The Man Left Half Dead by the Roadside

We are all looking for rest. We work all week and wait for the weekend. We work all year and wait for our holiday. We tell ourselves that once we have a bigger house, more money or fewer worries, we will finally be at peace. And yet, so often we come back from holiday just as tired as when we left. The body has rested, but the soul has not.

That is because the heaviest weariness is not in the body but in the heart. We are worn out by quarrels, by grudges we have carried for years, by the worry of not measuring up to others, by the need to always be right, by thoughts of the person who wronged us. Many people do not even know what they are looking for. They only feel an emptiness that nothing fills, and they move from one thing to the next, hoping the next one will bring them peace.

The Bible describes this condition very well. It says that the heart of the one who lives far from God is "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest" (Isaiah 57:20). You can own a lovely house by the sea, but if the sea inside you is in a storm, you will have no rest.

Two Worlds

The Bible speaks of two ways of living. It calls one "things on the earth" and the other "things above." When we hear "things on the earth," we think of money and possessions. But the Bible is thinking above all of what goes on in the heart.

In the world we live in, everyone knows the rules. From childhood you are taught to stand up for yourself, to give as good as you get, never to let anyone walk all over you. You judge others quickly and yourself slowly. For your own mistakes you always find an excuse; for other people's, none at all. You remember who wronged you. You want to have the last word.

In God's world, the rules are different. Jesus said, "Love ye your enemies" and "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:35–36). He did not just tell us not to hate those who hurt us, but to do them good. He also said, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged… forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). And He asked us to love others "as ourselves," that is, to judge them with the same leniency with which we judge ourselves.

At first glance these rules look impossible, even unfair. But look at what each way brings. The grudge you hold against someone weighs on you, not on them. The desire for revenge is never satisfied. The worry about being right keeps you constantly on edge. This world promises peace but demands an endless fight. God's world seems to ask a great deal, but it gives rest.

A Man Fallen by the Roadside

Jesus once told a simple story. A man was travelling along a lonely road when he was attacked by thieves, robbed, beaten and left half dead. Two very religious men came down that road. They saw him and walked on. They did him no harm; they simply passed by on the other side. Then a

foreigner came along, from a despised people. When he saw him, he had compassion on him. He stopped, bound up his wounds, brought him to an inn and paid for his care (Luke 10:30–35).

The story shows the difference between the two worlds very clearly. All three saw the same man. The first two saw trouble to keep away from. The third saw a man to lift up. In our world it is normal to walk on. In God's world, you stop.

The Invitation

Jesus did not only speak about rest; He offered it: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30).

A yoke was the wooden beam laid across the necks of oxen so they could pull the plough together. It seems strange to promise rest and then hand someone a yoke. But every person already carries a yoke: the yoke of pride, of resentment, of fear, of always wanting to be first. That is the heavy yoke. Jesus invites us to lay it down and take up His, which is light.

And He tells us what to learn from Him: meekness and humility. Meekness is not weakness. Jesus had all power, yet He did not use it to strike back. When He was mocked, He did not answer with mockery. A proud heart always feels under attack; it compares, it defends itself, it gets angry. A humble heart has nothing left to defend, and so it can be at peace. Pride brings war into the soul; humility brings peace.

Many believe that peace only comes after death. That is why we say at funerals, "Rest in peace." But Jesus speaks of a rest that begins now, in the middle of life, even in the middle of the storm. Once, out on the sea, His disciples were afraid they would drown, while He lay peacefully asleep in the boat (Mark 4:38). This is the peace He gives: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

Long before, a prophet spoke the same invitation in a few words: "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). Rest does not come from changing where we live, but from changing how we live. The invitation is for anyone: to try the way of Jesus, to forgive, to stop beside the one who has fallen, to lay down the yoke of pride. And there, on that road, to find the rest they have been searching for all their life.

Source: *The Man Left Half Dead by the Roadside* — Purpose of Life
truepurposeoflife.com/articles/the-man-left-half-dead-by-the-roadside