

# A devotion from Lutheran Women's Missionary League–Canada

## Lift up your eyes to the hills

Have you ever felt life is too much for you? Have you wanted to get away from it all? I remember feeling that way as a teenager. I would jump on my bicycle and ride out to a slough about a mile from town where I could be alone. I would sit on the bank – it was not particularly a pretty spot – but I would look at the foothills in the distance. Psalm 121:1 would come to mind: *I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.* And I would be comforted. I knew God was in control.

Several times in His ministry Jesus went to a “solitary place” to get away from the crowds. In **Matthew 14:6-23** and **Mark 6:32-46** we read about one of these occasions. What prompted Jesus to withdraw to a solitary place? What happened when He got there? Was He really able to get away?

Read **John 6:15**. What reason did John give for Jesus dismissing the crowd and going by Himself to the mountain to pray?

Jesus was at last able to get the privacy and rest which He sought earlier in the day. Many things had been happening and He needed to pour out His soul to His Heavenly Father and to receive the comfort and strength only His Father could give.

We all have times when life seems too much, whether it be guilt over something we have done, concern for loved ones, death of a family member, too much busyness or a combination of all of these. We have a need to get away. Where do we go?

What does Jesus recommend in **Matthew 11:28**? What rest is Jesus talking about? Is He talking about a break from the daily stresses of life? Or is He talking about much more than that?

Read **Matthew 11:29-30; Colossians 2:13-14; John 14:1-3; Philippians 4:6-7**.

The rest Jesus gives is rest for our souls – the assurance of sins forgiven, the certainty that Christ paid the price for our sins with His death on the cross and that just as He rose again we, too, shall rise to spend eternity with Him. It’s knowing that as we commit our cares to Him in prayer and rest under His wing all our yokes become easy and all our burdens light.

We have been released from the captivity of sin and so we can say as Isaiah did when the Israelites were released from Babylon:

*You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field will clap their hands (Isaiah 55:12).*

God’s beautiful creation speaks to us of God’s greatness and of His love for us. Taking time to sit still and marvel at majestic mountains, golden sunsets and quiet waters reminds us that the same God who created these wonders will surely watch over us. He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die in our place. He made us His own in Baptism and comes to us in Word and Sacrament to give us rest.

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