

## SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2022 – REFLECTION

“Relax – It's a Long Weekend” ~ *Gay Todd*

The Book of Colossians invites us to consider what we really treasure in this life. How do we find balance in our lives? Well the long weekend is here! It's a time to relax and find a peaceful place.

But how do we do that? Are you thinking about how you relax? Perhaps it's laying on a blanket on the sand at Grand Beach or sitting in a comfortable chair reading a good book.

My Granddad built a cabin in 1941 at Grand Marais. Growing up my family spent our entire summer there. We would pack up clothing, food, bedding and dogs in my dad's Model A. We left on the last day of school and returned to our St. James home the end of the September long weekend.

I can still picture my Granddad sitting in his favourite lawn chair. Some of you will remember the orange and green striped canvas ones back in the 1950's. I still have that chair, although the canvas is blue and white stripes today! He would be smoking his pipe and holding a paper bag full of peanuts. He loved feeding the chipmunks and they loved receiving the peanuts. That's how he relaxed.

Other people listen to their favourite music or play a musical instrument to relax. Some people meditate or pray. Others take a leisurely walk; have a family picnic in the park; go for a long bike ride or people even relax by playing sports; fishing or going to the movies. Others find yoga or gardening relaxing. Then there's those who just like to sit in front of a 42" screen TV with a "cold one" watching the "big game". Each and every one of us finds relaxation in different ways!

But what about Jesus? How do you expect that He relaxed? Do you imagine Jesus kicking off his sandals and enjoying a "goblet" of red wine sitting around a fire with his Disciples? Maybe he enjoyed swimming in the River Jordan or the Sea of Galilee on a hot day. Perhaps Jesus enjoyed taking a donkey ride into the countryside.

I'm not sure what kind of sports were available in Jesus' time, if any. The Romans enjoyed watching Gladiators fight to their death and watching Christians being thrown to the lions. Obviously Jesus wasn't involved in that so-called sport!

We know from the scriptures that Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and to meditate. Maybe **that** was **his** time of relaxation.

But when did Jesus really have time to relax? Talk about a full schedule!! Jesus' father, Joseph, was a carpenter, and if Jesus took up this trade or helped Joseph, what kind of carpenter was he? Did he build houses? Not likely, as most buildings were made from stone or brick in those days. Perhaps he was a finishing carpenter making furniture. Who knows how heavy a workload Jesus had – and with the modest tools used in that time period, it would have taken much longer for Jesus to complete his projects than

in today's world.

Jesus went fishing with his disciples, although I'm sure this activity was their livelihood and not a form of relaxation.

We read in the Bible, Jesus preached to numerous crowds of people. He tended to the poor; travelled to the scattered villages healing the sick; performing miracles and even raising the dead.

Jesus carried the weight of the world on his shoulders – as well as a wooden cross. He worried and was concerned about the poor. Jesus had to contend with epidemic diseases. He showed compassion for lepers. He cared about the shepherds tending their flocks; the farmers who suffered lost crops due to locusts, floods or drought. Jesus also had to worry about the Roman soldiers and wars their leaders created. Isn't it sad, with all the modern technologies today that weren't available in Jesus's time; people still don't take time to relax or to pray.

Christians and people everywhere worry about the same things in this day and age as in Jesus' time. Wars worldwide are still a concern and poverty and hunger are also prevalent. People are stressed from a heavy workload or the anxiousness of job security. There are still so many diseases and the Covid pandemic is also a reality in today's world.

Our planet and our environment – which are God's creations, are greatly suffering. People continue to experience floods, tsunamis, droughts, forest fires and tornadoes as well as diseased livestock and crops.

But, it is good that some things never change! Christians still care for one another and try to do God's will and follow His Commandments. We still go to God in prayer, and we continue to rely on our everlasting faith to sustain us in our times of need. God is love and His light shines on all of us and protects us.

So, on this long weekend, take time to relax, to pray, meditate and take time to be Holy! Thanks be to God. AMEN.