

**All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. (v. 21b)**

At eighteen, we young adults thought we could take on anything. We were bundles of energy, ready for every challenge. Through my formative years, I would easily work eighty hours a week in an attempt to leave my mark on the world. And after work, I would never refuse friends who wanted to go out on the town. "Who needs rest?" we'd often say.

As I have aged and have found more enjoyment through the quiet sports of cycling and swimming, I still find it hard to take a break because exercise feels so good. Then I pause and remind myself that any trainer, even those for Olympic athletes, build rest days into training plans. They allow the body to recuperate and give broken-down muscles the opportunity to rebuild. God our Creator rested on the seventh day, looking back on all the good of six days. We are called to do the same. To rest, reflect, and be restored.

**Gentle Whisperer, may I hear your loving voice in my ears as I balance good work with sweet rest. It is you who renews. Amen.**

*Psalm 71:1-6; John 1:43-51*

**But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. (v. 30)**

The question, “Can you tell me how to get to Sesame Street?” has been heard by over 120 million viewers across 140 countries for nearly 50 years. It’s clear that the positive messaging of this children’s TV series of the same name resonates with the desire we have to live in and contribute to a happy, healthy neighborhood.

In today’s text, Jesus was speaking in his hometown. But things did not go well. Those gathered in the synagogue drove him out of town. Later, Paul wrote about the more positive side of being in community, an experience Jesus shared with his disciples. Paul wrote, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (1 Cor. 12:26).

I admire the work of Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Disaster Response, and other organizations that allow us to help our own communities. Churches across the world have local mission opportunities that complement their global efforts. Indeed, it is a small, small beautiful world.

**Divine Helper, you are my constant in a world that is ever changing. Amen.**

*Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13*

**For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life. (v. 13)**

No one wants to be left in the dark. Being caught at home when the electricity goes out, and candles or flashlights cannot be found, is scary. Just as frustrating is walking into the middle of a conversation and feeling like you are the odd person out. What is clear to us in daylight is often a mystery in darkness, be it a frog croaking or a tree branch hitting a window.

Knowledge empowers us, as it helps us see reality. Knowing God brings us light. When we read God's Word, we receive the understanding we need to make it through the shadowy valleys and gloomy points of life. Hard times are bound to come, but by God's grace, we make it through them.

As the writer of this psalm said, "For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life." I love the sound of that. I live in that light.

**Light of the world, I ask you for clarity in my mission and purpose as I share your light with others. Amen.**

*1 Kings 17:8-16; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16*