

Daily Devotional, September 3, 2021 Rest for the Weary

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

Labor Day is traditionally observed on the first Monday in September. It is often acknowledged as the “unofficial end of summer.” Today, people all over the United States will spend time at the lake, picnicking and grilling their favorite foods. Some will be traveling, spending time with family and friends, and simply relaxing while enjoying the extended weekend.

Labor Day first became a holiday in 1894. During a time of tremendous unrest in the United States, industrial workers began to organize and fight for better working conditions. There were multiple strikes across the country, many of which turned violent. That year was the first that the Central Labor Union began to hold annual celebrations on September 5th for what they called a “working man's holiday”. Over time, the first Monday of September slowly became known as the “Working person's holiday.”

We have come a long way since that first Labor Day. Working conditions have drastically improved in our country. We recognize that we still have far to go in many ways, such as in making pay standards more equitable, even still, we take this day of rest to celebrate the fruits of our labor and to rest from our work.

The demands of labor have been part of human life, long before the Industrial Revolution. Working on the farm, laboring with our hands, making ourselves useful and productive members of society has been part of life throughout history. The effect of labor is to make the laborer tired. At times our body is tired and at times our souls are tired.

The good news of our faith is that in Christ, we find rest. Our bodies find rest on the sabbath, and our souls find peace when we are in connection with God.

I hope today you rest. I pray that each day of this long weekend, you are reminded that God is at work in the midst of our labor. God brings peace and rest in the midst of our daily struggles, and the hope of an eternal rest when our work on earth is done.

Hymn as Prayer:

***Precious Lord take my hand
Lead me on, let me stand
I am tired, I'm weak, I am worn
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand, precious Lord
Lead me home***

Take My Hand, Precious Lord, Thomas A. Dorsey, ELW, 637-639