

Cancellation of All Services and Events Sunday, February 14, 2021 due to weather predictions

Saturday Night A 20 percent chance of snow after midnight. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 9.

Sunday Snow likely, mainly after noon. Cloudy, with a high near 12. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Sunday Night Snow likely. Cloudy, with a low around 0. Chance of precipitation is 70%.

Washington's Birthday A 50 percent chance of snow, mainly before noon. Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near 8.

Weather Channel

...WINTER WEATHER OUTLOOK... A significant snowstorm is expected to begin Saturday night in northwest Oklahoma, then spread quickly southeast through the day on Sunday. The heaviest snowfall will probably occur Sunday night and early Monday. **Snowfall totals of 5 to 10 inches will be the rule, with higher amounts in some areas.** The "dry" nature of the snow will make it **particularly susceptible to being blown around by the wind, and drifting snow is likely.** Near-blizzard conditions may occur in unprotected areas Sunday night and Monday.

Pause to Pray, Sunday, February 14, 2021

Jesus said, "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" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Musical Prelude: "Sheep May Safely Graze"

<https://youtu.be/g7OpiAg44m8>

English Text Translation:

*"Sheep may safely graze and pasture
In a watchful Shepherd's sight.*

*Those who rule with wisdom guiding
Bring to hearts a peace abiding
Bless a land with joy made bright. "*

Song: "Savior, Like a Shepherd, Lead Us"

<https://youtu.be/SQe8slFjX-o>

We have an invitation from the King of Kings: “Come (“here” implied) facing Me.”

It’s a directed invitation—to “all” who “labour” and are “heavy laden.”

Do we “labour”? The word speaks of grievous, burdensome work that is ongoing. It is work to the point of exhaustion. Hendriksen translates it “travel-weary (fatigued as a result of a long journey)” in John 4:6. “Heavy laden” translates a perfect tense, indicating a settled continuing state: loaded down with burdens. **Are we loaded down with burdens?**

Contextually, Jesus was talking about the burdens and weariness involved in keeping the 612 laws the scribes and Pharisees had constructed from the Ten Commandments. He was offering relief and freedom. Jesus’ promise to His listeners (and to us) is “rest.” The Greek word He used is ἀναπαύω. The word meant “to cause to cease,” “to give someone rest,” “to refresh someone” (Bauernfiend, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 356). Jesus was promising refreshment to people burdened down. The root of the word comes into English as “pause.” In 1929, as the US economy was heading into the Great Depression, sought to differentiate Coca-Cola from other soft drinks and make it more appealing when people were struggling. Coke’s president, Robert Woodruff, “wanted to encourage people to slow down and take time to enjoy Coke and to drink it often. His hope was to make Coca-Cola more than just a beverage, he hope to label it as a pleasurable escape from the rush of the everyday world” (<https://blog.retroplanet.com/coca-cola-pause-refreshes/>). Copywriter Archie Lee were able to portray that concept with their slogan, “The Pause that Refreshes,” and placed their first ad with that slogan in the *Saturday Evening Post* magazine. For decades, “Pause” and “Refresh” were prominently featured in Coke’s advertising.

“Rest” is a concept that appears throughout the Old Testament. The Sabbath was to be a day of “rest” (Exod. 16:23; 23:12; Lev. 23:3). Entrance into the Promised Land carried the promise of “rest” (Josh. 1:13; 21:44; 23:1). That rest was a temporary rest foreshadowing the ultimate “rest” (Isa. 11:10; 28:12) of salvation in Messiah’s kingdom. The Book of Hebrews picks up the concept to refer to the whole work of salvation by Christ (Heb. 4:1-11). That is what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 11:28: Resting from our own efforts to please God and resting in the finished work of Jesus.

I think the invitation and the promise of Matthew 11:28 apply to Christian living as well. We are saved by faith, and we live by faith. Peter expanded this idea in 1 Peter 5:7: “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” “Casting” pictures throwing something. What are we to throw? Our “care,” μεριμνά, a word that pictures anxiety or worry. Jesus reminded in the Sermon on the Mount: “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on” (Matt. 6:25). He then asked, “Which of you by taking thought an add one cubit unto his stature?” (vs. 27). Our worry cannot extend our lives one second.

I think we might apply this concept of rest and care to ourselves and to our nation, besieged as we are with the chaos of a pandemic, a second presidential impeachment trial, a new presidential administration that has issued 52 executive orders in less than three weeks, and the unusual weather we have and will experience in the days ahead.

I saw my first snowstorm when I was 11 year old in New Jersey. We had 21 inches of blowing snow, and the temperature was 8 degrees (without windchill). Yet New Jersey had the equipment and know-how to deal with those conditions. Oklahoma does not because we don't normally have weather like that. For over a decade we lived in northern and western Ohio. That first winter we lived in Cleveland, temperatures plunged to -25, and the Ohio River froze over (<https://www.wcpo.com/news/our-community/from-the-vault/from-the-vault-back-to-back-winters-of-1976-77-and-1977-78-were-coldest-snowiest>). It was so cold that the tires of Cincinnati's city buses froze to the pavement. There is something about that kind of cold weather that makes all of the muscles in a person's tense up in an attempt to keep warm.

So how do we cast our care on Him? How do we rest in Him? We do it by means of prayer and reflection on His Word, the Guidebook for life.

This Sunday as we remain safe and warm (hopefully) in our homes, take some time to pray for our nation. Pray for our President. Pray for those who represent us in Congress. Pray for our church family. Many of our people have burdens and cares. Pray for yourself and for your own family. Are they all believers in Jesus Christ? Pray that God would draw them to Himself (John 6:44, 65). I think if we do this, it will be a pause that refreshes. We may not be able to gather together because of the cold and snow, but we can join our spirits together in prayer for one another.

Song: "Sweet Hour of Prayer"

(Sung by Zimbabweans in English and in their native language.)

<https://youtu.be/Ph43J3pnBDo>

English A Capella

<https://youtu.be/VR31YX3fOIQ>

Jimmy Dean: "The Farmer and the Lord"
("Sweet Hour of Prayer")

<https://youtu.be/zbRBreq0bdU>