The words of Matthew 11:28-29 are words of invitation. "Come to Me." Usually we think of these words as being an invitation to "come to" Christ for salvation and rightly so. They are that but they are not limited only to that. Listen to them once again.

"28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

It is true that when we initially come to Christ for salvation we are very "heavy laden" with the guilt, power, and shame of sin in our lives. We are "weary" of carrying the burden of our sin. But it is also true that the power and the burden of sin are not completely eliminated at the time of our being washed in the blood of Christ. It was Christians who were addressed in the book of Hebrews and they were urged to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us..." Fighting sin is tiring. It is exhausting and its victory over us is disappointing.

The Apostle Paul was certainly familiar with struggling against sin. He admitted that what he wanted to do that was right he failed to practice and what he did not want to do, what he hated, he found himself doing. He put it this way: "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice." He said in Romans 7:17 that sin dwelled in him. He was engaged in a personal fight for spiritual victory and mastery over his own sin. In an outburst of frustration he said, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" And his answer was, "I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!" That was Who would deliver him from his "body of death." And that is Who delivers us from our "body of death" - "Jesus Christ our Lord!"

That is why the invitation of Christ in Matthew 11:28-29 remains to be so inviting even after the saved have been saved. We continue to "labor"; we continue to be "heavy laden"; we continue to need "rest for [our] souls."

The Table is to remind us of Him and it does. We are reminded of His own personal struggle against the forces of evil. As soon as He was immersed to "fulfill all righteousness" He was in a vicious struggle with the devil. After He "was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness" and "had fasted forty days and forty nights," and "afterward...was hungry," the devil was right there offering Him a way to have bread to eat. He was taken "up into the holy city" and was set "on the pinnacle of the temple"
and was told by the devil how He could reveal to the world His relationship to the heavenly Father. He was taken "up on an exceedingly high mountain, and [shown] all the kingdoms of the world and their glory" that could be His for the asking. He was in a fight against evil. In Matthew 16 He was encouraged to avoid the cross and had to rebuke Peter for being an instrument of Satan. He was in a fight against evil. The Hebrews writer reveals the full scope of our Lord's struggle by writing that He "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Unlike our Lord, we have not been so victorious. We still fight and struggle and war against sin only to fail at times. And we will continue in this struggle until our Lord delivers us from our weak body. It is tiring. It is wearisome. It can defeat us unless we "come to [Him]" even after our conversion and avail ourselves to His companionship, His refreshment, and His Word.

We can "come to" Christ in prayer, of course. But at this time we "come to" Christ to sit with Him at His Table. Here, at His Table, we commune with Him and with His body, the church, which also struggles and fights with sin just as we do. We seek His hand of comfort and encouragement. We seek His strength. We ask from Him relief and rest. We admit our failures. We confess our faults. We seek His gentle reassuring touch and His voice of assurance that we are still His children. We are reminded that unlike Him we "have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin." We have not been beaten and scourged and nailed alive to a cross as He was for our sake. We have not been cursed as He was cursed for our sake. We have not been mocked or ridiculed as He was mocked and ridiculed for our sake. And so, we go to Him in prayer and ask:

"Father in heaven, forgive us of our sins. Forgive us of our weakness and our failure to live perfectly the life of righteousness that we have been called to live. We thank you so much for Your Word in which You have shown us the faithfulness of Jesus to Your will on our behalf. We are ashamed of ourselves for having been defeated by sin as a Christian and ask for your grace and mercy. We do remember Jesus at this Table. The cup recalls to our remembrance the blood that He poured out for us. The loaf recalls to our remembrance the body that was so badly beaten and bruised for us. We confess to you that there is nothing that we have done and there is nothing that we can do or give you in payment for our sins. We simply ask that you will receive our thanks for the loaf and that you will bless the cup that is on this Table that is set in His honor. It is in the name of Jesus, the Christ, that we make this prayer request. Amen.