

“You Shall Find Rest for Your Souls”

Matthew 11: 28-30

Introduction:

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

In verses 20-24, Jesus taught about Human responsibility.
He then continued on to the Doctrine of Election

Now He turns to to give a FREE and FULL invitation to those who are needing rest!
It is free to us, but cost Him dearly!

There are three consistent things evident that should be found in all preaching:

Remember WHO it is that is inviting us to **come to Him**.

Jesus is the Son of the Most High God, the revealer of God *then* and *now*
He bids men to draw near to Him without fear, and offers rest in His presence!

The Saviour eternal (who once died), is waiting to receive and save ALL who will come to Him!
It is those He will bless with rest.

I. Who is Jesus Calling?

all you who labor and are heavy laden

LABOURING: in any form

- In the service of **formal religion**
 - Legalism (ie. Your own personal strengths to keep the Law of God)
 - Traditionalism (ie. Your rituals to maintain piety or guidance).
 - Self-justification

Reminds me of John Wayne in “Angel and the Badman”:

- Gun slinger (Quirt Evans - John Wayne) in love with a Quaker girl (Penny - Gail Russel)
- he won't chase after money dubiously owed to him.
- “At least the other guy will be always looking over his shoulder - his food won't sit right in his belly”
- Penny looks at him disapprovingly, to which he replies;
- **”Well if I'm going to be holy, I gotta have some fun out of it!”**

* I think he missed the boat about holiness

- In the service of **self**
 - To gain fame, praise or recognition
 - To increase wealth, comfort and luxury
- In the service of **the world**

- To learn, invent or legislate
- Philanthropy
- In service of **Satan**
 - Lust
 - Drunk
 - Gambling
 - Cheating
 - **DISOBEDIENT** to God's Will
 - ◆ Cf. Jonah - told to go to Ninevah to save them
 - ◆ Jonah **RAN** in the opposite direction !!!!
 - ◆ He was so exhausted from running away from God, he slet through the catastrophic storm

Most of these labours are caused fundamentally by the sin of **PRIDE!**

- Where I want to do MY will, NOT the LORD's will !!!
- Where I put anything else on a pedestal, over God's rightful place on the throne of my heart.

There is also a righteous and holy labour.

Scripture mentions many struggles, efforts and striving:

- And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." [Gen 32:28]
- run with endurance the race [Heb 12:1]
- For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places [Eph 6:12]
- In fact, this whole section is about the Christian battle and Gospel armour!

All who are HEAVY LADEN are called:

Jesus is here particularly talking about the heavy burden of Sin.

When the Holy Spirit convinces me of the evil of sin (as an abomination to a pure and holy God).

By God's grace, I am first convicted of my sin:

- **How it sickens and disgusts me**
- **How I am weary of pleasing the world and my flesh**
- **How when I am in the presence of a Holy God:**
 - **God shows me my tragic and dangerous state of my sin!**

Compare this with Biblical examples like:

- Ephraim (Jer. 31:18-20)
- The Prodigal Son (Luk. 15:17)
- The publican (luk. 18:13)
- Paul (Acts 9:4,6,9)

- The Jailer (Acts 16:29,30)

This is the necessary spiritual preparation for the gift to come!

I'd like to share a bit about my walk with the Lord:

- I had a head knowledge about Christian doctrine. I have so many Godly books in my library - literally hundreds.
- And I loved the intellectual learning about the things of God or theology.
- I would do my morning devotions, pray according to the correct process [A.C.T.S], read a chapter of the Bible. I would then mull it over thinking about what the message was.
- I would then go and check up my various commentaries to see that I understood & was on the right track - Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, John Calvin.
- You know what the most dangerous thing for me was ... I was correct in my thoughts !!!!
PRIDE !!!!
- It was like David preached last week about prayer (the intimate seeking of God's presence).
- I was just going through the motions - as far as God was concerned !!!
- Do you know what was even more dangerous?
- I had read about John Wesley and George Mueller and their "heart warming" - conversion!
- For years I had not experienced it, and I assumed it to be such a gradual process of maturing I had missed the experience and it wasn't necessary.
- But God put a burden on my heart - getting heavier and heavier.
- You see, I had a head-knowledge of the processes of salvation and sanctification.
- Like a "good" Christian, I could rattle off the doctrines and concepts, so that **even I was convinced in my good standing before God.**
- had this niggling in the back of my mind about this "heart warming" that was necessary.
- I just prayed that the Lord would convict me like he revealed Himself to Isaiah (Isaiah 6).
- I had a dream once. It was more like a nightmare, that filled my heart with mortal dread.
- This was my dream, which I have never forgotten to this day!
- *I was at evening worship at the Gold Coast, where I was many years ago.*
- *And in my dream - remember it was about 6:30 at night - a brilliant light, like the dawning Sun lit up from the East!*
- *In my dream I was so filled with fear and dread, because I knew it was the Lord's return and I had not been taken up to meet Him in the sky!*
- Now I know theologically, there are so many things wrong with this dream - HOWEVER, the Lord used that mightily to touch my heart !!!
- I woke up weeping and forlorn because the Lord had touched my heart, such that I now recognised my lost condition !!!!

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding! [Proverbs 3:5]

- I prayed so fervently for days, but I was still heart-broken - there was no immediate reply. My head kept telling me, the Lord sometimes says, "just wait". He wants us to be importune - repeatedly ask in faith !!!
- Then the Lord gave me another slightly different nightmare a few nights later.
- That further convicted me of my guilt and shame!
- I was almost crushed in my senses. I was searching the Bible voraciously - almost in a panic. It consumed my spare time and my constant thoughts.

I know several of you folk have shared a similar story, about the Holy Spirit convicting your hearts!

**Well have I now got fantastic news for you?
Returning to our passage in Matthew 11:**

II. What's Jesus' Offer?

These are promises!

I will give you rest.

Jesus will most assuredly give rest to our labours and heavy burdens:

- Rest from the terror of sin,
 - A well grounded peace of conscience
- Rest from the power of sin,
 - From a regular use of the means of grace (ie. The Word of God and Sacraments)
- Rest in God's presence
 - From communion in His love (including prayer).

I will expand on this peace further in the conclusion.

Because Jesus expects us to behave in accordance with the grace of God:

III. What's My Response?

Take My yoke upon you For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

YOKE

Yoke = ζυγός

- a coupling,
- a yoke that is put on draught cattle
- metaph., used of any burden or bondage
- i.e. (figuratively) servitude (a law or obligation)
- Eastern cattle yokes include the loop around the necks
 - notoriously heavy
 - pressed so hard, prevented the cattle bending their necks

- Notice our Lord's command
 - Take MY yoke upon you.
 - ◆ Implies a duty or service (according to his will)
 - ◆ Implies a sharing of the load (with our Saviour)
 - ◆ Implies a submission or absolute surrender to the Lord.
 - Is only successful when
 - ◆ both parties pull at the same speed
 - ◆ Both parties pull in the same direction
- As we read in Micah 6:8
 - We are to **walk humbly with your God**
 - Not dragging behind - slothful and lazy
 - Not racing ahead - overzealous and impatient
 - But Walk humbly beside!

This is sweet communion with the presence of the Lord!

- If you ever think the burden is becoming too heavy or difficult,
 - Check that its not you that is pulling in the wrong direction
 - Humble yourself to God's will and walk beside Him

Jesus has promised to be with you every step of the way!

Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Jesus also mentioned:

learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.

LEARN FROM ME:

2 main ways to learn -

1. be attentive to the teacher's words &
2. follow His example.

Learning from Jesus' Teachings

So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" [Luk.10:27]

From **humility before the Father** flows all the other Christlike virtues to emulate.

GENTLE

Gentle = πραῖος

- **meek**, i.e. the necessary balance of exercising power and avoiding harshness
- Not timid, or weak
- From a position of power and authority

HUMILITY

Lowly in heart = ταπεινός τῆ καρδία

- humble
- means being **God-reliant** rather than self-reliant
- **ULTIMATELY** always exalts a person (brings them true worth, cf. **1 Pet 5:6**).

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time

What other “Lessons” about gentleness and humility did He teach?

The Beatitudes - **Matthew 5:3-5**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Disciples ask who should be the greatest in the kingdom - Luk.9:46, **Matt.18:3**

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Sons of Zebedee who can sit on Jesus left & right in Heaven - Luk.20:26-,28

Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

About the Pharisees and the best seats - Matt.23:11,12

But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted

There are over 9 overt lessons by Jesus on humility recorded in detail in the Gospels.

Learning from Jesus' Example:

He repeatedly **demonstrated** humility to God the Father, by submitting to His will:

I am come **NOT** to do my own will [John 5:38]

My teaching is not mine [John 7:16]

“Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”
[Luk.22:42]

and to Man:

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many
[Luk.20:28]

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
[John 13:14]

These are the lessons to learn from our Saviour!

CONCLUSION: The 'Prize'!

you will find rest for your souls.

- Jesus quoted from Jeremiah (6:16)

Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it;
Then you will find rest for your souls

Rest for your soul is the best rest !!!
Peace that passes ALL understanding!

The only way to hear to find rest for our souls is to sit at the feet of Christ and hear His words.

**The way of duty is the way of rest.
The way of humility is the way of rest.**

And we look forward in Faith at the rest we shall share in Zion for eternity!

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding! [Proverbs 3:5]

If you would permit me to finish my testimony of God's Grace, I can bring this message to a resolution:

- Richard Sibbes was known as the "Heavenly Doctor", because most of his works centre around restoring and edifying the saints.
- I was grieving and needing more help after calling on the Lord, so I read another of Sibbes' books: "Josiah's Reformation", 1629.
- It outlined the history of King Josiah of Judah (2 Chronicles 34)
- Found the Book of the Law
- Read the Book of the Law
- Humbled himself and repented for the nation
- **Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the Lord. (v.27)**
- **Sibbes' book outlined the tender heart, humility and mourning.**
- **That sounds a lot like a man labouring and heavy burdened!**
- But the final chapter is about **God refreshing His saints**, from v.28a.

Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and

your **eyes shall not see all the calamity** which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants. [2 Chron. 34]