

PM Matthew 11:1-30 Are you Tired?

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Date: 23 January 2022

Preacher: Mr James Blackwell

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[2:09] . . .

. . . And next Lord's Day, Mr. Alan Thompson will lead both services.

First Steps meets on Thursday from 9.30 to 11. There are invitation cards, as I'm sure you've been shown as you came in today, if you want to invite anyone along to that.

And if you are able, the First Base Food Agency is in need of donations. There's a box at the rear of the church for that purpose. Anyway, it's good to be together again.

Even in the dark. But because we know Jesus, we are, of course, in the light, despite the darkness around us. It's a great privilege.

[3:07] So let us hear from the Word of God as we hear a call to worship from the book of Revelation, chapter 15, from the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb, which reads, Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God Almighty.

Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy.

All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed. What a wonderful God it is that we worship today.

So let's sing praise to that wonderful God. We're going to sing together Psalm 62. From the Sing Psalms version, page 79 of your Psalm books.

Psalm 62. We'll sing through to verse 8 from verse 1. My soul finds rest in God alone. From him comes my salvation. Sure, my safety fortress, sheltering rock.

[4:15] In him alone I am secure. So friends, let's stand together as we sing Psalm 62 together. There we are.

Quilbs Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[6:50] Sovereign Lord, we thank you and we praise you for the privilege we have today to come and worship you again tonight. the power of your words which brought creation to being, the wonderful, beautiful world in which we live.

Help us not to take it for granted, Lord, the planet, the land in which you've given to us, but help us to see your works in all things, from the clouds in the sky to the blades of grass beneath our feet. Your hand was involved in it all. We thank you and we praise you for it. And we ask you to help us to care for it and to look after it and to preserve it, Lord, as you have commanded us to do, to be good stewards of your land.

So help us, O Lord, and we praise you for this holy day, this special day, this Sabbath day, in which we can come and set our weekly woes aside and come before you to rest, that great holy rest that comes from spending time with you, spending time amongst your people, spending time in your word, spending time in prayer, and renewing our dedication to you as we go forth to the coming week and wondering what it will bring.

It's good to have our foundation secured in you and in Christ our Savior and the Holy Spirit which keeps us on the path. We thank you, Lord, for this day and for this church.

[8 : 55] And we pray that the gospel would be heard from here and throughout our land again within our lifetimes. The people we know and love would come and hear your wondrous works, would come and hear your great holy name, would come and hear the wonderful deeds of Christ and would come to know him and love him and serve him as their own.

Lord, we thank you. We thank you because we know how unworthy we are of all the many great gifts you've given to us. We know how far we have fallen from you, how much we have rebelled against you, how far away we are from the standards you've set.

And yet, despite this, Lord, despite our failings, despite our sin, despite our rebellion, we are not left without hope. You did not abandon us.

You did not cut yourself off from us forever, but you sent your Son. You sent your Son, your wonderful, lovely Son, Jesus Christ, to live the perfect, sinless life that only he could achieve, to die that horrible death that we are all deserving, to bear the sins of the world upon his shoulders as only he could, to die and be raised again, defeating death forever, and showing us a wonderful glimpse of the wonderful future that awaits those who follow him, that there will be no more death, there will be no more suffering, no more sadness, there will be no more mourning or tears, for that way, the old way of order, of things will have passed away.

And we long, and we look forward to that day, and yet we know in the meantime you have so much left for us to do, so help us, Lord, to repent of our sins before you, to turn to Jesus today, to renew our commitment to him, and to serve him, and to love him, and to give our lives to him, so that others may come and know the hope that can be found in him.

[11 : 16] Help us to love you stronger and stronger each day, Lord, help us to love each other with more strength each day, and help us, as we seek to serve you, in our homes, in our families, in our places of work, wherever you've put us.

Help us, Lord, and bless us, and bless the congregation today. May they know your peace, and your love, and your holy rest today. In Jesus' name, we ask it.

Amen. Amen. So let's sing, as we consider the theme of rest, today, let's sing the great psalm, of rest, Psalm 23, from the Sing Psalms, version, page 28, of your psalm books.

The Lord is my shepherd, no one shall I know, he makes me lie down, where the green pastures grow, he leads me to rest, where the calm waters flow.

So let's stand together, as we sing, Psalm 23. Psalm 23. Psalm 23. Psalm 23. Psalm 23.

[12 : 52] Psalm 23. So let's sing,ashi, Aw, Paul. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Let us hear now from the Word of God as we read together from the Gospel of Matthew chapter 11. We're just going to read through the whole chapter this evening. We're just going to focus really on the last two sections, but we'll read the whole chapter together because it's helpful to get the context.

So from Matthew chapter 11 from verse 1. When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

[15 : 05] Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, Are you the one who is to come or shall we look for another?

And Jesus answered them, Go and tell John what you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them, and blessed is the one who is not offended by me.

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowd concerning John. What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind.

What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in king's houses. What then did you go out to see?

A prophet? Yes, I tell you, I'm more than a prophet. This is he of whom it was written, Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.

[16 : 15] Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

But what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates. We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he has a demon. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Look at him, a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds. Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent.

[17:26] Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven?

You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you, that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.

At that time, Jesus declared, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise, and understanding, and revealed them to little children.

Yet, yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[18:38] Come to me, all 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. Amen. And may God bless the reading of his holy, inspired word to us all this evening.

Friends, let's spend some more time than in prayer for our God. O Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise again for the privilege we have to come before you again tonight.

Lord, we thank you for all your mighty gifts, all your mighty deeds. We thank you for the words of your Son, which we have just had read to us.

Your word, Lord, and what a wonderful comfort and a challenge they are to us. We pray, Lord, that your Spirit would be with us as we consider your words and what they have to say to us this day.

[19:51] And we thank you for the privilege we have to come together in fellowship to do so. Lord, we give thanks for your great witness in this town and this land throughout the ages.

That the gospel has been preached faithfully in so many places around Scotland for so many years. We're thankful for the wonderful witness of men and women who have given their lives to you over the years.

For those who have gone abroad to take your word to other lands or those who have stayed at home and sought to teach their brothers, their neighbours about the love of Jesus.

We thank you for this wonderful past. And though we can be disheartened, Lord, looking at how things are currently in the state of the church in our land and how small we may appear, we are also so thankful to hear of the wonderful, good, amazing works you're doing abroad.

We hear of the wonderful miracles happening in China where despite huge levels of persecution, many are coming to faith and following Jesus. And we hear the same coming out of Iran and other places, Lord, where it would have been unheard of in decades past and yet you are working powerfully in that part of the world.

[21:17] And we pray you would work powerfully again in our land too. That you'd help myself and my colleagues and all those who are seeking and studying to serve you in the ministry and all those in the congregations in which they hope to serve, Lord, that we would carry the message faithfully to those who so desperately need to hear it.

We are reminded of our brothers and sisters who are in the dark, our neighbours, our friends, our loved ones who do not know you. And we pray, especially for those who are raised in the church, who have heard the good news, who know the gospel, that you would speak to them through that knowledge, that their hearts would just be awakened with love and fervour for you and that you would save them and you would save so many that you would give everlasting life to all those who

need it, which is everyone, and all those who are in darkness.

We pray for those struggling with addiction, for those struggling with financial difficulties or problems in the family, Lord, there are so many things that can trip us up, so many areas where we can struggle.

And we pray that you would work powerfully in our lives and in their lives and to show them the peace and the rest and the joy that can be found in Jesus, the only place true rest can really be found.

We pray for our brothers and sisters who are sick, who are unwell, who are unable to be with us this evening. We pray for the elderly and those struggling. We give thanks for new life, for new birth, and we pray that there will be new life in all of those who need it tonight.

[23 : 15] And we pray, Lord, that you would be with your people who are struggling, that you would give them peace, the peace that surpasses all understanding, that you would guard their hearts in Jesus, that you would keep them safe from temptation and harm, that you would protect them, and you would protect all of us as we seek to go and serve you.

Help us in our struggles, Lord, to know we are not alone because you are with us. If we follow you, if we trust in Christ, he lives within us. Your spirit unites us to him, and we are united to each other with that same spirit, that same love.

So help us, Lord, and bless us. And bless our brothers and sisters facing persecution around the globe, especially in Afghanistan where it has gotten so much worse in such a short period of time for Christians in a land that has seen so much upheaval and war and conflict.

We pray for peace, the peace only you bring. Be with them, Lord, and save many from the enemy so they would stop seeking to destroy your church, but instead seek to help build it.

That's our prayer today, Lord, as we come to study your word together. So bless us and comfort each of us and help us through our own struggles for only you know what each of us is going through.

[24 : 44] So be with us, Lord, and help us to serve one another and to serve you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So before we look together at Matthew 11, we're going to sing again to the glory of God.

We're going to sing Psalm 98 from the Sing Psalms page 129 and we'll sing just the first three verses. So the first four stanzas.

Oh, sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he has done. His right hand and his holy arm the victory have won. So let's, once more, stand together as we sing Psalm 98 together.

and Thank you.

Thank you.

[26 : 58] Friends, here we are. It's January 2022. We've made it this far. We've gotten through all the upset and troubles that last two years have thrown at us through COVID and Brexit and all these things.

And we are here together to worship God and what a wonderful thing that is. But I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm tired. I'm tired of all this COVID thing. I'm tired of having to wear masks on the trains and everywhere I go and in classes and things.

Because, you know, I'm tired of my son who is still nearly two and still really isn't sleeping properly, keeping us up throughout the night. You know, I'm just tired of Zoom. I came to really detest Zoom. I don't know about you. It's useful, don't get me wrong.

But I was on it for nearly seven days a week at one point for different meetings and classes in church. And I just came to really, really hate it. But I can appreciate its usefulness. But I'm tired of that too.

And, you know, I'm sure many of you have had your trials and your tribulations too over these last couple of years. And maybe you're also flagging, you know, you're tired, you're struggling.

[28 : 19] You just want things to go back to some normality. You want to be, you know, a bit more just normal, whatever normal is anymore.

But all these things which make us physically tired, you know, all of these trials which we go through, none of it really compares with the struggles and the just exhaustion that trying to make ourselves right with God would bring if we try to do it for our own strength and for our own abilities. You could dedicate every single day, every single hour of every single day of your entire life to seek to try and make yourself right with God and you would never be able to achieve it. It's an

unachievable task. You'd never manage.

It'd be like trying to climb Mount Everest in bare feet. You know, you might get so far, but then eventually you'll stumble and cut your foot on a rock or you'll get to the bit with the ice and your legs will freeze and you just won't make it. You'll never, ever reach the top.

And I'd hate to know how weary and how painful an eternity of judgment would be.

[29 : 46] I think that is the worst of the worst, really, isn't it? And yet, that is the life that the majority of the world in which we live in is trying to live.

They're either trying to make themselves right with God by doing, you know, good things, or they're ignoring him altogether or actively in rebellion against him.

And sadly, the end result will be the same for them all. Jonathan Edwards, the great American Puritan, who also was around at the time of the Great Awakening, was involved in it too, like George Whitefield we heard this morning.

He wrote in one of his famous sermons, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, these very profound words. He said, Your wickedness makes you, as it were, heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell.

And if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf. And your healthy constitution, your own care and prudence and best contrivance and all your righteousness would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock.

[31 : 12] It's quite a stark image, isn't it, really? And yet this is the burden that all who do not believe and all those who are misguided in their faith are facing.

These burdens overtake and just overwhelm the burdens that COVID might have brought multiple, multiple, multiple times upon us.

It's a stark image, isn't it, that all the efforts of man are just a spider web trying to catch a falling rock. It's tiring and it's never going to get anywhere.

So let's make sure as January comes to an end that we take the rest of the year on the right foot. Because Jesus in his ultimate mercy and in his grace and in his love gives us another way in which we can go.

Another path which we can follow. A path that gives us an easier road and leads us to a holy rest. But without faith in Jesus without trust in him our lives are like that spider web waiting for that rock to fall and break through all our efforts and all our plans.

[32 : 35] So we're going to look at the end really from verse 20 of Matthew chapter 11 under three headings. We're going to consider unrepentant sinners unrepentant sinners.

Undeserving saints and unparalleled rest. So we start really with a warning first off as we consider unrepentant sinners.

Jesus as we read has been denouncing the people of Capernaum and some of the cities in which he visited. The cities he performed miracles in because despite the great things they had seen they persisted in their unbelief and they would refuse to repent.

And his words are very fierce words indeed. If you read in verse from verse 23 and it says On you Capernaum will you be exalted to heaven and you will be brought down to Hades.

For if the mighty works done in you have been done in Sodom it would have remained until this day but I tell you it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.

[33 : 49] These are very very strong words from Jesus. But directly after this Jesus changes and then he begins by the next section by praying.

He begins with the words I thank you Father or I praise you Father in some different translations Lord of heaven and earth that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding.

Jesus is still among the people he's just been condemning. At the beginning of verse 25 it tells us at that time. So there Jesus is he's just condemned these people and now he's praying to God and he's praying out loud they can all hear what he's saying and yet what's interesting is Jesus doesn't pray for their repentance he doesn't pray for them to see the light instead he gives thanks to God that they haven't repented which is very strange isn't it when you come to think about it he gives thanks to God that they cannot see the truth it's fascinating Jesus has compared them to Sodom which was the epitome of evil cities in the Bible and declares that they are worse even than them Jesus says look even Sodom would have repented if they'd have seen what I've done if they'd have witnessed my miracles and seen the reality of the kingdom of God it's quite a stark thing we don't

think about

Jesus in that way often do we and yet here it is in black and white for us verse 25 at that time Jesus declared I thank you father lord of heaven and earth that you've hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children yes father for such was your gracious will the scribes and some of the Pharisees had rejected Jesus and these people would have been widely recognized in society as being wise and learned they were the highly educated they were the leaders of their society they were important in their culture and yet here they're being contrasted with little children not literal children I think but rather those people whom society considers unimportant things like the poor the uneducated the sick those were the people who were more responsive to Jesus' miracles and to

God's revelation of his merciful and gracious character than those who should have been than the ones who were educated the ones who were religious the ones who knew the Old Testament like the back of their hands they didn't get it later in Matthew's gospel Jesus will say that unless a person turns and becomes like a little child he or she cannot enter the kingdom of heaven it's important to note that while we are to be like little children in our faith our faith isn't a childish faith our faith does involve understanding and knowledge that comes over time but it involves understanding and knowledge that one is wholly dependent upon God for their salvation just like a little child is wholly dependent for life and health upon their parents or their loving adults who care for them that is how our relationship to

[37 : 44] God should be Paul makes the same point about the cross of Christ on 1st Corinthians chapter 1 God used the cross to bring atonement for the sins of those who believe the gospel but in the society of the day and indeed in ours today the cross was seen as an instrument of suffering and humiliation and death and punishment it was a great sign of defeat it's like you have lost the Romans had won there was nothing great about the cross to them at all it was shameful the idea of saving people through the crucifixion of Christ seemed like madness to those who were fascinated with the law and with worldly wisdom they were just so unable to accept that humbling and amazing truth and realize that they weren't as great as they thought they were they were sinners in need of saving but the very atonement they needed they saw instead as madness instead it was mainly those who were not wise according to worldly standards who were not powerful who were not of noble birth the so called foolish of the world who embraced the gospel when Paul and others preached it we need again to be very wary of being unrepentant as the wise were in Christ's day when we hear the gospel being preached or when we read it at home in our devotional studies do we look to our own knowledge do we look to our own understanding of theology or our own biblical knowledge do we look to how much of the new testament we can memorize and just reel off in our heads do we trust in these things in ourselves or do we look at ourselves and see how much we are in need of repentance do we react like little children when we hear the gospel and do we trust in our

God and our father and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ when we hear the gospel when we hear the wonders of the miracles that Jesus performed these things should lead us to wonder and amazement but also to repentance and humility and then to joy in that we are now trusting in the father for our salvation especially when we realize the truth that our salvation is indeed undeserved which is our second heading the undeserving saints verses 25 and 26 are a bit of a mystery we have we so often come to the bible with our own prejudices and our own ideas and we see verses like this and we think goodness that's unfair isn't it why does

God hide the gospel from anyone no matter how proud they are doesn't he want everyone to be saved why doesn't God humble everyone we hear stories in the bible like how God humbled Nebuchadnezzar in such a powerful and profound way why doesn't he do that with the great leaders of our day we see how he humbled Neiman well why doesn't he do the same with the great atheists you know like Richard Dawkins and his ilk today why doesn't he do it you remember Muhammad Ali the famous boxer his motto was I am the greatest why doesn't God take people like that who think they are the greatest and show them by whatever means that that's just not the case the truth is we simply don't know when we talk about things like election or predestination there is indeed a very deep and unfathomable mystery the Westminster

Confession says that the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care and that is how it should be too often we get into arguments with other Christians about this because it's such a high heated issue and yet we should be very careful with how we talk about it because we simply cannot know the reasoning behind it we do not know God's

mind in this regard but it doesn't stop the hurting you can think you know why did God save me but he hasn't saved my sister why has he saved me but not my parents or my best friend or why doesn't my child believe even we cannot know but we can believe God's word we can believe what he says and we can know how we are ourselves we can know that I am a sinner we can know how flawed we are we can know our own weaknesses we can know we weren't good enough for God to save us to be gracious to us but we can know that despite all that he still did it anyway there's always that question why did

God choose me I don't know why he did I just know that he did I'm so thankful for it I also know that God would be totally fair and just at just sending all 7.8 billion of us on a direct course to hell and saving no one he would be well within his rights to do that but because of who he is and because of his love and his mercy and his grace and his glory he doesn't do that instead he chose to reveal himself to us to sinful human beings to save the souls of many to reveal his son to us to send him so we can come to him for rest how amazing is the grace of our God I think we can understate this sometimes how amazing it truly is in his prologue to the gospel of

[44 : 51] Matthew William Tyndale wrote two things that are required of a Christian firstly he wrote the first is a steadfast faith and trust in almighty God to obtain all the mercy that he hath promised us through the deserving and merits of Christ's blood only without all respect to our own works and the other thing is that we forsake evil and turn to God every day better and better and how does Jesus make this possible for us and simply because of who he is excuse me verse 27 reads all things have been handed over to me by my father and no one knows the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal to him in verses 25 and 26

Jesus has said the only way into the kingdom is through humility and in verse 27 he gives four claims that sound like the most arrogant claims ever made in the history of humanity these are the things that Jesus claims he claims firstly he has authority over all things he has authority over everything that Jesus has all power and all wisdom and all authority on heaven and on earth as Jesus says later in chapter 28 secondly he claims that he alone as God's son truly and fully knows God as father as my father as he says thirdly he claims that we cannot know God except through knowing him knowing the son and fourthly he claims we can't know God unless he chooses to reveal him to us now looking at the from the outside these claims are incredibly arrogant aren't they especially for somebody who just a little bit later on calls himself lowly in heart it certainly sounds arrogant doesn't it when you hear these things from the outside

I'm sure the wise Jews who were listening to Jesus pray this prayer thought how dare he how offensive or blasphemous are the things that he is saying here even today 2000 years later these claims are offensive people don't like to hear it they hate to hear these things because it's just not how arrogant can you be Jesus manages in one sentence almost to offend the entire world this incredible achievement in that he claims he has all authority and that he from God and like God has lordship over heaven and earth this is all a bit much I'm sure for the people who are listening you know if you claim you're a carpenter that's who you are claim to be good at that if you want but you're not the creator you're not a wise teacher but you're not wisdom embodied calm down you may be lowly in heart but you're not equal with the father this is just incredibly offensive

Jesus but then it gets even worse then does Jesus claim that the knowledge of God comes only through knowledge of him again this would have been incredible for the people to hear in fact it's incredible today for people to hear how often do we hear the words about my personal spiritual journey or my own personal faith how dare Jesus say that that is invalid that he is the only way we live in a society where many believe that all religions lead to the same God Jesus is saying no that is not the case it's only through me that you can know God he obliterates this idea that we have in our own society today Jesus is really pushing it here he claims are getting bolder and bolder saying we cannot know God unless Jesus chooses to reveal him to us God this is almost the fatal stab wound in the heart of our self centered individualistic world how dare

Jesus say that I determine my own destiny my life is in my hands I am free to believe and do whatever I want Jesus is very offensive in this passage the gospel itself is very offensive The claims of the Bible are offensive.

[49 : 54] What Jesus says is arrogant, unless they are true. Which, of course, they are. Because Jesus is the only way we need to make sure we have no doubts about that at all.

To be a Christian is to be an undeserving saint. And as we have seen, it is only through Jesus that this is possible. And while humility opens the doors to the kingdom, pride keeps them closed. But what does that mean for us today? What does Jesus take next? As we go to our third heading, Unparalleled Rest.

Jesus' words are harsh. They are offensive. They are also powerful. They have a great weight and a great authority behind them. He tells us that if we do not know Him, if we do not know the Son, then we do not know God.

But then He switches tone instantly. But despite the switch in tone, His words do not lose that weight or authority or that power that they had before.

[51 : 05] But now He speaks softly to those who He calls to believe in Him. And He says these wonderful words. Such an incredible switch in the conversation here.

But these words are so encouraging to us. Jesus is inviting all who are hearing Him then or all who read His words today to experience the refreshment that comes from being His follower, of being His disciple.

The Pharisees and the scribes had so many rules and regulations on top of what the law said that one needed to follow in order to be righteous.

They made it so hard, something that was already impossible, even more impossible to achieve. To learn from some of these men would have been considered a high honor.

It would have been a high privilege to have sat under their teaching. But Jesus is saying, don't go to them to learn. He says, come to me.

[52 : 35] Because what they teach will weigh you down. You will break your back trying to follow what it is that they are teaching you. So no, don't go to them. Come to me.

Because what Jesus has to teach us is easy, He says. While the burden of the Pharisees is hard, His is not. Jesus' invitation is truly amazing in both whom He invites and what He invites them to. Jesus does not invite those who are full of pride. He does not invite the self-satisfied. He does not invite the self-righteous. He does not invite those living an easy life, living in big fancy houses with fancy clothes, or those lounging on a beach somewhere.

Here Jesus invites us to come to me, all who are weary and burdened. All who labor. Jesus invites the tired.

He invites the poor. He invites those whose lives have been hard and difficult. Those who are weighed down by religious responsibility. He invites regular people.

[53 : 52] He invites the oppressed. He invites those who long to be free. Jesus calls them to Himself. But it's also amazing to what He calls them to.

Isn't it? I will give you rest. You will find rest for your souls. Perhaps you read this and think, rest.

Rest is good. Rest to me means being in a nice hotel somewhere in a hot country. By the pool with a good book. And, you know, just relaxing. Maybe, maybe different.

Maybe for you it's a cozy new chair cuddling up by the fire. You know, with a fuzzy blanket in winter. That's not what we hear. Instead, our call to rest involves a work order.

Take my yoke upon you, Jesus said. Some of you work in agriculture, so I'm sure you're very aware what a yoke is. You know, it is a big hunk of wood.

[54 : 58] A wooden frame that would be placed upon the shoulders of animals. Allowing them to perform various tasks. Jesus says, I'm going to give you an instrument for work.

It's an instrument that is designed specifically to distribute weight very well in equal proportions to both sides of the body. To make the job easier. But yet there is still a weight to carry.

There's a bit of a paradox in this statement. Because you think, what yoke is easy and what burden is ever light? What we need to realize here is that Jesus doesn't promise us an escape from reality. He doesn't promise us a life of wealth and long healthy life free from troubles. But he does promise us the right equipment to deal with whatever life will throw at us.

He promises the right tools. He promises a yoke. Take my yoke upon you, he says. To take Jesus' yoke upon you, you have to submit yourself to him.

[56 : 08] To his authority. You have to commit yourself to learn from him. So it's not the heavy yoke of the scribes and the Pharisees. It's not those heavy burdens that Jesus calls them in chapter 23.

It's not the burdens that have been placed on people's shoulders by the law. These are proper burdens.

Proper biblical burdens have a lightness to them. Because they have been given to us by God as gifts to help us. Given from the mouth of a man who is indeed in every way gentle and lowly in heart.

One who has carried them himself. He shares these burdens with us. Now compared with the hundreds of Jewish laws, there are much many fewer things to carry in Christ.

That is true. But there is still something to carry. Let's not ignore things like the Sermon on the Mount. The parables. The Great Commission.

[57 : 16] Let us not ignore the greatest commandment. To love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. And to love your neighbour as yourself. But these teachings bring with them rest.

Rest. In some strange weird paradox that none of us are really used to. Rest. True rest. Comes from working. Rest comes from labouring.

It sounds weird when you say that loud. But it is true. Rest comes from obedience. True rest comes in seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Rest comes from God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven. You know. You know.

We are coming to the end of January. And what do people do at the beginning of January every year? They set themselves resolutions. You know. New year's resolutions. How am I going to improve myself this year?

[58 : 17] Am I going to lose weight? Am I going to get fit? Am I going to learn a language or something else? Am I going to take up a hobby? Am I going to be happy? Sometimes we succeed in these things.

But more often than not. By now. By the 23rd of January. We've fallen off the wagon. We've lost the will. We're back to our old habits. Our own ways of doing things. But if you are determined to make a true change in your life this year.

Then remember the words of Jesus. Come to me all who labour 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.

So friends. Rest in the Lord Jesus today. But remember that Jesus did not say. Take my recliner chair. Or take my sofa.

[59 : 19] Or take my bed. Those are equipment used for sitting and sleeping. No. Jesus said. Take my yoke. Remember as we enter Jesus rest.

That it will be a working rest. We'll be working. We'll be walking. Moving forward. Doing what he commands us to do. To bear our own cross.

And life may be uncomfortable. It may be hard. It may be trying at times. But if you walk in Jesus way. You will find rest. And you will find refreshment that comes with forgiveness.

You will find renewal that comes with a purposeful living. The rest that comes from working for Jesus. The Holy Spirit also empowers us to do these things.

It encourages us. It disciplines us. It leads us down the right paths. It helps us to trust in Jesus. And in his deeds. And in his words.

[60 : 24] To trust in what he says. And not in ourselves. Are you tired tonight? Turn to Jesus today.

For he alone can provide true rest. For your soul. Amen. Heavenly Father. We thank you for this wonderful. Encouraging words.

Reminding us that true rest for our souls. Comes through your son Jesus. That we are freed from the burden of the law. And sin. And are saved from our unrighteousness.

And that Christ has given it all to us. And yet we are reminded that we are given a yoke. We are given a purpose. We are given work to do. To help us and strengthen us.

To fulfill the work you've set for us. To carry that yoke happily. Knowing that you have a purpose for us. Knowing that you will grant us. Unrecognizable rest.

[61 : 23] That we will come. To love you more and more each day. And serve you more and more. And come to know Christ. Who is truly gentle and lowly in heart.

Help us Lord. To trust not in ourselves. But to trust in Christ. In all things. So be with us. And bless us as we go. Out into this coming week Lord.

And forgive us all our many sins. In Jesus name. We ask it. Amen. Amen. So let us conclude. By singing.

Together the hymn. What a friend we have. In Jesus. Which is on. The reverse of your. Notice
sheet. What a friend. We have in Jesus. We have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege. To carry everything to God. In prayer. So as we close. Let us sing. To God's
praise. This wonderful hymn. What a friend. We have in Jesus.

[62 : 22] We have out. We are. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[64 : 56] Thank you.

Thank you.