

AM Matthew 11:25-30 Childlike Faith

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[0 : 00] Bibles to Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 11. Matthew chapter 11 verses 25 to 30.

These verses have been very much in my heart and mind in recent days. And I pray that God will speak to us through them by his spirit as we read them together today.

Starting at verse 25. 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 have revealed them to little children.

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.

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.

[1 : 37] For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Amen. May God bless to us this reading of his word.

I think it's amazing the deeds of our God, and our God is still the same God today. Both morning and evening we're going to be looking at these verses in Matthew's Gospel.

J.C. Ryle, who was the former Bishop of Liverpool, who wrote many commentaries, many Christian commentaries, when reading this passage, wrote, there are few passages in the four Gospels more important than this one.

There are few which contain in so short a compass, meaning in so few verses, so many precious truths. So I pray that God might give us the eyes to see and the hearts to feel the value of these words spoken by our Lord.

J.C. Ryle went on to say, let's learn the excellence of childlike faith, which he described as a teachable mind and spirit.

[2 : 55] Childlike faith, a teachable mind and spirit. For many years prior to being ordained, I worked as a volunteer with Scripture Union, both here in Scotland, in school groups and in camps, and in Eastern Europe, most especially in Ukraine.

So Ukraine is very dear to our hearts. I was there right from the very first camps in Ukraine in 1994, a chap called Grigory Stupak, who is still the Director of Scripture Union in Ukraine, which is called in Ukraine Open Bible, and is a registered charity.

Still operating there. And I remember being there in 1994, not long after the Berlin Wall had fallen and Eastern Europe was opening up. And I remember in my childhood, how we came so very close to firing nuclear weapons at one another.

And then in just those few short years from when the wall came down, just those few short years to be able to go to Eastern Europe and share something of the love of Christ with the people that live there.

Scripture Union taught me that when we're reading the Bible, or when hearing it read, that we're to ask ourselves the following questions.

[4 : 20] What is this passage about? And what is the context of the passage? And what does this passage teach us, teach me, about the Triune God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit?

And what, if anything, does this passage teach us about ourselves and our own situation? And those thoughts are always with me now, whenever I open the Bible.

They're good questions to ask. And immediately this morning, we notice that Jesus is the one who's speaking, and he's speaking to God the Father.

I don't know about you, but one of my Bibles has the words of Jesus in red. Has anyone else got a Bible where that's the case? It's really good to note that these are recorded words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus says, verse 25, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and have revealed them to little children.

[5 : 25] Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. The Lord Jesus Christ enjoyed a unique relationship of intimacy with God as his Father.

They had and have a direct and immediate knowledge of each other, a relationship that's not possible for anyone else. And in these opening verses this morning, Jesus links the truth of God as Father and God as Sovereign Lord.

God the Father is sovereign. He rules everything in heaven and on earth. And Jesus goes on to picture a loving heavenly Father acting in his sovereign ways, bringing about his loving will in verse 26.

Jesus is one with the Father. To know Jesus Christ is to see and know God the Father, verse 27. Jesus Christ, the Son, is the key to knowing God.

Jesus is the manifestation of God in human form. Jesus said, Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. John 14, verse 9.

[6 : 47] Now whilst we can't see Jesus in the flesh, we can know him through what is revealed about him in the Bible. We all know the Christmas story that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God.

He is God in human form. The Apostle Paul wrote that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1, 15 to 20. And the writer of Hebrews states, He, that is Jesus, is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature.

[7 : 49] The more we know and learn about Jesus, the closer we're drawn to God, our Heavenly Father. And Jesus goes on in this passage to speak about childlike faith.

He tells us that God has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and has revealed them to little children. What does he mean?

Why is it that some people receive and believe the gospel while others do not? I believe that the first of the seven deadly sins gives us part of the answer.

It is often because of pride. Because of our so-called intellect, our pride. This can be a barrier to knowing who Jesus is. Because some of us are wise in our own eyes, we don't see our need of a saviour compared with those who are humble, childlike and willing to learn.

Those who have a childlike humility know that they are sinners in need of God's grace and forgiveness. As a child, I was brought up to go to church every Sunday.

[9 : 18] We went to the morning service. Sunday school was part of the morning service. We went to the evening service. And we went to a meeting during the week, every week, as I grew up as a child.

But when I became age 16, because of the situation at home, my father had a drink problem. And when he drank, he was abusive. And I'm the eldest of seven children.

And so it was very difficult growing up in that kind of a situation. My mother, bless her, was just a wonderful person. And I thank God for her. But my dad was difficult.

And I left home when I was 16 and I went my own way. I also left church completely. I believe as a child, I had a childlike faith. But I left when I was 16 and I went my own way.

And I have to say that I drifted off and took up the values of the world. Believing, because coming from a family of seven, we were materially poor, that the more I earned, the more money I had, the happier I would be.

[10 : 27] Friends, I can tell you, that's a lie. It's a lie of the devil. I was more happy as a child when we had nothing than I ever was when I began to acquire the things of this world.

And I thank God that aged 34, God brought me back to himself through a meeting in Moffat. And a man called Sandy Thompson, who worked with Messianic Jews in Israel, who helped me to see that God loved me.

Extraordinary as it might seem to me at the time, God loved and loves me. And I didn't know what to pray.

But all I could pray was, God, if you'll have me, here I am. And I believe firmly that it's the same sort of childlike humility that brings a person into a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

See, pride in our own goodness and in our intellect and in our wealth and in our earthly possessions can never mean that we are going to get to know the Lord Jesus.

[11 : 40] We can be so full of our own importance and so blinded by our current beliefs that we fail to acknowledge who Jesus really is. The disciples made this mistake as well, didn't they?

Matthew 18, verse 1, And the disciples came to Jesus and asked, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? How did Jesus respond?

He called a child and put him in the midst of them and said, Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like this child, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. J.C. Ryle, who I quoted earlier, commenting on this passage of scripture again, states, What we all need is a conversion from pride to humility, from high thoughts of ourselves to lowly thoughts of ourselves, from self-conceit to self-abasement, from the mind of the Pharisee to the mind of the publican.

If you turn to Luke chapter 18, Luke chapter 18, chapter 18, verses 9 to 14.

[13 : 24] Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt. Two men went into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector or publican in some versions.

The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get. But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven.

but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful unto me, a sinner. I tell you, said Jesus, that this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. a conversion from pride to humility must be experienced if we have any hope of being saved.

[14 : 38] I've met people who have got good intellectual understanding of who Jesus is or was without actually knowing him at all.

love. The apostle writes that knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

But if anyone knows God, he is loved by God. 1 Corinthians 8, 1. So do you know that you're loved by God this morning?

The one true and living God. When Jesus says, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you've kept these things hidden from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children, by these things he's referring to the message and activities of the kingdom of heaven, which require faith and humility to grasp, and faith and humility are childlike characteristics.

Another commentator wrote, as long as we think that we're something, we'll never be saved. The beginning of the way to heaven is to feel that we're on the way to hell.

[16 : 00] And which, without the intervention of God's love and mercy, we are. Ephesians 2 tells us that without conversion there's no salvation.

We're all by nature children of wrath, deserving God's condemnation. People struggle to understand what God's wrath is.

Surely, if God's a loving God, he cannot be a wrathful God. I understand wrath to mean it's God's just judgment on our transgressions and our sins.

It's not God having a wobbly and thinking some are better than others. It's God's just judgment on our transgressions and sins.

All of us, without exception, need to be born again of the Holy Spirit, becoming new creations in Christ. When we come to God in humble repentance, acknowledging our sin, and casting ourselves on his mercy and grace, we can know and experience forgiveness.

[17 : 08] All our sins, all our sins, are cleansed by the shed blood of the Savior, who died in my place instead, who died in your place instead, on the cross of Calvary, taking my punishment, taking your punishment, so that we might receive a new heart, and a new spirit living within us.

Why did the religious leaders of the day rebel against Jesus? Because they were spiritually and intellectually proud, and therefore blind.

Jesus was a walking parable of the truth. In fact, he was full of grace and truth, writes John, 1 John 14. His simple background made it difficult for the established religious leaders of that time to understand and accept that he is God's son, God's one and only son, God in human flesh.

So to come to Jesus, we must put our trust in him, give our lives to him in humble submission. His arms are always open to those who will humbly come seeking mercy and forgiveness.

forgiveness. This childlike faith and trust in our Heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ is foundational to all that we are and all that we seek to be and do.

[18 : 46] In this morning's passage, the RSV entitles it, Come to me and I will give you rest. Verse 28. Jesus issues an invitation, Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Come, says Jesus. The Pharisees and scribes of that time and even still today say you must do. You must do this and this and this and this if you have any hope of coming to God.

The invitation from Jesus simply come. It's open to all those who are exhausted and burdened this is how people felt under the yoke of Pharisee legalism.

The scribes and Pharisees tried to make the people follow the law of Moses and religious traditions. This included the Ten Commandments which are God given but it also included over 600 other rules and regulations.

Can you imagine trying to keep so many rules and regulations? Many of them were man-made. In other words the message of the Pharisees was your salvation your relationship with God depends on what you do.

[20 : 07] Your salvation depends on how good a person you are and whether you have kept all the requirements of the law. Friends it's impossible in our own strength to keep all the requirements of God's law.

Jesus simply issued an invitation come. Come to me. There's no doubt that the Christian life you might find it different to this but in my experience the Christian life is inescapably a life of toil and labor.

Jesus promises rest for the weary and the troubled. Note that this rest which only Jesus can give is not an absence of physical work or physical labor.

Come to me or you are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Rest for your soul. Verse 29 Eternal rest for all who seek forgiveness of their sins and freedom from crushing legalism and the guilt of trying to earn salvation by keeping the law and doing good works.

one of my favorite verses in the whole Bible is Ephesians 2 verse 8. Paul writes it is by grace you have been saved through faith and this not from yourselves it's a gift from God not by works so that no one can boast.

[21 : 45] Good works do matter but we're saved for good works not by good works we're saved by grace which extraordinarily is the unmerited love of God.

Jesus said come to me the scribes and the Pharisees said you must do this this and yet they never lifted a finger to help those who were struggling.

Hard work hardship and suffering are the lot of every believer as we seek to navigate our way through this sinful world the rest that Jesus promises is the absence of guilt of worry of anxiety a lack of meaning in this life together with the certain hope of eternal salvation.

Jesus promises meaning hope assurance peace and joy even in the troubles we all face and endure.

I never tire of speaking about the love of God in the Lord Jesus Christ never tire because it's the most wonderful good news the world has ever heard.

[23 : 18] It's a free gift to all who will humble themselves and come to Jesus in childlike faith and trust. This morning's Bible passage I agree with J.C. Ryle is full of precious truths do you have eyes to see and hearts to feel their value?

Do you do I have a personal relationship with God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you placed your faith and trust in the finished work of salvation achieved for us by the Lord Jesus Christ in his sacrificial death on the cross?

or are you still burdened with guilt and anxiety desperately trying to find meaning in life? The beauty of what Jesus is saying in this morning's passage is you don't need to unburden yourselves and

then come to Jesus.

The very fact that you're burdened is what qualifies you to come. No payments required. He can't earn God's forgiveness.

It's a free gift of grace. This is who Jesus is to those who come to him. He's a loving saviour, a friend who unlike others will never leave you nor forsake you and who will one day take you home to glory.

[24 : 50] Even in the darkest moments of life, my experience has been that I've known that Jesus is there with me. The picture of the boy I showed jumping into my arms from the monument is no longer with us.

Sadly, he died in 2006. It was heartbreaking. But I know for sure that God was with me in and through all of that and still sustains me to this day.

I pray that you know the saviour in that way. Tonight we're going to be considering verses 29 and 30. See, we can't take the yoke of our Lord upon us and learn from him until we experience the joy of salvation.

until we're born again of the Holy Spirit of God and until we're willing to humbly trust, put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But I'm looking forward to this evening when we think about Jesus saying, take my yoke upon you and learn from me. as we consider the wonderful privilege it is to be disciples of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

[26 : 13] Amen.