

Rest for Your Souls

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. If we haven't gotten a chance to meet yet, my name is Daniel, and I've had the special privilege of coming here with my family for the past nine years or so, since 2016.

And most recently, I've been at Cedarville University, getting my MDiv there. I'm kind of in my fourth year of the MDiv out of a five-year program. And this summer, I've also been able to work here as the intern, and I'm going to be able to work alongside the pastors, which has just been really cool just to see God's faithfulness in their lives and just the way that they love the church and have been serving them. And just learning from and growing from their example has been just a blessing to me. And even just being able to preach this morning is also just an encouragement.

So, if you have a copy of God's Word, would you just please turn with me to Matthew 11, 25 through 30? You can also find this in your pew Bibles in front of you on page 816. But before we begin, let's go ahead and just open with another word of prayer.

God, we come to you as little children who need help. We recognize that you are a great God who is Lord of heaven and earth, and we can depend on you, as we just sang.

And so, God, I just ask that you would help us to come and understand. Open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things from your law. Please help turn our eyes away from looking at worthless things and give us life in your Word. Help us to come to you and to enjoy you, to be satisfied in you, and to seek to glorify you in all that we do. May we worship you together as I preach the Word, and may we be an encouragement to one another as we are gathered together. In your name I pray.

Amen.

[2 : 19] So, I titled this message this morning, Rest for Your Souls, because as we read through this passage, it mentions rest two times. And I believe that rest is the culmination of this passage. And it's also seen in the rest of Scripture, this call to rest. In the beginning of the Bible, we see that God rested from his work on the seventh day, and that he even called his people to rest on the Sabbath and to keep it holy. And even at the very end of the Bible, in Revelation, we see the promise for eternal rest, a rest in God's presence. And I know normally when I think about the idea of rest, it's easy to associate it with just sleeping in or taking a nap, watching my favorite show or movie, or just doing the things that I enjoy, or hanging out with my friends. But when we think about what the Bible calls rest, sure, it involves being able to rest physically, but it goes deeper than that. And it points out that true rest, a rest for your souls, is resting in and coming in the presence of God. And so, not only do we, to those who believe in God, have a hope in a future rest, eternal rest with God, but there's also a call to have a present rest. A rest in the presence of our God, our Savior, Jesus Christ, and his spirit that he gives to all who come. So again, we're going to be reading from Matthew 11, 25 through 30, which says,

So today I just want to hone in on and focus on the call to come and take, and how coming to Jesus and taking his yoke and learning from him leads to true rest for your souls. If you have a bulletin or are taking notes, I'm just going to be walking through these five points. Come to the king. Come as children. Come with your burdens. Come and take. And finally, we'll end with take and rest. So again, my first point is, come to the king. This passage opens in verse 25 with Jesus praying, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, but have revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for such is 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 he chooses to reveal him.

So I want to point out to begin with that Jesus claims to be equal with the Father. We see this in a couple ways. One, both the Father and the Son are active in revealing. We see the Father in verse

25 active in revealing the teachings of the kingdom to little children. And then in verse 27, the Son is active in revealing the Father to those whom he chooses to reveal. Then you also see that the Father is Lord of heaven and earth, and the Son has been given all things from his Father.

[6 : 49] And so you may wonder, okay, so why is it important that the Son claims to be equal with the Father? Why is that significant? Because it is from this equal authority with the Father that Jesus says, come to me. It's astonishing that the Son who is equal with the Lord of heaven and earth would take an interest in us and call us to come. Isaiah 40 kind of paints a picture of who we are as people.

He says that in earlier in the passage that all flesh is like grass and they'll fade away like the flower, but God's word remains forever. But then it says later how we must behold our God and our creator. And even in verse 25 and 26, it says, To whom then will you compare me? That I should be like him, says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and see who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them by name, by the greatness of his might. And because he is strong in power, not one is missing. Our God is a glorious creator.

He is the Lord of heaven and earth. All that we can see in creation is his. The mountains, the oceans, the sunrise and sunsets are all due to God's creation and his power as Lord. But then he also, with his power and authority, handed over all things to his son. And as Paul writes in Philippians 2, it says that, Therefore, God highly exalted him, Jesus, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Jesus rightly claims to be equal with the Father because all things have been handed over to him.

It is to his name that every knee should bow and every tongue confess. Just thinking about who he is as king should be enough reason for us to come to him.

[9 : 15] But not only is he king, he actually calls us. It's shocking that the one with authority over all things, instead of commanding us to come, he actually willingly and openly invites us.

He pleads with us. He pleads with us. He's equal with the Father, and yet he invites and pleads with us to come to him. Throughout Matthew's gospel, he'll actually argue that Jesus is king. And so at the very end of his gospel, he ends with the great commission, which begins by saying, He has all authority, but he is also gentle and lowly of heart.

Again, the invitation is open to all. Not as just one of the ways that we can find rest, but Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

He will say, Come to me and find rest. Take my yoke and find rest for your souls. If you are looking for rest, if you are seeking to be satisfied, look to Jesus.

What does it mean to come to Jesus? Well, the times that I recognize that I'm in need and that I have nothing are the times that I go to places for help. So when I'm hungry, I'll go to places that have food.

[11 : 01] When I'm thirsty, I'll go to places that have water. Or if I'm tired, I'll go to my bed to sleep. If I need to get a lot done, I'll go to a quiet place to work productively.

But God, the Lord of heaven and earth, has the authority and power to meet every need.

There is no need that we have that he cannot meet. And I've heard it said that we aren't to give God just part of our lives.

Instead, we're supposed to give him all of our lives, which I think is true. But I think it can also be hard to understand, okay, what does it mean to give God all of my life?

What does it mean to come to him with all of my life? But when I understand that I have a need, and I need to go somewhere to meet that need, and God is able to meet every need, I think it helps us understand, okay, then I can come to him with my whole life, because my whole life is in need of him.

[12 : 10] And so when I wake up in the morning, my first thought and prayer should be, God, I need you today. Help me as I face various temptations and doubts and worries today.

Help me complete the tasks that I have on my list, or talk with my coworkers and give grace to be patient with my kids, or to enjoy your presence.

God, help me. And then we go to his word, recognizing that he is able to satisfy us, that we can enjoy it.

And when we get to the end of our days, we can also, before going to bed, thank him for his presence and his help and his comfort, that he's come alongside of us, and he's given us what we needed to sustain us and to give us faith each day.

As I've been studying this passage, I realize that I have nothing. I am desperately in need, and I am extremely weak on my own. And so when I come, I come to him with my whole life, because my whole life is in need of him.

[13:29] There's not a single part of me that I do not need God and his sustaining help. So have you come to a point of recognizing you are completely in need of God?

You must submit yourself daily to your King Jesus. Coming to Jesus as our King and submitting to the Father is necessary if we want to find true rest for our souls.

And if you turn back in your Bibles, one page or so, to Matthew 9, 11 through 13, it says, we come to him with our righteousness, seeking to impress him.

We come with our burdens, seeking his help. We come with our sin, our fears, our pain, and our need. And he is able to meet those needs.

I come to Jesus because I am sick and in need of healing. I am blind and I need sight. I am lame and I need to walk. I am unclean, but Jesus can make me clean.

[15:04] I am a sinner, but he can give me and offer me forgiveness. No one else can meet these needs. No one else can give us rest. So come to the King.

Second, we are to come as children. Now, when I think of times when my authorities have called me to come, my first thought is normally, okay, what did I do wrong?

But I think our image of authority has been tainted by culture and it kind of has negative connotations. We see authorities sometimes as distant or insensitive or selfish, but our God is none of these.

So instead, we are also to come as children. There's a difference between the way I come to a boss and the way that I come to a father or someone that I know genuinely loves me.

The father has hidden these things from the wise and understanding, but has revealed them to little children. I don't remember this being true about myself per se, but I can think of a moment where I saw a little child go to the top of this playground.

[16:13] You know, they made the treacherous trek up the playground to the highest slide, but when they got there, they were paralyzed by fear. And when they looked down, they were unable to go down.

So their father patiently came to the bottom of their slide, looked up to their kid, and said, come on, you can do it. In that moment, the child is freed from their fear.

It may still take a couple moments of contemplation, but they're finally able to go to their father. They weren't afraid of their father's call, but they are empowered by it.

As a child, it was the authority of my dad that brought comfort and peace. I knew that when I came to my dad, I knew everything would be okay.

I could come to him with my burdens, my questions, my doubts, and it didn't matter what it was. It didn't matter the fears I faced. I knew that my dad was willing to help me because of his love for me.

[17:28] I knew that he cared for my good and that he could do something about my problems. What did I do to deserve his love for me?

Nothing. As a child, I never did anything that could earn my dad's love. As a child, I had nothing to lose but everything to gain when I came to and listened to my father.

Our heavenly father is Lord of heaven and earth and he has chosen to graciously reveal himself to little children. He reveals himself to those who have nothing to lose, but everything to gain.

The son will show us the glory of God if we come to the cross as needy children. What a privilege it is to know the father and the son.

I get to participate in knowing God. Not because I'm a great person, not because of my wisdom, but because I am a child to whom God has graciously revealed himself to.

[18:48] I am nothing, but God is my everything. The invitation to be called children of God is open to all. Paul even writes in Romans 8, 14 through 16, it says, for all who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

And third, we're going to talk about coming with your burdens. come with your burdens. Are you burdened by the weight of your sin?

Are you constantly controlled by anxiety? Are you relentlessly ruled by fear? Have you surrendered yourself to sorrow?

Are you burdened by thoughts that you are worthless or without value? Are you struggling with thoughts about how you're going to make it? Maybe it's financial stresses or things at work, frustrations with family or friends or medical issues.

[20 : 08] Are you exhausted by your pursuit of just doing the right things? Well, Jesus says to you, come to me. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I, I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly of heart and you will find rest for your souls. Repent, turn away from your sins, confess them and come to Christ.

If you are burdened by fear and sorrow, bring them honestly to Jesus because he will listen and he cares. he offers peace and hope and rest.

The father doesn't reveal them to little children expecting us to bring anything to the table. Jesus calls us to come with our burdens. He doesn't call people have everything figured out.

Jesus calls the weary and burdened and he calls us to come and find rest. Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, people came to him with many burdens.

[21 : 24] If you even look at chapter 11, verse 2, it says, Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to them, 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, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

Jesus' ministry was defined by compassion. He showed compassion to the tax collectors, compassion to the sinners.

He demonstrated compassion to the outcasts, to the sick, to the deaf, to the lame, and he will show compassion to you too. This compassion is founded in Jesus' character.

Father, he is gentle and lowly of heart. He is a merciful and sympathetic high priest who intercedes for us with the Father, and he offers us rest for our souls.

[22 : 38] He says that my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Soon after Jesus rose from the grave, false teachers came into the church and preached that faith alone was not enough and that they had to add works and good deeds in order to earn God's favor, in order to free themselves from these burdens that they bore.

But this is not the gospel. Paul writes in Galatians 3.10, he says, for all who rely on works of the law are under a curse.

And then again in 5.1, he explains the purpose of why we are saved. He says that Christ has freed us.

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Christ has called us to lay down our burdens and legalism. Laying down our good works, trying to earn God's favor, and actually just trusting in God who can provide for us in our need. Where do you find yourself going with your burdens? Do you just find yourself trying to escape? Do you find yourself trying to keep yourself busy?

[24 : 00] Or do you go to Jesus? Do you come to his word and prayer? Do you seek encouragement and counsel from the church and from your leaders? God offers forgiveness for your sins.

He offers hope amidst your trials. He offers peace through his word and through his spirit. Which doesn't necessarily mean that everything is going to become easier.

He may not change your circumstances, but he does offer hope. He's offered his word. He's offered a relationship with him.

So we must not turn to just busyness or escape as a means for rest.

We must come to Jesus. John describes in his gospel that many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. And so Jesus asked the twelve, do you want to go away as well?

[25 : 08] And Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.

We must not turn to anyone or anything else. It is only in Jesus that we can find rest from our burdens. Come as you are. Charles Spurgeon says, without money, come. without merit, come. Without preparation, come. It is just. Come. Come now. Come as you are. Come with your burdens.

Come with your yoke. Though the yoke be the yoke of the devil and the burden be the burden of sin, yet come as you are and the promise shall be fulfilled to you. I will give you rest.

The rest is not earned. It is a gift freely given to those who come. If we had to come on our own, we would stand in fearful judgment.

[26 : 20] But we come with the hope of the cross and the kingdom of Christ in view. We come because Christ called. Fourth, we are to come and take.

again, let me read verses 28-30 again. 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 of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. First, Jesus calls us to come. But what are we to do when we come? We are to take his yoke and learn from him.

For those of you who don't know, a yoke is a tool used in farming to sync up two animals, whether donkeys or oxen or horses, to plow a field or even to move a wagon.

And there is actually a law written in Deuteronomy 20-10 that says that an oxen and a donkey should not be yoked together.

[27 : 31] Well, this law was put in place as practical wisdom because you don't want to have just one animal who's pulling the whole load, whereas the other one is not able to keep up.

You know, we can kind of see this in three-legged races. You don't want to pair two people who are like one person being significantly stronger and taller and faster than the other, because if you do, it's going to actually slow them down and hinder them from being able to run, because they'll be slowed down by the shorter and slower and weaker person, and they'll be pulling along their partner the whole way.

And so, similarly, when you're in yoking up an oxen, you want to have him yoked to another oxen so they can work together and plow together so that one is not more exhausted than the other.

I bring this up because when I think about the call to take the yoke of Jesus, it's shocking that our God would ask us and call us to take his yoke, to share a yoke with Jesus.

It's shocking that the creator would yoke himself to his creature. It doesn't even make sense. So when we come with our burdens, we come with our trials, we come with the things that are weighing us down, and we recognize we have nothing to offer him, and we take his yoke, it's actually a promise because he'll pull us along.

[29 : 14] We'll be the smaller and shorter and weaker person in that three-legged race. He's just going to carry us along the whole way. He has also given us his spirit so that we may walk according to his ways as well in his word.

All the burdens that I have are his, and all that he has is mine. He has unveiled our hearts so we may behold his glory, being transformed in the same image as him, and so that we may be transformed into the next degree of glory to another through the Lord who is the spirit.

We are to look to the life of Christ and imitate him. We are not alone in our pursuit of imitating him as well. He has given us again his spirit so that he may empower us to do this work.

So this is different than legalism because it's not based on our own merit or our own ability. It's actually God himself who empowers us. God himself who draws us and guides us and gives us life and gives us rest.

So finally, we are to take and rest. Again, I titled this message, Rest for Your Souls, because as I've been studying through this passage, I saw that rest is the culmination of this whole passage.

[30 : 48] We cannot find rest unless we come to our king. We cannot find rest unless we come as children. We cannot find rest if we don't come with our burdens.

We cannot find rest if we do not take his yoke and learn from him. True rest for your souls is resting in the presence of God.

The idea of rest is not just equivalent again to getting a little bit of extra sleep, taking a break from work, being able to watch your favorite TV show, watch a movie.

True rest is coming to God, enjoying his presence, inviting him in to all of your life, seeking his help in your need.

True rest is rest for your soul. It is a peace that surpasses all understanding, the freedom that we have from sin and death. It is the hope that we have that God is with us and that he will never leave us nor forsake us.

[32 : 03] It is the assurance that we have nothing to fear. We have nothing to lose but everything to gain. Jesus says, Christ is true rest because he is true joy, true assurance, true fulfillment.

There is no shame when we come to him, no guilt because Jesus has taken that upon himself on the cross. When we encounter various troubles, we can come to Jesus and take his yoke, subjecting ourselves to him.

This is a joyous thing because our God has graciously invited us to take his yoke, to pull us along, to help us on our journey, and through faith may we endure.

My circumstances again may not change. My feelings may not go away. The thoughts I'm wrestling with may continue to play over and over again, but I have an enduring and lasting trust, something that will never change, and I will never fade.

But rest for my soul is found in the promise of the gospel. that is the enduring and lasting and eternal message. Again, we may be burdened by many different things.

[33 : 46] It may be personal sin, feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness, or worry or stress, medical issues, frustrations with family and friends, financial struggles, doubt.

doubt. But when we look at what Christ did on the cross, we can have assurance. We can rest assured knowing the length and depth of his love.

The fact that the son was willing to go to such far lengths in order to save us and offer forgiveness to us. The yoke was made possible through the cross and resurrection.

What is keeping us from coming to him with our burdens? Are we satisfied with our temporary and hollow solutions? Just putting off the things that are burdening us?

Or are we actually seeking to find a solution? Because Christ can meet our needs. He is the solution to all of our needs. God can provide for you if you turn to him and come to him.

[34 : 52] And that is when we find a lasting rest. Paul even admits in 2 Corinthians over and over again. He has faced many persecutions and he gets to this point of saying that while we're on this earth in the bodies that we have right now we groan.

But even though we groan we are looking forward to the day when there would be no more tears and no more pain and that we'll be with God and see him as he is.

are you willing to surrender your circumstances to the Savior and commit your burdens to him? Bring your burdens and bear his yoke for he is gentle and lowly of heart.

You will find rest for your souls. Thank you all for coming. It's been a pleasure of being able to preach God's word and just even seeing all the faces who are here this morning.

So again thanks for coming. Let me go ahead and just close this in a word of prayer. God thank you so much for this promise that you have given. You will provide us rest.

[36 : 04] Thank you for your son who came to live as a human to suffer to be mocked and persecuted and ultimately to die on the cross. Thank you for his example of humility to us and that he is our God and our Savior.

And that you have bestowed on him the name that is above every other name. It's that the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and the glory of God the Father.

May we live in light of these truths this week. Help us to come to you with the various things we encounter this week and just give us a heart of humility to come before you and to seek your help in our time of need.

In your name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.