

# Christ Hidden and Revealed

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 March 2020

Preacher: Rev Iain Thomson

[ 0 : 0 0 ] And we're going to focus on verses 25 through to the end of the chapter.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast heard these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. It would appear from what we read in this chapter that it was a time of great disappointment.

[ 1 : 1 7 ] In verses 1 to 6, we read of John the Baptist doubting whether Jesus was the Christ. And in verses 15 to 19, the general unbelief of that generation, both to the message of John the Baptist and the message of Jesus.

He resembles them to children playing in the playground, because that's where the children would play in the marketplaces. That was their playground as their parents went about the markets.

The children used to play, and as we've all probably experienced, there would be times that, regardless of what we wanted to play, some children didn't want to join in.

So he's comparing them to children that just won't join in, regardless of how the message is presented, or who brings the message. And it would appear that he's especially disappointed with the cities in which he had done so much work, because they still hadn't accepted him.

So as we read of these reasons of disappointment, John's doubting the general unbelief of the people who heard him, and the impenitence of the cities of Israel, it would appear that the discouragements were going from bad to wash.

[ 2 : 5 5 ] So how is Jesus going to respond to all of the discouragements that he sees all around him?

Well, we see that, to begin with, he thanks God. And secondly, he gives an open invitation.

And thirdly, he promises those that attend to that invitation rest. So that's the order in which we want to look at these verses 25 through to the end of the chapter.

First of all, he responds by giving thanks. Now that's a very strange response to all the disappointments that he was seeing all around him.

And very often, when we look at our situations all around us, we find many reasons to be disappointed.

[ 4 : 00 ] But when we look up, we ought to find many reasons to be thankful. And that's what Jesus does.

He doesn't just look at the situations that are all around him confronting him. He's looking up. And he believes that God is fully aware of all of what's happening.

And he believes that God is in control of all that is happening. And he responds by giving him thanks. Giving him thanks for the limitations that he has put on the salvation that he is freely offering to this world.

In verse 25, we read, At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and hast revealed them unto babes.

He's giving thanks that God has hidden his salvation from the wise and the prudent. Because he believes that God orders all things right.

[ 5 : 23 ] God never makes a mistake. And if people aren't accepting the invitation of the gospel, then it's because God has hidden from them the secret of that gospel.

They're not able to see how precious what God is offering to them in that gospel really is. Because the object of the gospel is to dethrone self and to enthrone God.

And if the salvation that is on offer was to be given to the wise and the prudent, it would only lead to feeding our self-ego, as if it's something that we've attained to through our own ability.

But salvation is hidden from those that think they can earn it through anything that they can do. Or anything that they can attain to through exercising their own wisdom.

And if it was given to those who were, naturally speaking, the wise and the prudent, it would defeat the goal of the gospel because God would never be enthroned in our hearts.

[ 6 : 46 ] We would keep ourselves firmly enthroned on our hearts. The kingdom of heaven would then become a scholarship prize. And that would limit the gospel to those who had great intellect.

And if that's who the gospel was to be given to, then it would confine it to a few. But because the gospel is offered to those who humble themselves and become as little children, there is no limitation on the gospel because even the wise and the prudent can humble themselves and become as little children and recognize that what God reveals concerning himself and concerning his salvation is beyond their ability to grasp.

They recognize, I can't understand it. I can't understand how I can be saved. I need to be taught. And you humble yourself, not thinking that you're wise, but recognizing when it comes to spiritual things, I'm spiritually bankrupt, I haven't got a clue.

And if you humble yourself, then God will reveal himself to you. And therefore, the gospel has no limitations because we can all come down to that level.

But we can't all ascend to the level of the intellectually wise and the prudent. Now, the next great thought that comes to the relief of Jesus that dispels his disappointments is that although there are barriers in the hearts of men concerning God, there are no barriers in the heart of God concerning men.

[ 8 : 54 ] And that's what we understand from what he says in verse 27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son.

And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Even at this time when it becomes so apparent that very few want to have anything to do with the salvation that he's offering, he delights in the knowledge of knowing that he is in possession of everything that man needs in order to be saved.

He has the revelation of the Father to reveal to them. He can reveal the Father's love. He can reveal the Father's mercy.

He can reveal the Father's trustworthiness. He can reveal the firm commitment that God has covenanted to give to all who are his people.

and he can reveal that to whosoever comes to him. So there are no barriers on the side of God. All the barriers are on the side of man.

[ 10 : 24 ] Because God has put into the possession of Jesus everything that is necessary for us to come to know God. But nobody will ever come to know God except through Jesus.

But Jesus is inviting people to come to him for that reason with the assurance that if anybody does come to him that he will in no way cast them out.

And that leads him to give a renewed invitation. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Now the invitation that Christ gives is to everyone. And it comes to everyone because everybody in this world is labouring under something.

And from time to time we become aware that we're labouring that we're struggling that we're not coping as well as we would like to cope.

[ 11 : 37 ] Sometimes we feel the weight is too heavy for us to bear. Sometimes we feel as if we've come to the end of our tether that we can't take anymore because we're aware that we are carrying burdens.

Now the invitation is to the worker who labour all week and who feels that they never have enough time to rest.

You sometimes feel you just get up go to work come home go to bed get up go to work come home that you're just caught up in a system that you're a slave to the system.

Well Christ can give you rest because if he gives you spiritual rest you will realise that he has given you bodily rest.

The invitation is to the weary worshipper maybe you're tired coming to church but the invitation is not to come to church and maybe there are some of you here tonight who had second thoughts about whether you would come or not because your desire really wasn't to come but you felt well it's a Sunday of the communions and I usually go out on Sunday of the communions and I think I should go out tonight and you have come out but it's not because you want to come out and if you go every week you feel that it's a burden for you but Jesus is not inviting you to come to church to perform your own religious rituals which you've formed as part of the habits that you practice throughout your life he's saying come unto me and there's a big difference in the invitation to come to church and in the invitation to come unto him because the vital living religion that we all need is an inward thing and when that vital living religion takes a hold of our hearts then coming to church will not be a burden to us because we're coming to meet with the person that we have fallen in love with was it a burden for you to meet with the person that you found as your life's partner it was your delight to meet with them as often as you could meet with them when you fell in love with them so

[ 14 : 38 ] Jesus isn't inviting you to come and perform a religious ritual he's inviting you to enter into a relationship with them and that's what will make the difference between it being a burden and a service of joy when you come to church because the people who have come to know Jesus don't find that it's a burden in fact they would love to come to church every day of the week if circumstances made that possible for them but unfortunately that's not the world that we're living in but they delight to come to him because they have found rest in him it's not merely a performance of religious rituals to them maybe you're weary from self reformation maybe you're afflicted with addictions of drink or drugs or gambling or pornography or whatever that you may have become addicted to and maybe you're aware that it's something that you shouldn't continue to be involved in but you can't escape it you've determined on numerous occasions

I'm going to break this habit only to find that you fall back into the habit because you've become a slave to it and you feel disappointed with yourself well Christ is offering you double rest because not only will he give you power over whatever it is that's enslaved you but he will also pardon you for being a slave to it and you will find a double rest the invitation is also to those who are labouring after pleasure you work all week so that you can go on and join yourselves at the weekend or maybe you're working all week so that you can afford to go on a luxury holiday or afford to buy a luxury car or afford to build a luxury house and afford to furnish it with the most luxurious furniture you can afford to buy the nice clothes that you want to wear and you're labouring in order to get these things and when you get these things you find that they don't really give you the satisfaction that you thought they were going to give you because the new car is going to need looking after it's going to need renewed and you're going to have to keep on working in order to do that the house is the same the clothes is the same the pleasures at the weekend are the same because you've spent your money and enjoying yourself at the weekend only to start the cycle all over again and it's never ending and it might have become wearisome to you because the rest that you're seeking you're never finding in all of these things that you're seeking to find that rest and that peace in the invitation is to those who are labouring and are heavy laden under old age who are labouring and are heavy laden suffering sorrowful it's to all those who are doubters those who are warriors those who are weighed down with the guilt of sin in fact the invitation is as wide as human misery because whatever it is that's causing us to feel that it's a treachery that it's a burden for us to continue living in this world and makes us feel as if we're just breaking under the strain then then he invites us to come to him because regardless of our misery whatever it is that's causing us to be dissatisfied whatever it is that's such a heavy burden for us he's able to alleviate that burden because there was never a man in this world that carried the burden that he carried because he carried the burden of this world sin and because he carried the burden of this world sin he's the only one that can guarantee his rest and that brings us to the third point the promise of

rest that he gives it doesn't matter how we're laboring we find that there are times in our experience that we feel that we cannot take any more of it all labor is as a result of sin maybe not directly our own sin but the fact that we're laboring under anything is because of the curse of sin because this is what God said to our first parents as a result of their rebellion after having provided everything that they needed the one thing he told them that they couldn't have is the one thing that they focused on and thought

I must have it and as a result of failing that test they brought down God's curse upon themselves and rather than God provide everything for them then for them just to live at ease and at rest forever more he said to them from now on by the sweat of your brow you're going to eat bread you are going to labor in order to survive in this world and that's what we're experiencing we're experiencing the curse that sin brought into our experience and the reason that our bodies and our minds have weaknesses the reason that we grow old and the reason that we die and suffer from illnesses is all as a result of sin now in the rest that

Jesus is offering the curse is removed the effects of it still have to be dealt with but the curse is removed and the way that Jesus was able to remove that curse for us was because he himself became the curse and he experienced all the wrath that our sins deserved he suffered what we ought to have suffered and if we think we've got it bad it's nothing in comparison to what's to come if we continue under that curse it's only a small foretaste of the hell that awaits us if we're really miserable and struggling then there's going to come a time when we will really know what misery is when we come under the full wrath of God which is what

[ 23 : 25 ] Jesus took in order to redeem us the rest is not so much what he's going to give to us but what he becomes for us because the literal translation is I will rest you meaning I'm not just going to give you something and leave you to get on with it God I'm going to come into your experience I'm going to be with you you are going to be united with me I will help you to carry this burden I will rest you I will teach you how you should live your life in a way that you will receive God's blessing he invites us to take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls Jesus is inviting us to become his disciples when he asks us to take his yoke upon us and he professes that he is meek and lowly in heart gentle and lowly in heart heart now this is a promise to be kind and to be patient with those who are slow learners in his school the lessons are hard but the teacher is never hard now we've all had experiences of teachers experiences of brilliant teachers who dazzled us with their own abilities but who went right over our heads because they couldn't come down to our level and they didn't have the patience to try and teach us what they knew and if we couldn't keep up with them then tough because they weren't really concerned that they impart the knowledge that they obviously had they were more concerned to display to us that they had this knowledge that they were clever that they had attained brilliance and they dazzled us but we didn't learn much from them because they went right over our heads and we couldn't learn from the austere teachers because they paralysed us with fear and when you're paralysed with fear you can't take in what the teacher is teaching you you're not focused on that because you're terrified but that's not the kind of teacher

Jesus is we're not going to be paralysed with fear he's going to come down to our level he's going to take as much time as it's going to take in order for us to learn from him he's going to be patient with us he is me and lowly in heart when we accept Christ not only do we accept pardon but we also receive teachings that will enable us to live lives that will give us satisfaction lives that we will experience the peace of God in our hearts because he is giving us rest we receive his pardon we receive his righteousness he rests us and he enables us to do God's will and our life will then not be about making decisions what am I going to spend this money on how much how many hours do

I have to work what attainments must I get in order to get this profession it's not going to be about these choices he's made the choices for us what we're going to learn is how to live the way that he wants us to live he's going to reveal God's will to us so that we will learn what's going to glorify God and when we're successful in glorifying God then we get enjoyment out of it we get satisfaction we get rest we get peace in our hearts money can't buy this peace the richest people in the world can't afford this peace they haven't got enough money because this salvation was purchased with nothing less than the blood of the son of

God money can't buy that this is the peace that Christ purchased for sinners such as you and I this is what's on offer here the rest that he promises he's going to liberate our wills going to liberate our souls he's not going to come with a new set of tyrannical rules that we have to adhere to and that's what a lot of people imagine the Christians are living under they can't do this they can't do that they must go to church they must read their Bibles they must pray that's not the rules that God gives to his people for them to fulfill these rules in order to receive his blessing the Christian doesn't go to church because he has to go to church he doesn't read his

Bible because he has to read the Bible he doesn't pray because he has to pray he does all of these things because he's been liberated to do them in order to grow more in his relationship with God it's something that he delights to do doesn't do it because he has to do it he does it because this is where he finds rest for his soul because this brings him into our relationship with God this is what we were reminded of this morning that Christ death has reconciled us to God so that we can have communion with God this is the communion season to remind us of how we can have communion because all things have been given to Christ as we've already seen and Christ is able to reveal

[ 30 : 52 ] God the father to us now many people believe in a God James tells us the devils believe in God and they tremble but we by nature haven't got the sense to tremble even although we believe in God because we don't understand what God is or who he is but Jesus makes it possible for us to get to know the living and the true God not the God that Satan has convinced you of that God is because if you're unconverted in here tonight Satan has convinced you that God is a tyrant and that God demands that you must do this you must do that and you must do the next thing that's not the true God that's the God Satan wants you to believe in so that you will never come to him but

Jesus reveals the true God the generous God the merciful God the trustworthy God he reveals to us the true God he has all that in his possession to give to us and that's what gives us rest in our souls because that's what's caused all the unrest in our experience our ignorance of God the darkness that came into our minds concerning God but Jesus has brought light into that darkness he has brought light into this world to reveal to us the true God that wants us to be at rest with him that wants us to experience his peace and what the Christian does in the service of

God is not something that he has to do it's something that he wants to do just as you look after a loved one not because you have to look after them but because you want to look after them why because you love them and God so loved us that he gave us his only begotten son that whosoever would believe in him would not have to perish but receive everlasting life and that gives us hope and that's what this world needs it needs hope and when you're laboring for something that you know is going to endure and will never pass away when you're laboring for the treasures that God has laid up for you in heaven which no man will be able to rob you of which nothing will be able to corrupt it gives you a purpose to live because you see that this is the life that

God wants you to enjoy this is the life that's on offer in the gospel this is the life that Jesus came to give to us the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life and when you receive that life you receive rest because you've arrived you find what you've always been looking for not in the new car not in the new house not in the drugs or the drink or the sex or the pornography or whatever it's to be found in Christ that's what our hearts are yearning for that's what's missing in our lives peace with God finally I want to ask you how are you going to respond to this invitation because the invitation is coming from

Christ come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest to come as we are throughout the gospel it's made clear that it's sinners that were drawn to Christ they came as they were in their sins we're not to dress ourselves up we're not to try and make ourselves better thinking that that's going to make us more acceptable it'll never make us acceptable regardless of how well we dress ourselves up it's like the fig leaves that our first parents dressed themselves up with God said that's not going to cover your nakedness he provided a covering that would cover their nakedness and that's what God is offering he's offering us to come as we are and he has made the provision that will meet all of our needs come he says in another place for all things are now ready we don't have to because we can't do anything to earn our salvation

[ 36 : 30 ] God has done it for us and all he's requiring of us is that we accept it come for all things are now ready now if you refuse this invitation let me tell you why you're going to refuse it you're going to refuse it because you think you're wiser than Christ you think you know better how to live your life than he does you're going to make your own decisions because you think your decisions for your life is far better than the decisions that he makes for your life so what you're actually doing is you're making yourself wiser than God and that's why you will refuse the invitation you refuse to accept that it's as good as it sounds because

Satan has caused you to doubt that God is as generous and as loving as he really is and don't think that you can get off with it by saying well that's all very well but the invitation isn't really for me well let's look at the invitation what does it say come unto me all not some not the person sitting next to you come unto me all ye that labour can you say that you not labouring can you say that you've never laboured that you've never struggled that you've never thought I can't take any more of this why am I doing this to myself well if you know that that's the truth the invitation is for you because it's to all ye that labour and are heavy laden and that includes all of us because we all labour and we all feel that we're at the end of our terror at times and the promise is not to the person sitting next to you the promise is to you because he says

I will give you rest and if you fall into the first category you fall into the second category if you find yourself amongst the all then it's you that he's speaking to I will give you rest I will rest your soul and if you go out of here tonight choosing once again to refuse this invitation which you've probably had several times or maybe numerous times in your life and if you die before you wake up in the morning you're not going to be able to stand at the judgment seat and say to God well I didn't come because you didn't invite me because if this was the first time you heard the gospel then you are without excuse because you've been given the invitation and it's up to you what you're going to do with that invitation because you're not going to be able to accuse

God at the judgment seat that he didn't invite you because we see from the words of the invitation that all of us are invited and the promise is unto all of us and the barriers are not on God's side the barriers are on our side and if we choose to reject the invitation it's because as Jesus said he has hidden it from the wise and the prudent because you think yourself wiser than God and you think you know how to live your life better than he does well may God grant that he would give us mercy for acting the way that we do act so often with the insolence that we conduct ourselves with in thinking that we know better than God does may he have mercy upon our souls and whilst we're still on mercy's ground may he enable us to accept this invitation and may we give him the opportunity to demonstrate to us that there is far more in the invitation than we would ever could imagine the invitation is for an abundance of good things that will make our lives worth living and give us a reason to hope for the future that lies ahead of us may

God grant that he would bless to us these thoughts let's pray