

Come unto Me.....and I will give you Rest

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[0:00] As the Lord enables us, let us again turn to this chapter we read from Matthew's Gospel, chapter 11. And consider in particular verses 28 to the end of the chapter.

Where the Lord Jesus says, 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. We see from the earlier part of the chapter that despite the Lord's preaching and miracle working, there were many who continued unrepentant in the land of Israel.

And we see, for example, at verse 16, the attitude that some had who were there.

To what, Jesus says, 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.

[1:45] We sang a dirge and you did not mourn. 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, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

It is as if whoever came and whatever people said, it was not going to please these people.

There are some people maybe in the world still like this. The sermon might be too long or it might be too short. Too much theology, too little theology.

This, that and the other thing in relation to the gospel. And people just cannot be pleased because they have an estimation of things in their own mind.

And whatever somebody else says or does, it really doesn't fit the space that they've created in their own mind and heart.

[2:56] And that even went for Jesus and John the Baptist. They weren't up to the standard or expectation of these people. Therefore, they continued in their sin because they didn't receive the news, the good news of the gospel.

And then you see the cities mentioned in verse 20 onwards. Woe to you, Chorazin, and woe to you, Bethsaida.

And then he comes on and talks about Capernaum. Exalted up to heaven with the real privilege of having had the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only present there, but teaching and preaching there and performing miracles there.

And despite the fact that Jesus was there and preaching and teaching and performing miracles, these people were so hard against his message and against his person that they didn't receive him.

And the Lord Jesus said it would be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for Capernaum. Capernaum, with its privileges, exalted as it were up to heaven.

[4:15] But now, because they refused the gospel, they have the day of judgment to face up to and an eternity of woe.

And then in verse 25, and this I'm really highlighting these things before I come to my, to highlight three points. In verse 25, Jesus declares, These things being the gospel teachings.

These things meaning the things of the Spirit and the things of the kingdom of God. And because these cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum and the people who couldn't be pleased were so wise in their own conceits and so self-sufficient in their own estimation of themselves, the Lord said, I'm going to leave you the way you are.

God in his wisdom left them in their hardness. And he says he's going to reveal the gospel glories to little children.

People who are low in their own estimation of themselves. See how interesting it is the Apostle Paul takes this very point up in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 26, when he says, Consider your calling, brothers.

[5:57] Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

And God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.

And so on. People who aren't wise in their own estimation. People who really are open to receiving the good news of the gospel because they feel that they have so much need of things from heaven.

And this is where Jesus comes with these marvelous words from verse 28 onwards. And three points there. He gives an authoritative command.

Come to me. And he makes that command known to all who labor and are heavy laden. I want to say a few words about that.

[7:13] Secondly, he gives a sure promise. Verse 28. I will give you rest. Those who are laboring and are heavy laden.

The Lord says, I will give you rest. And that gospel rest is, as it were, the first installment of an eternal rest.

When we come into fellowship with Jesus Christ through faith in the gospel, we know the peace of God. And that peace is, as it were, the first installment or an earnest of the everlasting peace that people of God will have in heaven.

And thirdly and finally, there are urgent words of guidance. In verse 29. Addressed to those who come and place their trust in Jesus.

He says, take my yoke upon you. Learn from me. 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.

[8:29] Firstly then, this authoritative command that Jesus gives. Come to me. I mean, it's authoritative from the point of view that in verse 27, Jesus says, all things have been handed over to me by my father.

He has authority to make this invitation or to give this command. Jesus Christ has. And he says, I have authority to give you eternal life.

I have authority to send light and understanding into your hearts and into your lives. I have power to do so. And he gives the command here.

Come to me. Come to me. It's amazing the number of times that command or invitation is given throughout the Gospels and throughout the Scriptures.

When you go to the book of Genesis, certainly in the authorized version, the word says, to Noah, come into the ark.

[9:50] Although in some of the later versions of the Scriptures in English, it says, go into the ark. It's the same word in the Hebrew. It can be translated, come or go.

It means move. And God says to Noah, come into the ark. It's the only place of safety. And Moses also says in Numbers chapter 10, to Hobab, come thou with us, and we will do you good.

The Lord says to the people in Isaiah's day, come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Come. Come into the fellowship of the Lord. We see, of course, in Isaiah 55, come everyone that thirsteth.

Come ye to the waters. And he who has no money, come buy and eat wine and milk without money and without price. Come. The Lord is giving this repeated invitation and gives this repeated command to those whom he knows who are needy.

[11:15] And the Lord Jesus here does exactly the same. He knows what their needs are. He knows what your needs are.

He knows what my needs are. And he focuses on the need of these people using these words. Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden.

He doesn't specify what causes them to be labouring or be burdened with weights.

It could be problems in relation to your own circumstances in your family that burden you. Circumstances in relation to your own health.

Circumstances in relation to your work or your finances. Whatever burdens they are, the Lord knows what your needs are.

[12:19] And he says if you come to him he is able to give you rest. But I think there is a higher level or shall I say a more important level of need that the Lord has in mind when he says come to me all who labour and are heavy laden.

The Lord knew very well the way the Pharisees were requiring of these people to fulfil all of these laws.

Hundreds of laws over and above the Ten Commandments. and they were burdened with them and they were labouring under the weight of them and they couldn't fulfil all of these laws and the Lord Jesus says come to me and I will give you rest.

But I think there is maybe even a deeper level of meaning before the Lord's mind and that is that people can be burdened greatly with a sense of their need as sinners before God.

That they realise from the teaching of the scriptures and the witness of the spirit of God within them that they are lost sinners by nature and that there is nothing that they themselves can do to alleviate the burden of this consciousness of sin and feeling of guilt before God.

[14:02] Maybe that's exactly the way you feel here this evening. That you feel impure and unclean because of your sin. That you feel guilty in the presence of God because he has highlighted to you the secrets of your heart and the secrets of your life and they are not pleasant to get to know in the light of God's law because God's law is holy and upright and he shows you how unholy you are and how far short of the mark you are coming.

Maybe once you became aware of your sin in that particular way you started trying to reform your life. You stopped going to places that you had been going to before.

You stopped talking the way that you had been speaking before. It's as if you turned around by a few degrees and you were going in a slightly different direction and you were hoping that that was going to improve your life.

but the further along that particular road you go, you realise that you haven't really shaken off this burden at all.

You haven't improved your life at all. It's as if you are heading in the same general direction although maybe you're not as involved in outward sins as you were at a previous time in your life.

[15:47] And Jesus comes and he knows every aspect of our sin. He knows our sins of omission things we ought to have done and we haven't done.

He knows our sins of commission things we have been doing that we ought not to have been doing. He knows our sins against light in the teaching of God's word and your knowledge of God's word there are many things you know you shouldn't have been doing and you were sinning against light and you sinned and sinned again and again.

And maybe you have come to the end of that way of thinking and the Lord knows that you're at an end of yourself. Just like that woman who had the issue of blood.

remember in the gospel and she had this issue of blood for 12 years and of course that brought so many complications into her life because under the ceremonial law in Israel at that time she was unclean and whatever seat she sat on was unclean any bed she would lie on would be unclean anybody she touched would be unclean in the eyes of the law it's as if she really was burdened in that way and she went to the doctors and she went to another one and another one and another one and over the years they took her money but didn't give her any relief from her problem and that's the way many people still are they go to the doctor of self-improvement or self-reformation they go to various doctors and these doctors take all your money and take everything from you but never give you health and never give you forgiveness but God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life and here we have that glorious son of

God saying come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden every one of you doesn't matter who you are maybe you've rejected the gospel before well the invitation is here this evening once more maybe you've shrugged off the strivings of the spirit of God before in your life maybe you think that you have escaped it but the Lord Jesus here presses the point again and he says with an authoritative command come to me there is no other way by which you can be freed and relieved of your burden of sin remember the marvelous picture that John Bunyan draws for us in the pilgrim's progress when a Christian sets forth from the city of destruction with his burden upon his back and he flees people who are trying to stop him from going he says

[19:20] I want life life eternal life and he reached the cross and he looked up to the cross at the crucified saviour and only then looking with the eye of faith at the crucified saviour to disburden fall of his back and he burst into song and he said blessed cross blessed sepulchre blessed rather be the man that there was put to shame for me that's the man who's calling with this wonderful and authoritative command here this evening and he says come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest it's the first thing but the second thing is that he gives a marvellous promise and the promise is in that really that phrase

I will give you rest rest rest is an amazing word isn't it rest from your labour rest from an accusing conscience rest from the power of the evil one dominating your life isn't it amazing that the power of Jesus Christ is greater than the power of your sin greater than the power of Satan greater than the power of darkness that would seek to destroy you not only physically but spiritually and eternally how did and how does the Lord Jesus Christ give us rest well if we are going to focus on our sin as being the prime matter that causes us to be burdened and to be labouring so heavily he has dealt with sin do you remember the marvellous words spoken by John the Baptist when he said behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world

John the Baptist saw Jesus as the one who was at that time bearing the sin of the world and he was bearing it every step of the way until at last he paid the price for it upon the cross of Calvary there is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus those who believe in Christ who bore in himself the punishment for our sin who bore in his own body the punishment of the sins of his people he is the one alone who is able to give us real and true rest rest in fellowship with God rest in fellowship that is so marvellous and so heavenly and so blessed that nothing and no one in the world can give it but himself there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved gospel rest the peace of God that passes all understanding isn't it marvellous the elements we have in this rest or in this peace we have an assurance of

God's love well that's an amazing statement isn't it we are assured that God loves us in the midst of the difficulties and trials of life if we have the assurance that somebody who is with us our family around us love us and support us that's an amazing thing but if we know that God loves us and he loves us with an everlasting love a love that doesn't change that cannot decrease because it's an everlasting love just like he is an everlasting God himself assurance of God's love peace of conscience what an amazing thing that is for those who have been bothered with a guilty conscience an accusing conscience because you have been breaking

God's law and breaking the law repeatedly knowing that every sin deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life and the life which is to come but when the blessing of God comes the rest of God comes we have peace of conscience because Christ gives us that peace my peace I give unto you not as the world gives give I unto you let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid the other element in this rest is joy in the Holy Ghost joy in the Holy Spirit joy in the Holy Spirit well you thought in your young days carefree days that you knew what joy was and in a restricted sense you probably did have much joy and there is legitimate joy also in the life of people in families but this joy in the

[25 : 55] Holy Spirit has a heavenly dimension that the earth cannot supply it is knowing that joy and peace with God that is saving and of salvation and there is also an increase of the grace that God gives you in this peace peace it's as if the whole blessing of being in fellowship with Christ is something that continues and increases increase of grace grace the apostle Peter commands those to whom he's writing in the second epistle grow in grace and in the knowledge of your

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ so we grow in the grace of faith and hope and love and the graces that God has planted in our hearts he gives us to grow in these graces so that it's as if we have more understanding of the rest and the peace that God has given to us remember they used to say that when you first started following the Lord and knew the blessing of God first of all much of what you were aware of was in the emotions you knew the joy of it all but as time went on it's as if the blessing that focused to your understanding in the emotions at the beginning seems to settle more into your thinking and when you know

Jesus Christ today having been on the road as a Christian for many years there are aspects of his person that you understand better than ever you have done aspects of his work that you understand better than ever you have done aspects of the grace that he supplies to you in the face of adversity that you know more about now than you did before I will give you rest I will give you this security because I have come into your life with my blessing but that asks the question what does it mean to come to the Lord Jesus when he says come to me does it mean just come to church does that come into Jesus does it mean come to the

Bible and read it is that coming to Jesus does it mean come and be baptized or come to the Lord's table is that coming to Jesus well not of itself coming to Jesus as he requires it of us here is a coming in faith a coming and trusting in him alone for salvation as he is freely offered in the gospel lean upon him rely upon him cast your all upon him alone so that you might be saved Jesus says come to me and coming to him means Lord I come and commit myself to you in faith I rely upon you and lean upon you alone your person and your finished work for time and for eternity

I think I mentioned this already in the Song of Solomon chapter chapter 8 I think it is the question is asked who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved and of course it is the church of Christ she is coming up from this wilderness the wilderness of life and she finds it hard because it is an uphill struggle but she is leaning upon him casting all her burdens upon him her soul's affairs for time and for eternity leaning upon him whose grace is sufficient and whose strength is made perfect in our weakness true promise I will give you rest and of course I mentioned at the very beginning that the rest you have through faith in

[31:23] Jesus here it's an earnest it's the beginning of an eternal rest into which all of God's people go at the end of life's journey they shall rest from their labor and their works to follow them what an amazing prospect that is thirdly then and we have here in verse 29 some guidance that the Lord makes known to us having come to him he now says 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 take my yoke upon you in the olden days I suppose people found it easy to understand what that meant I'm sure most of you know what the word yoke means also but just in case you don't the yoke was a piece of wood shaped to accommodate the shoulders of animals that were used to pull a plough or to pull a cart beasts of burden two of them together and there was this shaped piece of wood put over their shoulders so that they would be kept together as they pulled the burden along and

Jesus says take my yoke upon you I believe that he says this in contrast to the yoke of sin in which they have already been you see in an unconverted condition Satan is your opposite in the yoke as you plough the furrow of life Satan is with you you think you're alone you're not alone at all he is there and he is keeping you in his dark furrow and he is whispering his language into your heart and into your mind and he encourages you to continue ploughing his land that will bear awful destructive fruit for your heart and life but when you come to

Jesus you cast off the yoke of Satan and you come to Jesus and he says you take my yoke upon you my yoke yoke I'll be with you in the plough I'm your best friend I'm the one whose grace is sufficient for you I'm the one who is going to instruct you to lead you and enable you to plough a God glorifying furrow and live a God glorifying life and live a life that will magnify and glorify the name of Christ and bear much fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life take my yoke upon you who would want to be in any other yoke apart from the yoke of Christ well he says take my yoke and learn from me sit at my feet listen to my voice obey my commandments do what

I say I have your best interests at heart because you are heading for eternity and it is my grace that is going to enable you to live to God's glory and at last to go into my nearer presence in heaven learn from me I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls maybe you're here this evening restless the world has promised you much it's disappointed you again and again Christ will never disappoint you when he says I will give you rest that's exactly what he will give if only you would come when he says take my yoke upon you my yoke is easy and my burden is light he means it in comparison to the yoke of sin and the yoke of

Satan the yoke of Jesus is light and a pleasure somebody was trying to explain what the Lord Jesus here is saying when he's talking about a yoke being light and he says it's something like wings to a bird when you see a bird flying the wings take him heavenward Jesus is yoke and burden aren't bringing us down they actually lift us up just like sails to a sailboat the sails fill with the wind and carry the sailboat along so it is with Jesus's marvellous yoke and burdens his burden is light in comparison to the burdens of sin and iniquity where are you this evening are you something like the people of

[37 : 43] Korazan and Bethsaida who despite the number of conversions you've seen in this community you still retain your hardness of heart against the gospel are you something like these people who didn't like John the Baptist austerity and on the other hand who didn't like the Lord Jesus mixing with people and sinners nothing can please you well Jesus says come to me I'll not disappoint you ask for him to give you grace to come and commit yourself to him now for time and for eternity may God bless these thoughts to us let us pray spoke to parents of can the Beatles I know

I know for