

# I Will Give You Rest

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Preacher: David Moser

[0:00] 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.

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.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Let's pray. Father, as we come to this most incredible passage, will you give me clarity of speech to make this clear to us?

And Lord, will you, by the power of your Spirit, show us yourself in your word? Lord, may we come to be in awe of you today.

[1:30] And find in you our hope and our rest. We pray that in the name of Jesus, who speaks these words to us.

Amen. This week, I told my community group, hey, you know, battle the snow. I really, really want to preach this passage, and I really, really want to preach this passage.

I'm very excited about it. Few passages have excited me quite like this one. It is special to me.

The great British preacher, however, Dick Lucas, said of this passage, this section is so well known. But like other passages in the New Testament, for example, he said, 1 Corinthians 13, that's the one that everybody reads at weddings. Everyone is moved by it, and no one understands it.

[2:39] We're going to walk through this passage backwards, from its end to its beginning. That's for a few reasons. First, just because it's easier for my brain to do it.

Second, it is helpful to begin with the end in mind. If you drive out of your driveway without a destination in mind, you will never get there. And likewise, if Jesus is building up to this idea in verse 28, the rest there, it helps us to understand that the rest of the passage is going to be building there.

And so if we've got the end in mind, then we understand the pieces that lead to it a little bit better.

Third, with very good reason, verse 28 is one of the most beloved passages in all the Bible.

So if we don't start there, our hearts are going to start there anyway. And finally, I am convinced that verse 28 is actually not the center of this passage.

Verse 27 is. The promise of rest rises from the primary glory. And what Jesus is going to do in verse 27 is he is going to pull back the curtain, the fabric of the universe, and show us something.

[4:04] Something of the everlasting triune God. And it is only from there that our rest emerges. So in honor of walking through this passage backward, this week I learned how to moonwalk.

Don't believe me. All right, so let's begin with the end in mind. Verse 28. 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.

Jesus is calling people to himself for rest. And the first thing we must see is who is he calling? He says all who labor and are heavy laden.

When our minds, when we hear this, our minds probably go to something like stress and anxiety, right? Does life feel like toil to you?

Do you feel you're overburdened? Are you approaching burnout? This passage is for you. But Jesus here uses some of the most broad terms that he could use, right?

[5:27] Even if you're not battling anxiety, who isn't laboring over something, striving for something? Who doesn't feel some burden? These categories exclude no one.

Jesus calls the whole world, you included, to himself for rest. So this also applies to being heavy laden with all sorts of things.

For instance, guilt and shame. Guilt and shame before people. We live in a brave new world of what's called the call-out culture.

America is starting to regress into an honor-shame society, I think, which can rapidly and thoughtlessly destroy people's lives.

And friends, the idea of a scarlet letter, a public, lasting, irredeemable shunning, friends, that is from Satan.

[6:27] It is not. It has nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our burden can be guilt and shame before God.

John Chrysostom was perhaps the greatest preacher of the ancient church, and he said, Sin, too, has labor and a burden that is heavy and hard to bear.

And experience proves this. For nothing so weighs upon the soul and presses it down as consciousness of sin. Nothing so much gives it wings and raises it on high as the attainment of righteousness and virtue.

And I take that to mean that sin takes effort. Effort to act out. Effort to clean up. To bear its guilt on our shoulders.

This also includes the heavy burdens of sadness and grief and loss and depression. This includes, Jesus terms here, the burdens of what other people have done to us, what they have failed to do.

[7:46] The heavy burdens of medical distress or financial pressures. The heavy burdens of mental health issues. The heavy burdens of abuse.

Be they physical or verbal or sexual or abuses of authority. These can burden us to the point where we feel we can't even cry out for help.

And friends, if that is you today or if that's somebody you know today, get help. Jesus Christ died for you. That's how much he values you. He does not want people trapped in abuse.

This includes the heavy burdens of other people's expectations. Or the ones we think they have. Things like body image or our professional image or the image of our parenting success.

This can include the heavy burdens of our own unmet expectations. For relationships or accomplishments or bank accounts, we feel as if there's a judgment hanging over our heads that says failure until we've made it to our own expectations.

[8:55] Friends, there are so many kinds of burdens. This list of labor and burden goes on and on. No one is free from it. Which means Jesus calls everyone who would hear.

To you and to your loved ones. To those who are near. Those who are far off. To those you and I dislike. To every person God made in his image, he makes this call.

What is it? He says, come to me. Jesus intends that we find rest in a particular place. He doesn't say, go to your happy place.

Mine happens to be a chocolate factory inside a theological library with no kids. This is not self-discovery.

Jesus doesn't say, find yourself and you will give yourself rest. And friends, if you think about it, that's a message that our culture says all the time. Find yourself and you'll be complete and satisfied.

[10:02] If you really think about that, that's actually a huge burden. And it's one that many people bear. Find yourself and you will give yourself rest.

It is not go recharge. He doesn't say, take a vacation and you will purchase for yourself some rest. He says, come to me.

And I will give you rest. As Sinclair Ferguson put it, instead of teaching lessons, Jesus says that he himself is the lesson.

Jesus says, come to me and I will give you rest. And it's those two things. Come to me and I will give you rest. That convinced me that verse 27 is in fact the center of this passage.

The rest is found in Jesus. And he has just previously in verse 27 revealed something incredible about himself.

[11:09] And I think that is where this rest comes from. And where we must devote our attention. He is the source and the substance of our rest.

Look with me to verse 27. He says, 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.

When we read through this passage, this seems to come out of nowhere. This passage feels at its first reading very disjointed. Verses 25 and 26, he's talking about God revealing or concealing some stuff to some people.

Verse 27, he's talking about knowledge of one to the other. Verse 28 to 30, something about rest. It seems like it's just random sayings assembled together.

In fact, verse 27 doesn't even seem to connect to itself, does it? The beginning and the end don't seem to be about the same thing. He begins, all things have been handed over to me by my father.

[12:23] Now we would expect him to conclude that thought with, here, have some of this, all things. Have some of my stuff. But that's not what he says. It seems as if he switches topics midway through.

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. He starts talking about the gift of all things and then finishes talking about knowing the father.

And then suddenly verse 28 is about rest. What's going on here? First, I want to assure you there is a beautiful unity to this passage.

The rest that Jesus offers you is built on this unusual saying in verse 27. And it is so much deeper than your happy place or vacation.

In other words, this passage does make sense and the payoff is huge. But this is going to get worse before it gets better. That is to say that we are about to dive into the deepest idea in all of reality.

[13:45] The relationship between the father and the son. And we are going to see that God as he is, is the substance of our rest.

So I am going to stop right now and pray for us because I need God's help to be clear here. And we need, we need his heart.

We need his help in our hearts to see him as he is. So let's pray. Father in heaven, will you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, give us strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of you, the triune God.

And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. So that we leave this passage with such truth to hold on to.

That we will run to the son for perfect rest. We pray that in his name. Amen. Amen. This topic of God.

[15:10] God, as he is in himself, is a heavy, weighty idea. It is difficult to get your head around.

But I believe in you. And what's more, I believe in God. His power to reveal himself to us by his spirit and through his word.

To help us out, I'm going to give you sort of the map explaining where we're going. First, we are going to pay careful attention to verse 27. We are going to see that Jesus is revealing something about the nature of God.

Specifically, he's showing us a part of the mystery of the Trinity. Christians throughout the ages have used that term to refer to the way God has revealed himself.

One God eternally existing in three persons. And here's the kicker. Today, when Jesus shows us one part of this mystery, we won't be able to wrap our heads around it.

[16:12] It's not just complex. It is fully transcendent. We will be able to affirm the truths that he reveals to us.

But we will not fully understand it. Because it is too great a mystery. Therefore, on the basis of that, because it's too hard for us, because it is too great and too lofty for us, when we contemplate this fact, the fact that his very existence is beyond our full comprehension, we will begin to see how

much higher his ways are than our own.

And from that position of awe and humility, that is when we will be able to find the rest Jesus is talking about in verse 28.

So again, Jesus is going to reveal something about the triune God. That thing will be too great for us to handle fully in our minds.

And it is exactly that. The fact of him, the fact that he is so much greater than us, incomprehensibly greater than us, that will prompt us to awe and worship and finally rest.

[17:46] Because we can trust him. Even when we can't see what's going on, we can understand that he who is past our understanding holds everything, including our lives, in his hands.

That very fact, the knowledge of his incalculable greatness, is why we can trust and rest in him.

Jesus says, 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.

The living God is not a bigger version of you or of me.

He's not like the fictitious gods of Greek mythology that were essentially just supersized human beings playing out a supersized but very human soap opera in the sky.

Right? He's not just bigger. He is fundamentally different. Look with me at the end of the verse.

[19:06] How do you and I come to know the Father? He has to be revealed to us. Now, look at how Jesus, the Son, knows the Father.

He does not need the Father to be revealed to him. Neither does the Son need to be revealed to the Father.

Jesus has a unique knowledge of the Father. It is not revealed. He already naturally knows the Father.

He has an intrinsic knowledge of him. No revealing required. You and I only know one person, naturally and intrinsically, our own selves.

The only person I can say I know without any active communication is me. And that's what the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him?

[20:17] See, I don't have direct access to anyone else's thoughts or emotions or desires unless they reveal them to me. Everyone else, even those closest to us, our closest family and our friends, they have to, as Jesus says, reveal themselves to us through their words and their actions.

To know anyone, we must speak with them. We must observe them. Work with them. Watch them. Or we won't know them. We have to learn about them. For example, in my life, I'll just give the example of my wife.

And you might put into your thoughts right now the person you know best in this world. See if it does not correspond to this experience. I guarantee you it does.

The person I know best in this world is my wife. But everything, every single thing I know about her has been revealed to me.

First, I didn't know that she ever existed until I was 19 years old and I met her at the academy. I'm 33 now. I'm 33 now.

[21:30] So I didn't even know that there was such a person for more of half my life so far. My spirit didn't and couldn't produce a knowledge of her on its own.

Her very existence had to be revealed to me. Second, once we met, I didn't know a thing about her. It took more than a year before either of us was even interested in the other.

It was me. I wanted her bad. But she wasn't impressed. I had to get to know her. To learn about her. Before I even wanted to pursue her.

I needed not only her existence but also her person to be revealed to me. That wasn't something I could come up with on my own.

I had no innate knowledge of her. She had to communicate it to me. Third, I'm still learning more about her as we live our lives.

[22:31] We're in our 11th year of marriage and I'm still learning about her. That means that my knowledge of her is true but not full. No matter

how extensive, it is not complete ever.

I know her truly but I will not know her fully because the scriptures and common sense say that the only person who knows the thoughts of a person is that person and their spirit within them.

I am not inside her spirit. I don't know her every thought, her every feeling or desire. I only know what she communicates to me.

What she reveals to me. Her very existence was news to me. Her personality was something I had to discover. The depths of her person are being revealed to me over a lifetime.

I do not know her exhaustively. I only have and you only have access to another person through their communication as they reveal themselves to you.

[23:37] With their words and their deeds. This is true of every relationship in our lives. Every relationship we ever have is a revealed one.

We do not begin with complete knowledge of one another. We learn about someone and they learn about us by words and actions and we can all decide what we will show, what we will withhold from one another.

However, even the closest relationships are at some distance from each other because we cannot see the inner man. Which is why, first, always keep learning your spouse and your children and your church family.

Which is why, also, we do our very best to foster open and honest and vulnerable conversation in our community groups. Because no one here is a mind reader. And this church family can only build one another up to the degree that we know what's going on with each other.

Also, which is why Jesus is so different. And Jesus is so glorious. Because this is not the way he knows the Father.

[24:45] This is not the way the Father knows the Son. All of our relationships are revealed relationships. But Jesus' knowledge of the Father is not like that.

Yes, Jesus reveals the Father to others. But he does not need the Father to be revealed to him. From everlasting to everlasting, he knows him already.

There is no revealing that must happen between the Father and the Son because they are one in their Holy Spirit. For us to know another person, they must be revealed.

Not so with the Lord. The triune God has, from before time, existed as three persons in complete oneness. No revelation needed.

Only full, unreserved, perfect fellowship of three persons in one essence. The God of the Bible has eternally, timelessly existed as one divine being in three persons.

[25:55] And Jesus is showing us two things about that relationship in verse 27. First, the Father and the Son are distinct persons. They have distinct names.

They relate to one another. The Son reveals the Father to others. And second, they are one in essence. The divine persons know each other intrinsically, without the need for revelation.

The Son knows the Father, without someone else, even the Father revealing himself. The Father knows the Son, without someone else, even the Son revealing himself.

The Scriptures say no one knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him. And friends, the Son does know the Father. And the Father does know the Son, which means they have the same spirit.

Spirit. If you think you understand this fully, you're wrong. And I have explained it poorly. We do not have the brain power for this.

[27:03] We don't understand what it means to have complete knowledge of another. We don't understand what it means to have any knowledge of another without communication. We don't know what it looks like, what that feels like, because none of us can comprehend what it's like to be God.

This is utterly transcendent. It is completely without precedent or analogy. And here's why it is so important.

While we have true knowledge of God, as he has revealed himself, what he's revealed to us shows that his nature, his being, his existence is past what our minds can understand.

So if you're sitting here thinking, I can't really get this all into my brain. Excellent. Excellent. That is the point. The living God is far beyond our comprehension and our understanding.

Here is majesty. His ways are so much higher than our own. Here is mystery. His very existence is beyond our ability to understand.

[28:21] Here is absolute, pure, unmediated, infinite glory. If you love sunsets, if you love the Grand Canyon, if you love the enormity of the stars in the sky, if you love big ideas, if you love Beethoven, if you seek transcendence, and we all do in different ways, if you seek transcendence, here is where you will be filled full.

The Apostle Paul said, He is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality.

And he says this, Who dwells in unapproachable light. Our minds cannot grasp the enormity of this God, because he dwells in unapproachable light.

And that is exactly the payoff. We serve a God so much higher than ourselves. We cannot truly grasp all the facts of his existence.

This is why Jesus doesn't say, The Father has given me all things, so here have some of those things. It is far better to have the incomprehensibly great God than to have all things.

[29:51] Friends, I can imagine what I would do with all things. If I had all the riches, I'd buy this, I'd travel there, I'd do this, I would do that. I can't imagine that. But I can't imagine what I'd do with access to a king this much higher than my comprehension.

I have some things, so I have a frame of reference for all things. There is no frame of reference for God. All the galaxies of the universe are just a breath of his mouth.

Just the idea of what he is, one God in three persons, has no frame of reference in this world.

So much so that every analogy you've ever heard of the Trinity, water and eggs and clovers, is so woefully deficient that it is heresy.

The moment we say, I like to think of the Trinity like dot, dot, dot, we've already run off the rails because there is none like him.

[31:03] And what we have done here is seen simply a glimpse. Jesus has cracked the door a little bit.

What we see here today, the fact that the Son has unrevealed knowledge of the Father is just one aspect of the many splendors of our King.

Our minds can't contain this one truth about the triune God, but there are many more. His glory is so far past our understanding in so many multiplied ways.

He is greater. He is higher. His majesty is inexpressibly great. His being is beyond comprehension.

And yet, he does reveal himself to us. Not fully, because our brains are too small, but truly. Not only that, but he offers himself to us.

[32:07] Jesus tells us that he, the Son, does indeed reveal the Father. And not only that, he did it by offering himself for us.

I hope this big picture of God makes the gospel bigger to you. It is against this, this incomparably great God that we have sinned.

Our sin is so great because it is rebellion against so great a King. Oh, how great a King.

And the Son, this one of matchless, mighty, the matchless, mighty, lovely, beloved, eternal Son, whose very being is past our comprehension.

He went to the cross and died in my place. The glory of glories took our guilt and our shame, stood in our place, and received the infinite punishment for our infinite crimes against an infinite God.

[33:25] We cannot imagine yet the glory of his being. What it is to be distinct in person and one in essence. What is that? Yet, with all that glory, he willingly was subjected to the greatest possible shame and punishment.

This God died naked and alone, mocked and scorned, on a cross, a traitor's death in the place of the very traitors who betrayed him.

Do you want rest? Rest in that. Rest in him. All our relationships are revealed ones.

Jesus, communicated through words and deeds. Jesus does reveal the Father through words and deeds. These words and deeds. The cross. The empty tomb.

He reveals himself to us, and yes, that means you. Even you.

[35:03] That's what verses 25 and 26 are about. He says, 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.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. First, if you are small in the world's eyes, or maybe even your eyes, you may still have Jesus, in whose eyes the world is small.

Second, these are not things that you and I or anyone can get to by sitting down in our study and thinking really hard.

God, as he has revealed himself, is bigger than our ability to imagine. So you will never be able to arrive there by your own wisdom or understanding.

We must go to him for his revelation. Third, if you are great in the world's eyes, wise and intelligent, there are a bunch of smart people in this room today, you won't get to God through your own contemplations.

[36:30] I hope, verse 27, that gives us just a brief glimpse of God as he is, shows you that. His ways are so much higher than our own.

And it is only by coming to him with the humility, as he says, of a little child, saying, I need you to show me that we will ever see him. We do not ascend to heaven with our lofty thoughts and our understandings.

There is no intellectual tower of Babel by which we build our way up to the Almighty. You can't get there from here.

Instead, he came down from heaven and revealed himself to us. He revealed himself in his teachings. He revealed himself in his ministry.

He revealed himself in his cross. He humbled himself. This great transcendent God humbled himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being founded human form, he humbles himself still further by becoming obedient to the point of death, still further, even to death on a cross.

[37:54] Every single person may come to know this great glorious king, not by human cunning or ingenuity, but only as he has revealed himself.

The distance between us and God is so great, both because he dwells in unapproachable life and light, and his ways are so much higher than our ways, and his way of being is so much higher than our way of being, also because we've sinned against him.

There is no way for us to get to him. Instead, he had to stoop down and come to us, and that's what he, in his great grace, chose to do.

Which leads us back to verse 28, I think. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He is not suddenly changing topics from the Trinity in verse 27 to rest in verse 28. Receiving access to the triune God is the rest. He doesn't say, come over to my living room and rest. He says, come to me and I will give you rest.

[39:20] The rest is found in him, in his person. We can find rest in Jesus because of who he is and what he's done.

First, who he is, the God of infinite, transcendent glory, the one to whom every human thought is childlike and every galaxy is tiny.

He invites you to himself and what he's done. Given himself to us as our highest good forever.

And he did that by dying on the cross in our place. And now, you, even you, may call the furiously holy, infinitely bright, unending, glorious king, Father.

You have never and you never will experience a blessing this great. You have never and you never will experience a loss as great as this gain.

[40:45] you have never and you never will find a better place to rest. And so, you can rest.

Whatever the burden, whatever the worry, whatever the labor, whatever the sorrow, whatever the toil or loss or anxiety, you have this God.

and so, to every labor and to every burden, we can say to our hearts, I do not understand why my circumstance looks like this, why I feel like this, but I know that his thoughts are so much higher than my thoughts because his very mode of being is so much higher than my own.

I cannot see purpose in this and maybe I never will, but I do not need to doubt him. I understand that I can't understand his ways.

And the fact that a God that big is on my side and sees this burden reassures me in even this circumstance.

[42:16] Friends, you and I have an unshakable hope of a God bigger than our understanding.

We may rest in him through any storm. Let's pray.