

# Finding Life in the Son

*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 September 2019

Preacher: Dave Nannery

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's start by, we're here to talk about Jesus this morning. We're here to talk about finding life in the Son, in the Son of God. And I want to start by talking about four ways that people relate to Jesus.

We have these sort of four views, ways of viewing Jesus, ways of relating to Jesus. There are four kinds, and perhaps more, but these are just as I've witnessed the way that people relate to Jesus, both inside the church and outside the church.

Here are four ways that I see people relating to Jesus. The first Jesus, this is something that's more common outside the church. But I have seen professing Christians relate to Jesus this way too.

This is one where you like this Jesus. You like this idea of Jesus because this Jesus says things that you like. You like Jesus because he says things you like.

And this is one where people have, usually people have an ideology or a behavior or a way of living that they want to promote. Or else they have an ideology or a way of living that they're trying to get someone else to adopt that.

[ 1 : 14 ] They're trying to win someone over. And so they pull out what I like to call sock puppet Jesus. So I call him sock puppet Jesus, like that little guy there. And the picture is cut off, but the idea behind a sock puppet, right?

I mean, who here has ever played with a sock puppet? Come on. You know what I mean? It's like, raise your hand, you know, and make the sock puppet, right? Because the idea is you put your hand in a tube sock, and then you just sort of talk.

And you put little eyeballs on the outside of the sock. And you've got this little puppet. And this puppet is saying things. But who's the one really doing the talking? Who is?

It's you, right? The way a sock puppet works is that you're the one who's really doing the talking.

You're the one controlling the puppet. Sock puppet Jesus says whatever you want him to say.

Sock puppet Jesus is full of these little sound bites, some of them that come from the gospel, some of them you make up yourself. Sock puppet Jesus can be a socialist or a capitalist.

[ 2 : 12 ] He can be a gay rights activist or an anti-Muslim crusader. He can be a gun control advocate or a firearms enthusiast. I've seen all of those. All of those little sock puppets.

Sock puppet Jesus says helpful sound bites like love your neighbor. Judge not lest you be judged.

Buy a sword for self-defense. You know, never mind the context to all those things, right?

When you and I want to be understood, right? We don't want people to grab like a... Don't you hate it? Have you ever had that when you say something and then somebody hears like a little snippet of what you say and they take it totally out of context and totally misrepresent you?

Don't you hate that? Do you feel loved when that happens? You sure don't. Is that a loving way to relate to somebody? It sure isn't. How do you think Jesus feels when he is related to in that way?

Like he's just some sock puppet? To us, to the person who relates to Jesus this way, what's important is that sock puppet Jesus is on my side.

[ 3 : 20 ] That's the way we relate. Almost every sort of warped way of thinking of, you know, false doctrine or wrong thinking usually has some sort of kernel of truth to it.

I really struggle. I don't know if there's any kernel of truth to this guy, to this sock puppet. But there is to the next two. There is to the next two. Because there's a second way to relate to Jesus. And this one is popular outside the church, but also very popular inside the church as well.

And in this way of relating to Jesus, you like Jesus because of the way he makes you feel. You like Jesus because of the way Jesus makes you feel. And this one we could call Teddy Bear Jesus.

Teddy Bear Jesus. I like this photo because that teddy bear looks like a little freaked out right now. It's getting hugged a little too hard by that little girl. When you're feeling sad, when you're feeling

lonely, when you're feeling discouraged, you know that Teddy Bear Jesus is there to give you a big fuzzy hug.

Right? But just like with sock puppet Jesus, this is a one-sided relationship. It's a one-sided relationship. You're getting something out of Jesus just as long as he doesn't ask anything of you.

[ 4 : 35 ] Just as long as he doesn't ask anything of you. Jesus makes you feel all warm and fuzzy, but the moment he says, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me, you're out of there. You're not really interested in getting to know the real Jesus.

This is not a real relationship. You just want the good feelings that come with Jesus loves me, this I know. Now there's a kernel of truth to this one, right? We're going to see today that Jesus really does bring us comfort.

Jesus really does bring us encouragement and the real Jesus brings more comfort, more encouragement, so much deeper than a Teddy Bear. You know, but to quote the well-known and popular theologian John Mayer, who do you love, me or the thought of me?

Right? Who do you love, me or the thought of me? Do you love Jesus or just the thought of who he might be and the way he makes you feel? There's a third way to relate to Jesus.

This one is, I find it's much more common inside the church than outside. Inside the church is very, very common. In this third way, you like Jesus because of the good stuff he can bring you.

[ 5 : 45 ] You like Jesus because of the good stuff he can bring you. And I call this one delivery truck Jesus. Delivery truck Jesus, right? This one, once again, you're not really here to know Jesus as a person.

You're here for all the good stuff that Jesus is going to deliver to you. You're here for all the good stuff he's going to deliver to you. Maybe Jesus will make you healthy, wealthy, and prosperous.

That's the prosperity gospel.

Maybe Jesus will give you the social standing and opportunities you're looking for. A lot of people come to church and relate to Jesus in this way because it'll give them, you know, a good social standing among friends, family, and their community.

Maybe Jesus will deliver you wisdom to have a good marriage and an easy life, right? You come to church because of all the cool tips you're going to get for how to live life and that it's going to make life go well for you.

Some of us, we show up because Jesus is going to dispense the doctrine that will make us feel intelligent and feel mature. He's just a doctrine dispenser.

[ 6 : 47 ] Maybe you recognize that Jesus brings atonement of sin and salvation. You're here for that. You're here for the free ticket out of hell. But you're not here to know him. You're not here to know him.

Once again, there's a kernel of truth in that. I mean, Jesus does bring us many good and beautiful things for us to enjoy, for us to express gratitude for. Jesus is a good teacher of doctrine.

Jesus does atone for our sins, bring us salvation. What a wonderful thing. And he wants us to enjoy that. But have we lost sight of Jesus himself? Have we just turned him to a delivery truck where all the stuff he can drop off at our doorstep is what matters?

We'll wave him goodbye and let him go. You know, would you be perfectly happy with all the blessings of God's kingdom if you never got to be with your king? Would you be happy with all the blessings of the kingdom without getting to be with your king and know your king?

So we've got the sock puppet Jesus. We've got teddy bear Jesus. We've got delivery truck Jesus. But there's a fourth way to relate to Jesus. And this fourth way is this. You love Jesus because of who he is.

[ 7 : 59 ] Who he is as a person. You know him. And you love him. This is the real Jesus.

The real Jesus. You want to know him. And it's so important to approach Jesus in this fourth way because this is the only way of finding life in the Son of God.

This is the only way of finding life in the Son of God. Today I've got two purposes for this sermon. And the first purpose is this. I want to present Jesus as the source of our life.

That we can turn to Jesus. We can find life, security, glory, joy, no matter what situation we are in. No matter what we are suffering. But this Jesus isn't just a sock puppet who gives life by agreeing with everything we want.

He isn't a teddy bear who gives life by surrounding us with fuzzy feelings. He isn't a delivery truck who gives life by delivering the things you want. This Jesus gives life when we come to know him as

he really is.

[ 9 : 12 ] And we put our trust in him. We put our faith, our trust in him. That's how Jesus becomes the source of our life. That's how we find life in the Son. And so my second purpose today, on top of that, not only presenting Jesus as the source of our life, but my second purpose today is to portray Jesus in his glory as he gives life.

To portray Jesus in his glory as Jesus gives life. I want us to taste and see that the Lord is good. I want us to come away marveling at Jesus, loving him.

So let's get to know the real flesh and blood person of Jesus in Matthew chapter 11. Now, once again, a couple weeks back, we looked and studied in depth the diagram that you'll find on the sermon notes insert in your bulletin.

You can see this diagram here. This is from the book, How People Change by Tim Lane and Paul Tripp. And once again, we'll also link to this on the website when we upload the sermon audio.

And a couple weeks back, we looked at Jeremiah chapter 17, verses five through 10. We saw how this diagram is drawn from those verses. We learned about finding life in the desert. We saw that the situation we face in life was represented by heat, by the hardships and temptations you and I face in the past, in the present, in the future.

[ 10 : 40 ] We have this heat. We saw that in response to this situation, a person whose desires are corrupted by sin, this person is going to turn away from the Lord, and they're going to function like a tree that produces thorns, thorns in the heat.

Yet God has given us all the resources, all the relationships that we need to flourish through what his son Jesus Christ has done on the cross, on the cross. Who God is, what he says and does in Christ, the spirit he gives.

They are the life-giving water for those who trust in the Lord. And so these people flourish under that heat. Their desires, their thinking are reoriented towards God.

And then they produce the fruit of love, the fruit, even in the worst situations. So four words summarize this diagram. Heat, thorns, cross, fruit.

And that's the lens, that's the perspective that we looked at Jesus last week, and we're going to look at him again this week. And we're going to look at ourselves this week, especially.

[ 11 : 46 ] Let's consider how this diagram directs us to find life in the son of God. Matthew chapter 11, that's on page 816 of the Blue Bibles, our usher's handout.

Chris read these verses at the beginning of the service and then continued into chapter 12, where we see illustrated the way that Jesus gives life.

But here's verses 25 to 30. 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.

[ 13 : 14 ] This is the word of the Lord. Now, last week, we looked at verses 25 through 27. We saw how Jesus grounds himself.

Jesus grounds himself in his Father's love when he is facing the heat of his difficult situation. Jesus is absolutely fully human, and so we've been looking at him and saying that Jesus is this just amazing singular model for mental health because Jesus does that with absolute consistency. You can just learn so much by watching Jesus, by learning from him. The way he thinks, the way he processes, the way he responds to the situations that he faces.

He is so remarkable and so good. Jesus finds life in his Father, and now at verse 28, Jesus turns around. He's grounded himself in his Father in response to that difficult, awful situation, the heat that he's facing in chapter 11, and he turns around and he addresses you and me, which is so amazing.

He's the one under the heat. He's the one facing this intensity, and that's something that's always so remarkable about Jesus. He's in the heat. He's in the intensity. You'd be willing to give him a pass, like, you know, this guy is not going to be bearing any fruit.

[ 14 : 28 ] He should just be surviving. And yet, somehow, under that heat, he produces this amazing fruit, this amazing crop of love, of kindness, of compassion.

And he speaks to all who labor and are heavy laden. That's in verse 28. Those are the ones whom he's addressing.

All who labor and are heavy laden. Now, who is that? Who belongs in that category? You labor and are heavy laden.

All right, let's think for a moment. Who would you put into that category? Honestly, when I look at myself, and when I look out at each one of you, when I look at everyone, I don't know all of you all that well, but I know some of you really well.

And when I look at everyone who I've come to know well here in the last four years, every one of you belongs in this category. Every one of you, weary, or you laboring, and you're heavy laden.

[ 15 : 36 ] You're like Jesus' disciples in chapter 12, verse 1. They're in the fields, hungry, in need of life and energy, failing. You're like the man with the withered hand in chapter 12, verse 10.

Limited, crippled, weak. This is the heat. This is the situation you're in. You are weary. You are weary.

You're weary. You're worn down. You're beat up. You're just a little bit frayed around the edges. You've been exposed over the course of your life. And if you're young and it hasn't happened yet, believe me, it's going to happen.

You're going to be exposed as lacking the ability to flourish where God has planted you. You just don't have it in you. We can't flourish where God has planted us any more than you can stick a seed in the soil and stick a seed in the soil, shove it in a dark cupboard, never water it, never give it light, and see what happens to it.

That's us trying to do life on our own. That's us trying to flourish out of our own strength. You are weary.

[ 16 : 50 ] And these are the people that Jesus is looking for. Not only in chapter 12, but in the rest of his earthly ministry. Jesus isn't looking for, you know, he's talking about the wise and understanding.

People who think they've got it all together. People who've got life handled, life figured out. They know how to do things. They're self-reliant, all put together. And Jesus is, has not come for people like that. He's come for little children, the worst and the least.

He's come for sinners who know they need to repent. This is your qualification for coming to Jesus. Your qualification is you have nothing.

You have nothing to offer him. And in fact, you have every reason to be rejected by him and you know it. On top of this heat, the difficult heat of the situation that each one of us are in.

Some of us, some of you may also be bearing the consequences of the thorns that you've produced, right? In this diagram, you can see that the thorns, that bad fruit, how you react to your situation, it produces consequences in your life, doesn't it?

[ 17 : 59 ] We all know what I'm talking about. I can think in my life of just being in really difficult situations and I, you know, blurted out things that wrecked a relationship and I bore the consequences of that and other people did too.

You might be bearing the consequences of the thorns you've produced. That's what Jeremiah, in Jeremiah chapter 17, he, you know, the Lord says, cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord.

Now, maybe you've been putting your trust in man, putting your trust in other people, putting your trust in the strength of their approval, in the strength of their affirmation, in the strength of their wisdom.

You might be trying to find life in other people. If I could only just get so-and-so to approve of me, to love me, to recognize me, to think I'm great, then life would be good.

So now you're weary. I mean, there's just, it feels like there's no weary, and it's quite like trying to get everybody to be happy with you, is there? That's a thankless task. Maybe you've been trusting in yourself.

[ 19 : 15 ] Maybe that trusting in man, the person you're trusting in is not someone else, but yourself. Your own wisdom, your own endurance, your own good sense. You might be trying to find life in yourself. And so now you're weary from doing it alone.

There's something deeply isolating about that. There is no life to be found from trusting in man and making flesh your strength. It might produce a little bit of short-term benefit.

It might help you cope with stuff in your life. But all it's going to do in the long run and in eternity is add to the heat. So that we are more weary than ever before.

We are laboring and heavy laden. The consequences add to the heat. And at some point just going through that, going wearier and wearier and wearier and I've seen this happen in people's lives.

At some point, the despair just causes you, you just break. You just break. You're done. Yes, you are weary.

[ 20 : 18 ] Some of us more than others, but all of us to some degree, you are weary. And this is where Jesus steps in. In verse 28, Jesus says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Jesus is promising rest. He's promising an end to your restlessness, an end to your efforts to prove yourself, to justify yourself, an end to your efforts to climb a ladder to glory, a pathway to glory that your culture or your family has set up that you've embraced trying to get that good life in the way they tell you to do it, in the way that you've decided it can be done.

And Jesus brings an end to all of that exhausting striving. Christ is your place of rest. Christ is your place of rest.

rest. Jesus is promising rest. There's this sense of satisfied completion, the sense of satisfied completion. When God created the world, we read in Genesis chapter 2 that he rested on the seventh day, something that's reiterated again in the book of Exodus, that he rested on the seventh day.

He's satisfied that his work of creating, his initial work of creating, is finished. Jesus says this rest that is available to you, it is something that he will give.

[ 22 : 02 ] He will give. What that suggests is that this rest cannot be earned by our own labor. You can't just work and work and work hard enough and eventually you'll finally achieve what you're trying to achieve.

Eventually you'll finally get that rest you're craving. Your restlessness will come to an end. He's saying, no, this can only be given. We work and work and work and work to be righteous.

We work and work and work. By that, I mean that we are trying to relate in a right way toward God and toward other people. We're trying to fulfill God's expectations for how we should relate to him, how we should relate to other people.

That's what righteousness is. It's just about relationships in the end. And we're trying to do what that law of love requires, but it's exhausting. It's exhausting, isn't it?

How do you do that? It's exhausting to love other people. It's exhausting to relate rightly to them as God has called us. My own flesh, and I speak from personal experience, my own flesh, I do not have what it takes.

[ 23 : 07 ] I've got what it takes to do that for about five minutes and then I'm done. Right? I can't even keep that up for an hour or a day, let alone a lifetime. When I try to draw life from other people, when I act as though they are life-giving gods who can justify me with their approval, then I find that they will fail me at some point.

So not only can I not rely on myself, I can't even rely on other people to ultimately be this source of righteousness to make me feel like I'm fulfilling the law of love.

I can't turn and find glory in myself because my weakness is clear. I can't find glory in other people because they're going to let me down too. It's wearying.

And so what Jesus has done is that he is the one who has done the labor. He has labored on my behalf and on yours. Jesus does everything well.

He is fully righteous. He perfectly obeys God's law of love. Just look at the next chapter. Look at chapter 12 of Matthew. Jesus shows mercy in verses 1-8 to his disciples.

[ 24 : 20 ] Mercy that the Pharisees aren't showing. He shows mercy to his disciples when they are hungry, demonstrating that he is Lord of the Sabbath. The Lord of rest.

Jesus brings then in verses 9-14, Jesus brings life to a man with a withered hand. He heals this man once again against the traditions of the Pharisees, against their wishes.

Jesus does everything in a way that is absolutely pleasing to God his father, pleasing to the God who then declares him righteous. And that's why in verse 18, chapter 12, verse 18, Matthew begins quoting a prophecy about Jesus.

He quotes this word from God, the Father, behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.

I will put my spirit upon him and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

[ 25 : 33 ] A bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not quench until he brings justice to victory and in his name the Gentiles will hope.

We see in this and it just gets carried out throughout the life of Jesus that Jesus is absolutely perfect. Isn't he? Jesus is everything that you and I were meant to be.

Jesus is everything that you and I would be if our motives and our desires were not corrupted by sin. He is more, if anything, more human than you and I have ever been.

A bruised reed he will not break. If you are bruised, you think of these reeds, if you go walk down to the estuary or you go to a marsh area and you see these thin, fragile reeds and how much effort does it take to bruise one of those things, to get it bent?

Almost none at all, right? And that's us. It just doesn't take a lot of effort to knock us down. But if you're bruised, you're at the point of breaking, Jesus in his kindness will not break you.

[ 26 : 50 ] A smoldering wick he will not quench. If you're almost burned out, Jesus will preserve just that tiny little smoldering spark of grace. That's why he says in chapter 11 verse 29, I am gentle and lowly in heart.

Jesus is humble, Jesus is gentle, Jesus knows your weakness, Christ is your place of rest. We need to see that in action.

Those are just words. Let's see this happen. Look earlier in chapter 11 at how gentle and kind Jesus is, the way he answers John the Baptist. In verses 2 and 3 we read, when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, are you the one who is to come or shall we look for another?

Now John, up to this point, has been the appointed herald for Jesus. John has been Jesus' biggest promoter, his biggest supporter, his most loyal advocate, but when John begins to actually question Jesus, now if that were you and I in Jesus' position, think of how would you respond.

When the person who was most loyal, who was most stuck by you through thick and thin, advocated for you publicly in front of everyone, and now they're beginning to question you. would you panic?

[ 28 : 29 ] Would you get upset? Oh man, I probably would. I would probably just slip into an absolute funk. You know, you want to curl up in a corner or something. Jesus doesn't panic, Jesus doesn't freak out, Jesus doesn't curl up in a corner, Jesus doesn't, you know, maybe your temptation will be alright, I'm going to, how could this person question me?

I'm going to put them in their place. Jesus doesn't do that to John. He sees John's weakness. Jesus knows what John is going through, right? He is suffering in prison.

He's been imprisoned by the king, by Herod, for speaking out against the sexual immorality that Herod's been engaging in. And John has been longing for this Messiah and preaching this Messiah who is prophesied in the Old Testament as bringing justice, as bringing the judgment of God against those who do evil, guys like, say, Herod, who has put John in prison, who is eventually going to have him beheaded.

That's what John is going through right now. He's going through heat too. And so Jesus answers, he says to him, just look at this, look at the way he answers, not just what he says, but the way he says it.

Go and tell John what you hear and see. The blind receive their sight and the lame walk. Lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear and the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them.

[ 30 : 01 ] And blessed is the one who is not offended by me. So all of these things that Jesus is referring to are Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah, about all the good things that he is going to do.

Jesus tells John's disciples, he tells them, you know, report all the things you've been hearing and seeing, report that these promises that God made are coming true through Jesus.

Jesus, though, he sort of carefully leaves out a feature of all these prophecies. He leaves out that, you know, if you actually look at these passages, you'll see that so many of them include that message of justice and vengeance the Messiah is supposed to bring.

And Jesus leaves that out. Jesus actually doesn't challenge John's perception of him directly. John's got a perception of Jesus that is a little bit off and Jesus doesn't actually just directly say, you're wrong, John.

He's just very gentle and indirect and he leaves out those words. What he's doing, he's gently breaking to John the Baptist the news that, yes, this Messiah will bring justice and vengeance, but not just yet.

[ 31 : 16 ] Not yet. That part of the prophecy is not going to come just yet. He reminds John gently, lovingly, and very indirectly, blessed is the one who is not offended by me.

Could you possibly correct someone in a more gentle way than that? Can you marvel at that? Have you ever seen a man correct a friend so softly, so gently, with such kindness, with such wisdom? Blessed is the one who is not offended by me. He doesn't say to John, don't get offended. Blessed is the one who is not offended by me. He actually turns it into a blessing.

Even after this, after John's disciples leave, if you read the following verses, Jesus then proceeds to just turn to the crowds and he reaffirms to the crowds the toughness, the boldness, the wisdom, even the greatness of John the Baptist.

The crowds could have thought, man, this guy John, he was going so well for a while, now this just shows. He's weak, he just didn't have what it takes. And Jesus absolutely won't let them think that at all.

[ 32 : 33 ] Do you see how good Jesus is? A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench. Christ, just like he was a place of rest for John, Christ is your place of rest.

You can learn so much from looking at Jesus. This Jesus is so perfect. He knows how to love in a way that you and I, we have just barely begun to learn.

We've just barely begun to learn. We're like a baby just taking their first steps and Jesus is like a marathon runner. And this Jesus, he loved us to the end.

He laid down his life. He died on a cross in our place. Cursed is the man who trusts in man who makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord.

You and I were cursed. We were under a curse for sinning, for corrupting our relationships with evil, for dishonoring, turning away from the Lord, rebelling against this life-giving God. But we are told in Galatians 3 about this curse.

[ 33 : 39 ] Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.

Christ became that entire curse in our behalf. It doesn't just say that he was cursed for us. He says he became the curse for us, which means there is none left. He became the whole thing.

He took the entire curse in our behalf because we are united to him by faith when we believe in this Jesus, when we place our full trust in him. This union, this unity by faith, this also means that we are bound to him, counted righteous with Jesus.

This Jesus who is gentle and lowly in heart, the one who loves you with that same compassion and wisdom that he loved John with, the one who is perfect in everything he does.

When God looks at you, when God looks at you, he sees that same Jesus. He counts you as perfectly loving, compassionate, and wise because you are bound to Jesus and tied to him and God cannot look at you without seeing his son.

[ 35 : 05 ] Oh, turn to Jesus and find life in the son of God. In your diagram, this is the cross, your place of rest.

Who is God and what does he say and do in Christ? Christ is your place of rest. He is the rest from all your striving to be righteous apart from him.

A rest from trying to be a good person and a great person and function and do life apart from Jesus. What's so fascinating? You'd think that this rest means okay, that we're not doing work anymore.

Call it a day. I'm going to just, you know, Jesus has covered, has got it covered. He's done everything righteous and well. He's loved on my behalf when I failed. Therefore, I'm okay. I don't have to love people. I don't have to do anything.

I don't have to do any of that. But actually what's so fascinating is that in verse 30, Jesus doesn't promise an end to that work. He doesn't promise to the end of the work, to an end, an end to that work of loving. And he doesn't promise an end to our burdens.

[ 36 : 08 ] What Jesus promises is that all who trust in him will find that work to be transformed. It's going to be transformed.

He says in verse 30, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. So Jesus is still calling you and me to do God's work, to love the Lord, to love one another just as we were called to do, just as human beings were made to do.

And yet now that burden is light. now it is a restful sort of work. It's a restful sort of work. How can that be? How is this possible?

What can make that same heavy work that was just crushing you and exhausting you and wearying you, how can it become now actually restful work?

Well, we see this restful work by looking at the three commands that Jesus gives us in verses 28 to 30. Jesus gives three commands here. And it all begins with that first command in verse 28.

[ 37 : 23 ] It begins with a summons. Jesus summons you with these words, come to me. He doesn't keep us at a distance.

He doesn't keep us at arm's length. Come to me. Jesus doesn't relate to you the way a pagan God would do with a handshake, a distant transaction.

You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. Come to me. So this isn't delivery truck Jesus. This isn't an empty shell who is here to deliver the goods you're looking for and then be on his way.

Come to me. He invites you into that intimate union, into an embrace. Come to me. Jesus doesn't want your outward performance.

He doesn't want the fake you on the outside. Jesus is jealous for your heart. He wants all of you for himself.

[ 38 : 28 ] You who are guilty of sin, you who are beset by weakness, he wants the real you. Come to me. You no longer see him as a delivery truck.

You see him as your friend. Jesus, what a friend of sinners. Jesus, lover of my soul. Jesus doesn't just want you to know about the good stuff he can bring you.

He wants you to know him. Come to me. And then Jesus continues with a second command in verse 29. Take my yoke upon you.

Take my yoke upon you. And in doing that, Jesus paints a picture for us. A picture that perhaps is foreign to you and me, but would have been so, so familiar to somebody in his culture and in many cultures throughout the world today.

In this picture, you're, think of yourself, you're standing in a field, you're surrounded by all this tough, hard soil under the beating sun, and this field needs to be plowed and crops need to be planted.

[ 39 : 34 ] You're strapped to the plow. Why? Because you're an ox. already we don't like this picture because I don't like to think of myself as an ox, but that's you in this picture.

You're an ox, you've been commanded to pull the plow behind you, you have to break up this hard soil through the sheer power of your own efforts, your own flesh, and you're a young strong ox, so you're like, okay, I can do this, and you begin to pull, you begin to strain against the weight of the plow as it tears through the hard soil, but it is hard, hard work, and far sooner than you expect, just like any hard work, it always, it becomes exhausting much, much sooner than you ever expect it will, you are gasping for breath, your heart is racing, you're trembling with exhaustion, you're heavy laden, you're nearly spent, and you look back, and you realize you haven't even plowed a tenth of the field, you've gotten almost nowhere, and look how much it took, boy, some of us are there, aren't we?

And then alongside of you, comes an older, wiser ox, who is also gentle and lowly in heart, this ox is Jesus, and he knows, he looks at you and he knows, and he understands, and he has been where you are, he understands that you've been trying to plow that field alone, that you've been trusting in man and making flesh your strength, and he says, take my yoke upon you, you don't want to do it, it feels like slavery, like the end of your freedom, the end of your independence, getting tied down, take my yoke upon you, you haven't wanted to bear that heavy wooden yoke over your neck, you haven't wanted to be bound to the other ox, bound to Jesus, but you look at your life and you think, what freedom have I really had up till now?

What freedom is there in being a spent and exhausted ox, collapsed in the field, under the beating sun? Take my yoke upon you. So you surrender to him, you obey him, you allow yourself to have that bar put over your neck, and now where Jesus goes, you will go, and now when Jesus pulls, you will pull, and now when Jesus loves, you will love, and you will do whatever he does, and you will follow him.

Take my yoke upon you, and you find that you are no longer working alone, you are never alone again, you are now in an intimate union with the Lord of rest.

[ 42 : 25 ] This is so much better than teddy bear Jesus, because this Jesus is your lord and master, that's something a teddy bear can never be. He's your lord and master, and so he can give you a rest that teddy bear Jesus never could.

And your Lord issues a third command in verse 29, learn from me. Learn from me. You're a young and foolish ox.

You don't know how to pull the plow with wisdom. You don't know how to put the effort into it. You don't know how to turn. You don't know how to do this, but he does. Learn from me. You don't know how to love God.

You don't know how to love your brothers and sisters, your neighbors and enemies. The world is so confounding and confusing. Things never turn out the way you expect. Learn from me. And so you watch Jesus as you go through life.

You read about him in scripture. You're absorbed in him. Every gesture, every word from him that you read and reread in the gospels, you're trying to know him.

[ 43 : 32 ] You're trying to understand him. How does he think? Who is this Jesus? What kind of a person is he? Learn from me.

He isn't sock puppet Jesus serving as your mouthpiece. This real Jesus, he is your teacher. He is your teacher. Learn from me.

You turn to the Old Testament. Now you're absorbed in Jesus. You've got Jesus in mind. And you look back on the Old Testament. You realize this is all one story. This is one coherent story that is crying out for a Savior, crying out for a Messiah, crying out for the Son of God.

You see in these pages your own need for Jesus, your longing, your crying, O come, O come, Emmanuel. Learn from me. You turn then to the New Testament.

You discover that Jesus has come. This new Jesus, the desire of nations, he has come. And not only that, but he will come again to fully establish his kingdom.

[ 44 : 40 ] And you're a part of the family of God now by faith in Jesus. You're a part of this family. You learn how we live in union with Christ. You learn now that I've been adopted into this family, here's the new way our family lives.

Here's our new way of life in the family of God. Learn from me. You are hearing the voice of your teacher in scripture. You're coming to know him. You're finding life in your father just the way Jesus does.

Now you start all the things that you're feeling and you're experiencing as you go through your day, you start sharing them with your father. You start praying continually, speaking to him just as you've been listening to his words in scripture.

Now you're speaking to him and you're listening to him. That's what we call a real relationship. Learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart.

You realize that Jesus he is indeed that singular perfect model for mental health but he isn't the way a lot of people are when it comes to that you know this harsh task master just get with it you know why can't you do better what's wrong with you he isn't like a model for us like a sports superstar would be you person Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart and he is in there in the yoke with you he is the kindest and most patient man who ever lived come to me take my yoke upon you learn from me he is your friend he is your Lord he is your teacher this is how you establish that good root that begins to bear fruit rest in the real Christ rest in the real

[ 46 : 37 ] Christ blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord whose trust is the Lord so you are transformed as you come to know Jesus you know him the way you know any friend and any brother you talk to him you listen to him you learn from him you know him the way you would know any Lord and teacher you trust him you obey him no matter what so Jesus becomes a place of rest as you behold his greatness as you behold his goodness as you enjoy his glory rest in the real Christ in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 we read about this new relationship of beholding him Paul writes in 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another for this comes from the

Lord who is the spirit you become what you behold you are transformed into that same image bit by bit little by little baby step by baby step you unlearn your old ways of dealing with life you unlearn your old coping mechanisms you unlearn your old ways of handling relationships knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers bit by bit little by little baby step by baby step you pick up Jesus mannerisms you start to talk like Jesus you start to act like Jesus

you start thinking about things the way that Jesus does you start relating love loving to loving you love to love you start valueing what Jesus values you start desiring what Jesus desires rest you you you rest rest rest in the real Christ and as you do this the words of Jeremiah chapter 17 they start to come true for you blessed is the man oh how happy is the man who trusts in the Lord whose trust is the Lord he is like a tree planted by water that sends out its roots by the stream and does not fear when heat comes for its leaves remain green and is not anxious in the year of drought for it does not cease to bear fruit you're still under the heat there is still a year of drought life is still hard the work is still heavy there is still a burden you're still in a difficult situation your past is hard you've got a hard present you face a hard future but now you have hope now you have rest now you see the story that God is telling this world and it's a story all about not me it's a story all about Jesus Lord of the Sabbath your place of rest and you find that Jesus promise is true when he says you will find rest for your souls you are weary but Christ is your place of rest so rest in that real Christ let me pray Lord we are we are