

Come and get some rest

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[0 : 00] Matthew chapter 11 and just reading from verse 25 through to verse 29. This is one of the invitations of Jesus, a very well-known one. I think Paul has preached on this during my time here about, come unto me all you who are weary and heavy burdened or whatever. Very appropriate for tonight, I would say, after the events of today. Maybe you're weary and so forth. I want you to look at this just for 10 minutes or so. So, Matthew 11, we're reading together from verse 25.

The context of this is very important. Jesus is revealing who he is, and he's already sent the disciples out to proclaim who he is, and whoever rejects him rejects the benefits that you have in Christ. And that is really what this is about. So, let's read from verse 25 of Matthew 11.

At that time, Jesus said, In other words, the things of God and who Jesus is, hidden these things from wise and learned and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Very much what we were thinking of this morning. Come to me, Jesus says, this invitation, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Let's stand and we'll sing, to him we come.

Many people struggle in so many ways. Here's an image of quite a few well-known people suffering in various ways. You can probably, you can't see what's probably written underneath their names, but various people, well-known people and not so well-known, suffer with mental illness.

Many people nowadays are volunteering that information, that they struggle mentally and in various ways. These people all have something in common because they struggle mentally in various areas. Ryan Reynolds, Emma Stone struggle with anxiety. Justin Bieber, Dwayne Johnson struggle with depression. And then you've got Demi Lovato. She's bipolar, would be her issue. And PTSD is Lady Gaga and Beyonce and Tiger Woods, ADHD. So they all struggle in various ways, and perhaps you struggle in some ways.

[3 : 02] Perhaps you know people who do this. And the reason for this is we are all fragile. We are created of the dust. We are not as strong as we think we are. So we all struggle, not just with mental illness, but physical illness and so forth. We read in Genesis, the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.

So in the moments that remain to us, I just want to throw out a couple of things to do with looking after ourselves, knowing how best to look after ourselves, body and soul. This is another one of the invitations of Jesus. We've looked at come to the wedding banquet, and then last week, come follow me, and what's involved in following him. Now here is an invitation to come and get some rest.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. So two things. First of all, come for spiritual rest. This passage is a verse, this verse that we've considered, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. It's often taken out of context. And we say, well, I'm just weary, I'm tired, I'll just come to the Lord, and so forth.

Jesus is really speaking here of spiritual rest, because he's talking here in verse 29 about finding rest for your soul. It is that type of rest that this verse primarily speaks of. And he's speaking into a situation where people, and nowadays folk do search for rest, not just physical rest, having a break and a coffee and a Kit Kat, but rest for their soul in their search for God, in their search for meaning to life. These big questions, Jesus, as we were considering this morning, is the end of our search, the search for eternal life, the search for abundant life in this life. It really is such a big issue.

Mahatma Gandhi, when he was dying, said this. Mahatma Gandhi was dying, one of his relatives came to him and asked, Babaki, you have been looking for God all your life. Have you found him

yet?

No, was the reply. I'm still looking. And it's amazing how many people want rest for their soul. It's our basic, basic need, whether it's a search for God, but just that sense of fulfillment in every way. Not just rest from labors, looking forward to retirement. It's bigger than that.

[5 : 33] It's rest for your soul. And the context of this is Jesus, as we were considering this morning, revealing who he is as the rest giver, the ultimate rest giver, where if we discover Jesus, we discover the meaning of life, the purpose of life, in this life, and in the life to come.

And that's what Jesus wants people to know. So he sends out the 12 in chapter 10, sends out them, and says, go and tell people who I am. And then John the Baptist, at the start of chapter 11, says, are you the one to come? Should we look for somebody else? Is our quest still open? And Jesus says, go back and tell them what you see, all the things I've been doing, the people being healed, raised, and so forth, that they might recognize that he is who he says he is. How can we find rest in Jesus?

Well, I won't labor this, because I mentioned this this morning. I've mentioned this in great detail. Jesus is the Father's representative. He mentions this in this passage, all things have been committed to me by my Father. You want to know God, you want to know the Father.

Look at Jesus. We mentioned this much. It's only Jesus, he says, that fully understands the Father. You want to know God, you come to Jesus. No one knows the Father except the Son, and only he can reveal the Father. Only he can show us who God really is. So if you want to know rest for your soul, the meaning of life, purpose in life, you need to come to Jesus. That's what he's basically saying.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened by searching, by the pressures of life. Come to me, and I will give you rest for your soul. He also tells us who will come. He says who won't come, the learned and wise won't come. You maybe know folk like that. The hardest folk to reach are people who have a brain, who are gifted. They don't need God. They've got money. They have it all.

[7 : 35] Those people think they're not interested in their soul. They really don't care. The Father hides the need from these people. But children, he says, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You've hidden these things. You've hidden me from the wise and learned, but you reveal them to little children. You have to come to Jesus as a child, and that's what we must do.

But he says those who not only won't come, but will come, those who must come, those who are weary and burdened by life, by the law. The law drives us to despair. Jesus is the end of the law by way of making us right before God. We come. So he is the end of these things, and he comes, and he offers us rest. Now, what does rest look like? It's not ease in that sense. Rest is discipleship.

Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me. We need to do this. He invites the weary to come, not to go to the law, not to try, but to come to him and learn from him. Walk with him by life's experience and from his word. Walking with Jesus, he says, being yoked to him is not difficult. It's easy. My yoke's easy. My burden is light.

In other words, come to him. So that's the first thing. Very, very briefly, come for spiritual rest. Rest for our soul is found only in Jesus. Secondly, come for physical rest. Now, the physical aspect, rest, isn't mentioned in Matthew's gospel, but it's mentioned in Mark's gospel. In Mark's gospel, the same account is given. The disciples are sent off, and then they return. But in Mark's account, when they return, he turns around and says to them, after they return, and they report how people responded to the message, he says, because so many people are coming and going, they did not have a chance to eat. He said to them, come to me by yourself to a quiet place and get some rest, he says. So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. Now, if you know your Bible, you know they never got that rest. Immediately, they were bombarded. Passion feeds the 5,000.

But Jesus knows how we're wired. He knows physically. We need rest for our soul spiritually and so forth, and the troubles of life, but we need rest physically. We're wired in such a way that we need to listen to our bodies. And it just so happens in pastoral ministry, I have followed various pastors. Quite a few of them hit the buffers. Quite a few of them burnt themselves out with stress or depression or anxiety. My very first pastorate, coming from Bible college, was to follow a man who'd been ministered for 12 years and lasted 18 months in the pastorate that I was coming. His ministry was ruined. He had to leave the ministry. He couldn't go back in again. He burnt himself out.

[10 : 45] And I thought, I've had no years of ministry. I'm coming straight from college. I'm just a youngster. How long am I going to last? If he lasted 18 months, I'll last 18 minutes. And then I inquired, why did this happen? I remember thinking, Lord, could you not have protected them?

Lord, were you asleep when this happened? These big questions. And I realized everybody was telling them, you're doing too much. You need to slow down. His body, we're built with sensors. Your car has sensors.

If your tires are now quite right, it'll beep, flashy, flashy. You're running out of oil. Our bodies are packed with sensors. You soon know if your stomach's getting, you're getting an ulcer. You're stressed. You're worried. Your body begins to get weary and tired. Your eyelids get heavy. That's telling you, you need to rest. We need to listen to the sensors that God has given us. I made a decision at that point. I would never toil in ministry to the detriment of my health.

I saw no point in it. I saw no wisdom in it whatsoever. And yet I hear and I see your pastors who constantly think that God needs them. I need to keep going. And if I hit the buffers, I hit the buffers. It's just foolish. There is no wisdom in that. And there is no wisdom and constantly laboring. And it's a problem in our church because we have many work, much work that needs to be done and few people to do it. And the danger is they could burn themselves out.

We need to take these things seriously. We need to look out for each other and to say, you're doing too much, brother, sister. Take it easy. But it might be in your workplace. It might be in your home. It might be you're making too many dinners or whatever that is for you.

[12 : 23] But we simply need physical rest. We might need medical help at times. We need to recognize we don't always have the same amount of talents. I need to remember that as a pastor. I keep forgetting that a call goes out to everybody, right? We need to do this, that, and the other. But not everybody has the same amount of talents. Some folk can just keep going. They can keep going 24-7 and they never stop. Others last an hour and they're flagging. They need recharged. They need black coffee and a Kit Kat or whatever just to keep them going. We're all different. And therefore, we cannot judge others by our standards. Well, I could keep going, so you should keep going. We are all very different. So we need to know our limitations and say, I don't have the skill set to keep going. I'm not wired the same as this person. I need rest. My body clock, ever since I was an embryo, whatever, two o'clock in the afternoon, I just begin to wilt. And it's often the time I visit folk as well and I think, oh dear, focus, John, focus. It's just, as an apprentice, I did this as well. It was two o'clock, between two and four o'clock, I'm not the best. I'm sharp between in the morning up to one o'clock. I can do anything.

After that, my body begins to wilt. I'm a sprinter as well. I don't plod. I'm not William Carey. It's not the way I'm wired. I can sprint. I'm more Eric Liddell. I just love, let's go, boom, here we go. And then, right, let's rest, let's recharge and go back into it. Know yourself. Most of you, the first one, you know about the spiritual rest. But think about the second one, the physical rest that you need for your soul. And also, just do the work the Lord has given you to do. Jesus didn't do everything.

But Jesus says, I have finished the work you gave me to do. There was a work that Jesus had to do, and that's what he did. Some of us can run around trying to do work the Lord never gave us to do.

And we're foolish in that way. So does that make sense? I'm just going to leave those two things with you. You're already convinced of the spiritual rest you have in the Lord. But hear the physical rest.

[14 : 36] Listen to your body. And recharge as best you can. There's no cavalry in this. If you disobey the way God's wired you, you will suffer. It's as simple as that. The cavalry's not going to come in. It never happened to that first pastor. Never happened to other pastors that I followed. And you need to hear these things. And look after yourself that the Lord may look after you and lead you and guide you.

We're going to stand and sing a closing song, He Will Hold Me Fast. Let's stand and we'll sing together. And

