

LESSON 6 ~ “*ALL WHO ARE WEARY: COME*”, JESUS AUGUST 9, 2020

Background Scripture: Matthew 11

Lesson Passage: Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV)

Introduction: Our lesson Scripture is one of the most beloved passages in the New Testament. In it the Lord summarizes the invitation to discipleship that characterized His earthly ministry, but to understand the invitation of this passage, we need to understand the background. In this passage the Lord was addressing the people of Israel who were burdened and weighed down with the externalism and the legal do's and don'ts of the Pharisees, and with the consequences—the guilt, frustration, and dissatisfaction that always goes along with legalism (Matthew 23:2, 4). He was speaking about the way they had hidden the true meaning of the Old Testament Law with all the religious rules and regulations that these religious externalists had instituted as the way to God, to true spirituality, and as a way to receive God's blessing in life. They had codified the Mosaic law into 365 prohibitions and 250 commandments.

But even though the Old Testament Law was good, holy, and righteous, it did not bring liberty because it was weak in that it depended on man. It did not provide the means of fulfilling the law and thus it left man under the guilt and load of sin. Rather than freedom, it brought oppression. Paul called it an administration of death. Instead of a sense of release, it brought a sense of guilt and failure.

Those who were under the Mosaic Law were said to be yoked to Moses. Those who were under the authority of the Pharisees were said to be yoked to the Pharisees (Acts 15:7-11). It is in the midst of this religious setting that the Lord makes a very gracious invitation to all who would want to experience the relief, joy, and the blessings of His life through a grace/faith relationship with Him. This is an invitation aimed at all, at the curious and at the convinced to bring them to a place of a deeper level of commitment in which they are to take His yoke and learn from Him as committed disciples.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV)

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Topic Explored: “*All who Are Weary: Come*” ~ Deep soul weariness: We all experience it, though in different ways and for different reasons. Sometimes we can point to a significant factor, but often we can't. Our weariness results from the cumulative, multilayered intersections of life's complexities, bodily frailties, emotional heartbreaks, and the consequences of sin. It surpasses understanding. Because our burdens are not simple, they are not relieved by simplistic platitudes (“*Cheer up! Things are bound to turn around!*”). But a simple promise can relieve a complex burden, provided we believe that the power behind the promise is complex and strong enough to relieve our heaviness. And into our weariness steps the most complex power in existence speaking a promise as simple, hopeful, and refreshing as we could possibly want.

Memory Verse: *28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* (Matthew 11:28) KJV

Lesson Focus:

Verse 28 ~ What does *come* to Jesus mean? When we read the context of this promise in Matthew 11-12; His meaning becomes clear. In His rebuke of the cities in and religious leaders in Matthew 11:21-24; and Matthew 12:1-8; that saw firsthand His miraculous works, so clearly demonstrating who He was in John 5:36, and still refused to believe in Him, we know that when Jesus said, “come to me,” He meant, “believe in who I claim to be and therefore what I am able to do for you.” And here is where our burdened souls are tested. Will we believe in Him; will we trust Him? We want to rest our souls on the knowledge of how and when our burdensome problems will be addressed. But Jesus does not provide those details. He simply promises us that they will be addressed.

Jesus does not want our souls resting on the how and when, as if we are wise enough to understand and determine them. Rather He wants our souls resting on the surety that He will keep His promise to us in the best way at the best time. “Come to me,” He says, “cast your anxieties on me for I care for you” (I Peter 5:7). “Trust in Me with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5), He says, “and you will find rest for your souls.”

Our souls only find rest in hope. That’s what we’re frantically looking for whenever our souls are burdened and restless: Hope. And that’s what most of the marketing of most of the products in the world tries to offer us: hope. But they are false hopes for soul-rest, providing only temporary distraction from or briefly masking the effects of our burdened souls. They don’t truly lighten our loads. Jesus knows that He *only* is our salvation, our fortress, our mighty rock, our refuge. He is the one answer to every question, concern, fear, and need we will ever have. And so, He simply and comprehensively offers us Himself. For our hope is from Him. Only in Him will we find rest for our souls.

Verse 29 ~ “Take my yoke and learn from me”. But if what He promises us is rest, why does He tell us to put on His yoke? A yoke is placed on a beast of burden in order to do some work. Is Jesus offering us rest or work? That is precisely the question Jesus wants us to ask: What work must we do for Him that supposedly will give us rest? Jesus answered this question in John 6:29: “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” (John 6:29). And He answered it in John 15:4: “Abide in me” (like a branch in a vine). Believe and abide: that really is all the work God requires of us. Faith (believing and abiding) is resting on the hopeful promises of God. That is the yoke Jesus calls us to put on.

And what is happening here is a yoke-exchange. In the cross, Jesus takes our inconceivably and unbearably heavy yoke of sin’s condemnation and penalty, and offers us in exchange the easy yoke and light burden of simply trusting Him. He does all the work and gives us all the rest. And His work not only fully addresses our sin problem, but also provides the supply of every other need we will ever have. All we are required to do is trust Him! And if that wasn’t enough, in becoming human and dwelling among us, Jesus makes it possible for us to learn from Him how to live by faith. Believe, abide, and follow in His steps (I Peter 2:21). That’s the light yoke Jesus calls us to put on. It is the only yoke in existence that gives us rest for our souls.

Verse 30 ~ This, as far as I know, is the only place where the Lord tells us what His person is really like, but this description tells us why taking His yoke is not just taking up another yoke. What is His point? “For I am gentle ... Do not fear my yoke for I am not like your previous masters. I am gentle and humble. You suffer now because your present masters (the world system, Satan, and your own sinful nature) are haughty, proud, and dominating.” “Easy” is from a verb which means “useful, manageable, serviceable, that which fills a need and is well fitting.” In other words, it is designed to fit our needs; it is tailor-made. “Light” in weight, agile, not burdensome, or overbearing.” So, what does it mean to take Christ’s yoke? To take Christ’s yoke means to submit to His person as the one who is gentle and meek, as one who is gentle and caring and concerned for us. It means to put yourself under His leading, to join yourself together with Him. This is how He can give rest.

Let’s talk about it. . .

What is the “yoke” Jesus is inviting us to put on?

Making it personal:

- So, if you are weary, for whatever reason, however complex, Jesus invites you to come. Come, take His light yoke of believing in Him. And if it’s hard, don’t come alone. Come to Jesus with and through a believing friend. Believe, abide, and follow Jesus’s example. That’s the light yoke Jesus calls us to put on. It is the only yoke in existence that gives us rest for our souls.

Closing Prayer: *“Dear God, please help us, we pray. Help us in such a way that we find rest for our souls as we abide in Jesus, as we walk with Jesus, as we learn what it means to follow Him, we pray that our souls will grow into greater and greater rest with You. In His Name we pray. Amen!”*

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