

Find Rest for Your Soul

Matthew 11:28-30

28. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29. 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. 30. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

A Chinese woman lost her dear son and could not find comfort. She carried unbearable burden of sorrow. One day she went to a wise old man and asked what to do. The old man said, “go to a home that has no sorrow or grief, and bring back a mustard seed as an evidence, and I will restore your son.” Several days went by, and she returned and said, “I have been so selfish in my grief...sorrow is common to every home.”

We all have some type of burden in our lives- It maybe sorrow, conflicts, worries, frustration, fear, turmoil, condemnation, failure, guilt, sickness etc. We tried to get rid of the burden but the burden never goes away. We tried to find somebody who can help us get rid of the burden but we can find no one.

But here, Jesus is saying that he can help us get rid of our burdens and find rest: “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.... and you will find rest for your souls.*”

It is rest for our souls. Rest for our souls means rest for our hearts and minds. As we need physical rest, we also need rest for our hearts and minds. Even if we have enough physical rest, we would still be tired and sick if we don't have rest for our hearts and minds.

So, with today's word, Jesus is inviting you and me to find rest for our souls.

Come to me

Jesus invites all who are weary and burdened to come to him to find rest.

It means to come to Jesus who sets us free from **the** burdens of guilt

The greatest burden that mankind faces is the burden of guilt. The burden of guilt constantly oppressing our hearts. It robs us of inner peace. It makes our hearts tired. There is no one and nothing that can get rid of the burden of guilt. Harrison Ford, the actor whose movies have grossed over 2 billion dollars said, “you only want what you ain’t got.” Somebody asked him, “Then what is it that you ain’t got?” He answered, “Peace!”

Coming to him means believing that he is the Redeemer who can pay for all the penalties of our sins and set us free from all the burdens caused by sins. When we come to Jesus and confess our sins, He sets us free from all burdens of guilt. 1 John 1:9 states, “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*” (1 John 1:9)

Jesus does not demand that **we** must come to him when we live a clean life without sinning. Rather, he calls us to come as we are. That does not mean that our sins are acceptable, but it means that before we can make **our** life clean we need to come to Him. When we come to him he makes us clean and set us free from the burden of guilt. Many have that backwards. Jesus calls us to come to him and to come as we are. What a joy it is to know that Jesus invites us to his resting place as we are.

It means to come to Jesus who sets us free from all religious burdens

The Jews of Jesus’ day were burdened by the grievous legalism placed on them by the religious leaders. Religious leaders’ interpretations of obeying the Law were so extreme that no one could possibly do what was expected of them.

The rules and regulations of religion give **us a** heavy burden if it is impossible for us to live it out. We become weary while we try to please God by keeping many religious rules. We have exhausted ourselves in trying to earn God's approval by our own efforts.

In this passage, Jesus is offering a faith that we can live out. He is saying we are not subject to rules and regulations that are impossible to obey. Jesus helps us obey and accomplish what the law asks us to do. How? By giving us God's grace and love. Through God's grace and love, we can love God. When we love God, **none of** his commandments are burdensome to us. It becomes words of love for us and we can obey them gladly as 1 John 5:3 says, "*This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome...*"

It means to come to Jesus who takes care of all other burdens

In 1930, an unusual event took place. It still represents an open FBI missing-person case. On August 15, after dining out with his family, a New York State Supreme Court Justice named Joseph Carter hailed a taxi and was never seen or heard from again. The FBI thought the disappearance might be work-related as the judge had heard many mob cases. But there was no real evidence to support that theory. All investigations led to dead-ends. The only clue was a note he left for his wife and family. It said, "I am very, very tired. Love, Joe." That was it. That was the last anyone ever heard from him.

Jesus has something to say to such a person, **a person** who is exhausted, worn out, chewed up and spit out by life. He offers rest to those who are frustrated, hurting, and tired. It means that when we bring all our burdens to Jesus and lay them at his feet, He will take care of them on behalf of us.

There is a story of a man riding down the road on a horse and cart when he saw a stranger struggling under a heavy load. He stopped and offered

him a ride, which the stranger gladly accepted. But as they rode along together, he noticed the stranger still **had** the huge sack on his back. So he said, "Why don't you just lay it down?" The stranger replied, "Oh no, it's good of you to carry me. I couldn't expect you to carry my sack too!"

This story exemplifies what will happen to us if we do not put our burdens down to God's care. So many times we want God to care for us but do not give Him the burden we are carrying. We become weary because we try to carry all our burdens by ourselves. Peter encourages us to lay our burdens down to the Lord so that we can be free from the burdens: "*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*" (1 Peter 5:7) The Amplified New Testament puts it this way, "*Casting the whole of your care—all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all—on Him; for He cares for you affectionately, and cares about you watchfully.*"

Cast your burdens to the Lord. Let him take care of your burdens. Then you will receive his rest in all circumstances.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me

Yoke that fits us personally

Jesus says "My yoke is easy." The word easy in Greek is "*chrestos*," which means well-fitting. In Palestine, ox-yokes were made of wood. The ox was brought, and the measurements were taken. The yoke was then roughed out, and the ox was brought back to have the yoke tried on. The yoke was then carefully adjusted so that it would fit well and would not gall the neck of **the** ox. The yolk was tailor-made to fit the ox. Jesus' yoke (his commandments) fits us well. The life that he gives us to live is not a bitter, burdensome life. Rather, it is a lifestyle that is made and measured to fit each of us.

In fellowship with Jesus, we learn that His yoke is not harsh and

oppressive, but gentle. Jesus' gentle presence brings us peace and comfort, and He enables us to continue on. That is why the Apostle Paul says in Philippians 1:6 "*Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*"

Power under control

Several years ago, the Wall Street Journal ran a story about Sally, an overly conscientious youngster who made herself miserable over the smallest failures and setbacks.

Early one fall, while the leaves were still on the trees, there was an exceptionally heavy snowstorm. Sally's grandfather took her for a drive and said, "Notice those elms, the branches are so badly broken that the trees may die. But just look at those pines and evergreens. They are completely undamaged by the storm. My child, there are two kinds of trees in the world, the foolish and the wise. An elm holds its branches rigid. As it becomes weighted down, eventually its limbs break. But when an evergreen is loaded, it simply relaxes, lowers its branches, and lets the burdens slip away."

The reason we are tired and burdened is because we are proud and stubborn. Our pride and stubbornness make us inflexible and rigid. When other people sin against us, we cannot forgive them. When others make mistakes, we are easily upset at the mistakes. We are upset even **about** small offenses by others. Our souls are always in turmoil. So we become weary with **the consequences of** our pride and stubbornness.

Taking **on** a yoke is a symbol of submission. It indicates a humble attitude of a student who is in submission to his teacher and learning from him. Ancient Jewish writing states, "Put your neck under the yoke and let your soul receive instruction." This is what Jesus had in mind here when He states to take His yoke and learn from Him. By yoking together with Jesus, and submitting ourselves to him, we receive Jesus'

humility and gentleness. In humility and gentleness, we receive rest for our souls.

When you are gentle, you can easily forgive others. You can handle their offenses gently. When you are humble, you can forgive them by realizing that you are a sinner as well and also make mistakes. When you are humble, you can always acknowledge that you are exactly the same sinner as others are. You acknowledge that without Jesus and his forgiveness, you are also a hopeless sinner. With such an acknowledgment, you can forgive other people's offenses against you. You do not harbor bitterness or **grudges** in your heart. When you are gentle and humble, you can have rest for your soul not because you are living in a sinless world, not because no one offends you, but because your gentleness and humility melt down all the bitterness and **grudges** caused by offenses. That is why your soul can find rest.

Strength in partnership

When animals are yoked together they produce better results. A pair of animals may yoke together to perform **more** work—pulling wagons, plows or a mill beam. A famous study was done on two horses. The first one could pull 10,000 lbs on a sled. The second could pull 14,000 lbs. What would you think they could pull when yoked together in the same direction? Most people would guess something close to 24,000 lbs, but the answer is 49,000 lbs! The sum is greater than **the** combination of the parts.

The reason why Jesus' yoke is easy for us to carry is because he shares the yoke we are taking and pulls the yoke for us. Jesus' yoke is light and easy because He does most of the work while He encourages us to do what we can.

When we take His yoke, we will get direction and resurrection. We get direction as the word of Proverbs 20:24 says, "*A man's steps are*

directed by the Lord.”

We get resurrection that unites us with the Lord as Romans 6:5 says, “*If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.*”