

## **“Rest for Your Soul”** (Matthew 11:25–30)(9.3.23)

Let me give you some context for this scripture. Just prior to our text for today, Jesus declares woe upon the Jewish cities where he had just performed notable miracles. They had seen the light of Jesus and his miracles but did not repent and come to faith.

Jesus says that even the wicked Gentile cities would have responded to him if they had experienced the same blessings. In the Bible, the city of Sodom is often cited as the standard of wickedness. Jesus said that even Sodom would have responded to His presence and miracles.

Then Jesus delivers the clincher. Because the Jewish cities had rejected Him, their punishment would be worse than the fate of Sodom. You will remember that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven. That brings us to today’s text.

Matthew 11:25–30      Amplified Bible      ***Come to Me***

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, “**I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth** [I openly and joyfully acknowledge Your great wisdom], **that You have hidden these things** [these spiritual truths] **from**

the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants [to new believers, to those seeking God's will and purpose].<sup>26</sup> Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.<sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one fully knows and accurately understands the Son except the Father; and no one fully knows and accurately understands the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son [deliberately] wills to reveal Him.

<sup>28</sup> "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavily burdened [by religious rituals that provide no peace], and I will give you rest [refreshing your souls with salvation].<sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me [following Me as My disciple], for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest (renewal, blessed quiet) for your souls.<sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy [to bear] and My burden is light."

## **The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: "**Rest for Your Soul**"

INTRODUCTION:

An often-overlooked aspect of our amazing God is that He pursues us. The Lord does not need us but knows that we need Him. He has sent prophets to

proclaim His glory and love. All of creation testifies about God, and those that deny Him are without excuse. He sent His only begotten Son to pay our debt and redeem our souls. Jesus lived a holy and sinless life as our perfect example. As Jesus promised, after His ascension to the right hand of the Father, God the Holy Spirit was sent on Pentecost. The Church, the Body of Christ, of which Jesus is the Head, was birthed on Pentecost. AND, all these things are recorded for us in the holy inspired word of God, our Bibles.

Like Father, like Son. Jesus' constant refrain is Come. Here, He implores, "Come to Me." If we come to Jesus, He promises to GIVE us rest. If we come to Jesus, He promises that we will FIND rest. These are two different types of rest for our SOULS. The first is our assurance of eternal life, our justification and salvation. The second is our life with Christ at our side; our sanctifying walk as a disciple of Jesus – learning and living.

BODY:

When Jesus started gathering His disciples, He said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." To others, Jesus said, "Come and see."

In Matthew 19:14 (NIV84) Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder

them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, he called to Simon Peter, “Come.” Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous but the sinners to repentance.”

To the rich young ruler, Jesus said, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Revelation 22:17 (NIV84) The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

The first church I served was Eldora United Methodist Church down in Cape May County. It was a tiny church with the front on a lightly traveled country road. In back of the church was a small field with Highway Route 47 abutting it. We bought a large banner and strung it across the back of the church so it could be seen from the highway. In red letters, it said, “Come and See.”

One of the cofounders of the Methodist Movement was Charles Wesley. He was a prolific poet and wrote over 6,000 hymns. Charles wrestles with

human reluctance to come to a saving faith with this poem:

**Sinners, Turn: Why Will You Die** by Charles Wesley

Sinners, turn: why will you die?  
God, your Maker, asks you why.  
God, who did your being give,  
made you himself, that you might live;  
he the fatal cause demands,  
asks the work of his own hands.  
Why, you thankless creatures, why  
will you cross his love, and die?

Sinners, turn: why will you die?  
God, your Savior, asks you why.  
God, who did your souls retrieve,  
died himself, that you might live.  
Will you let him die in vain?  
Crucify your Lord again?  
Why, you ransomed sinners, why  
will you slight his grace, and die?

Sinners, turn: why will you die?  
God, the Spirit, asks you why;  
he, who all your lives hath strove,  
wooded you to embrace his love.  
Will you not his grace receive?  
Will you still refuse to live?

Why, you long-sought sinners, why  
will you grieve your God, and die?

You, on whom he favors showers,  
you, possessed of nobler powers,  
you, of reason's powers possessed,  
you, with will and memory blest,  
you, with finer sense endued,  
creatures capable of God;  
noblest of his creatures, why,  
why will you forever die?

You, whom he ordained to be  
transcripts of the Trinity,  
you, whom he in life does hold,  
you, for whom himself was sold,  
you, on whom he still does wait,  
whom he would again create;  
made by him, and purchased, why,  
why will you forever die?

You, who own his record true,  
you, his chosen people, you,  
you, who call the Savior Lord,  
you, who read his written Word,  
you, who see the gospel light,  
claim a crown in Jesu's right;  
why will you, ye Christians, why  
will the house of Israel die?

Turn, he cries, ye sinners, turn;  
by his life your God hath sworn;  
he would have you turn and live,  
he would all the world receive;  
he hath brought to all the race  
full salvation by his grace;  
he has no one soul passed by;  
why will you resolve to die?

Can ye doubt, if God is love,  
if to all his mercies move?  
Will ye not his word receive?  
Will ye not his oath believe?  
See, the suffering God appears!  
Jesus weeps! Believe his tears!  
Mingled with his blood they cry,  
why will you resolve to die?

How can it be that Jesus says that Father God has hidden the good news of the gospel from the wise and intelligent but revealed it to infants? **It is "hidden" in plain sight.** I have already listed several ways that God has pursued the human race and offers salvation to ALL.

The problem is that a lot of people are wise in their own minds. Ephesians 4:18 (NIV84) They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 2

Corinthians 4:4 (NIV84) The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The intelligent believe that somehow they can figure an infinite, holy, perfect, and righteous God out with their finite minds. It is nothing but pride, and I know it firsthand because it was my downfall for decades.

Many think the good news of the gospel is too simple to be true. Romans 10:6–9 (NIV84)

<sup>6</sup>But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)<sup>7</sup>"or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:<sup>9</sup> **That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**

Maybe if it was as daunting as climbing the highest mountain or diving into the deepest depths of the ocean that might be more palatable to them. And, if it is that easy, it is available to everyone. Yes! That is exactly right. Every person who has ever



lived comes before God in exactly the same way. Intelligence, wealth, position, power, attractiveness, charisma, gender, race, religion, nationality, athletic prowess, creativity – whatever differentiation we have conceived mean nothing in our coming to Jesus.

New believers are all infants. We are to come to Jesus as little children. We are fully dependent children on the grace of God. We are to trust God like children trust their loving parents. We are to have confidence in our God. Preacher Adrian Rogers clarified: “Now we’re not talking about being childish. God forbid that we should be childish. But we should be childlike.”

Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8–9 (NIV84)

<sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast. > An innocent child receives a gift with joy and gratitude. But as we become adults, independent and self-sufficient, we become somewhat jaded and suspicious. What is the catch? How can it be that easy? You mean I don’t have to earn my salvation, my good standing with the Creator?

In John 14:6, Jesus says that He is the only WAY to the Father and He is saying the same thing from a different vantage point in today’s text. He is

explaining the unique relationship of God the Father and God the Son. You cannot know God unless you know the Son because Jesus REVEALS the Father to those who will believe.

Knowing God comes through revelation and that happens through the working Spirit of Christ. AND, it is a GIFT. Jesus tells us He will GIVE us, as part of this gift, rest. This rest is sorely needed and is a common theme in scripture. Sometimes it is interchangeable with peace, stillness, or relief.

Psalm 116:7 (NIV84) Be at rest once more, O my soul,

for the Lord has been good to you.

Revelation 14:13 (NIV84) Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV84)

<sup>16</sup>This is what the Lord says:

"Stand at the crossroads and look;

ask for the ancient paths,

ask where the good way is, and walk in it,

and you will find rest for your souls.

But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'

Do not be deceived into thinking that this salvation is a life of ease. Not at all. A yoke is an instrument of work. The oxen are joined together by the yoke so that they can more effectively plow the field or pull the cart. But because it is Jesus' yoke, and we **MUST WILLINGLY** put it on, it is Kingdom work. Remember that Ephesians 2:10, the verse immediately following the one saying we are not saved by our works. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to **do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Preacher John Henry Newman addresses this issue: "Again, in another place, our Lord speaks more expressly; "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Here we have the words of the text emphatically repeated. To come to Christ, is to come after Him; to take up our cross, is to take upon us His yoke; and though He calls this an easy yoke, yet it is easy because it is His yoke, and He makes it easy; still it does not cease to be a yoke, and it is troublesome and distressing, because it is a yoke."

So, we have this seeming paradox. This “rest” is not a cessation from work or effort. This rest is soul filled rest. It is a deeper and empowering rest. Think of it as a nuclear reactor within us, welling up from within, just bursting to live out its purpose. Yes, we must plow the fields of human despondency and futility. We are to build beacons of hope and fountains filled with grace.

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,  
calling for you and for me;  
see, on the portals he's waiting and watching,  
watching for you and for me.

Refrain:

Come home, come home;  
ye who are weary come home;  
earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,  
calling, O sinner, come home!

CONCLUSION:

Do not think of Christ's yoke as restraining you. We make a mistake when we think like the kite. It is soaring in the beautiful blue sky. It imagines that if it could just free itself of that restraining string it could reach the highest heavens. Let me just cut loose from this earthly connection. What happens when the kite string is cut? It flies out of control and comes crashing down to earth.

But Jesus' yoke connects you to God. You are in a relationship, communion, with your God and your purpose. Each yoke is easy because it has been formed specifically for you. There is a burden but it is light because you share it with your Savior.

Evangelist Dwight L. Moody shared this story:

"I was in Wales once, and a lady told me this little story: An English friend of hers, a mother, had a child that was sick. At first they considered there was no danger, until one day the doctor came in and said that the symptoms were very unfavorable. He took the mother out of the room, and told her that the child could not live. It came like a thunderbolt. After the doctor had gone the mother went into the room where the child lay and began to talk to the child and tried to divert its mind.

"Darling, do you know you will soon hear the music of heaven? You will hear a sweeter song than you have ever heard on earth. You will hear them sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. You are very fond of music. Won't it be sweet, darling?"

And the little tired, sick child turned its head away, and said, "Oh mamma, I am so tired and so sick that I think it would make me worse to hear all that music."

“Well,” the mother said, “you will soon see Jesus. You will see the seraphim and cherubim and the streets all paved with gold”; and she went on picturing heaven as it is described in Revelation.

The little tired child again turned its head away, and said, “Oh mamma, I am so tired that I think it would make me worse to see all those beautiful things!”

At last the mother took the child up in her arms, and pressed her to her loving heart. And the little sick one whispered:

“Oh mamma, that is what I want. If Jesus will only take me in His arms and let me rest!”

My friends, come to Jesus and find your rest. Come to the Lord’s Table and be nourished by His Body and His Blood. Let us prepare our hearts for Holy Communion.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.