

The Gospel Invitation

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[0 : 00] Gospel by Matthew chapter 11 and verse 28. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lonely in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. It was a call to the laboring and the heavy laden. And there were many in Christ's congregation that day who were in such a condition. The Jews were politically, socially, economically, spiritually a laboring and heavy laden people. Palestine was occupied by a pagan power. And the Roman overlords were everywhere, exacting burdens and placing their yokes upon the necks of the people.

[1 : 31] It was hard to live in those days. The people became impoverished and their circumstances were difficult.

It was a constant grind to find their daily bread. And spiritually, they were oppressed by a religion that had no answer to their needs.

The Pharisees had a conception of religion that placed a burden unspeakable upon the minds and hearts of men.

Commanded them to work out their own righteousness in meaningless ways. And what ought to be an inspiration and a help became an oppressive bondage to them.

And it was such a people that the Lord Jesus gave a call to rest, to peace.

[2 : 47] How relevant it was. The call of the Lord Jesus is never irrelevant to human need.

It is fitted to meet our precise circumstances. He knows, he understands, he cares.

And to such a people, he offered rest. Rest, if they accepted his invitation.

And he had three invitations to give. Come, take, and learn. Come, take, and learn.

And in obedience to these three invitations, their rest deepened. Their peace took more and more hold of their hearts and nature.

[3 : 47] And they entered more and more into the peace that remains for the people of God.

Heaven begins on earth.

Now I feel that that is the message of God to our generation and to us personally.

It is a message, a call to peace, to rest, to deliverance. And it's a threefold call.

Come, take, learn. Come.

How long are you looking to? in the only way in which a spiritual being can come by Christ, by faith, by committer. And he tells us about himself so that it's not a leap in the dark. Faith is never a leap in the dark. Christ tells us what he's calling us to. Come unto me and then he describes himself. All things are delivered unto me of my father.

[5 : 29] No man knoweth me, the son, but the father. And no man knoweth a father but whosoever, to whomsoever the son will redeem him. Come, come unto me. So he is inviting us first of all to the fullness, the abundance of his grace for us. All things are delivered to me. Now it is need that first drives us to the Savior. And if you never had a sense of need, I doubt if you'd ever think of looking Christwards. But the Gospel tells you that Christ is the answer to your need. And he says himself that he has all things given to him so that you didn't need to go empty away.

Listen again. All things are delivered unto me of my father. Come unto me and I will give you the rest you need.

And you know, it is want that rises to Christ. And it is the assurance that he can meet that need.

That is the answer to our problems. And that he will find exactly the grace we need.

So what is grace? Let me tell you what the grace of God is. It is the resources of God meeting us at the point of our deepest need. And all these resources of the eternal and almighty have been

deposited in Jesus Christ.

So that no empty-hearted, empty-hearted, empty-handed sinner might be sent away empty. That nobody would say, I came to Christ, but he had what I needed. I had to go away. He claims that all things were delivered unto him so that nobody would be turned away.

[7 : 55] And the grace of God means all his resources were deposited in Christ. So that in the hour of your distress, the hour of your poverty, the hour of your dying need, you might face him.

And find exactly what your heart and soul need. He promises, he pledges, he lays before you the fullness, the richness of his permission. And he says, you will not go away empty. Come, all things are delivered to me.

But more, he invites you to get to know him. As the one who supplies you. But he goes on to say, no man knoweth me, but the Father come unto me and I will give you. In other words, you'll never know me till you come as debtor to my grace.

And then you'll meet with me. And then you'll meet with me. And I'll make myself known to you. And I'll be a personal saviour to you forever after. You'll know me.

You may think you'll know me now. You may think you know me now. But no man knoweth a son but the Father. But if you come, you'll know me. And that's the wonder of the gospel invitation. It's the fullness to which we are invited.

[9 : 29] We are invited. But it's the wonder that he is given to us. You'll know me. But it's given to us by our passion. Who makes himself known to us. You remember when there was poverty in the land, the sons of Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt. Corn, oh that's what they needed in poverty. And Jacob sent his sons again and again to Egypt to fill their sacks of corn. But at one stage when their sacks were filled, the giver of the blessing bent over to them and said, bent over them and said, I am Joseph your brother whom he sold into the Egypt. They met their brother when they found the blessing throne. And friend, it is ever shown the gospel. When you come better to Greece, you'll meet a saviour and he'll whisper in your ears, I am Joseph your brother whom you sold to the cross. There's no retribution in his heart, no vengeance in his nature. Come unto me and I'll give you rest.

You'll meet your saviour. And a wonderful thing. Not the blessing but the one who gave you the blessing. You remember when the woman of Samaria got something to slay her inner thirst. She ran away into the city and she said, come and see the fountain. No, no. Come and see a man who told me all things that ever I did. It's a man she met at the well. That was the attraction. And it's a man that you meet with a blessing of grace that fills your eyes. Oh you'll sing. What a saviour. I met himself.

He told me. He told me. He told me. That he was Joseph my brother. But Christ also says that you are invited to his father. He will show you the father.

No man knoweth the father save the son and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him. Come unto me and I will.

That's it. And you say, what does it mean? That when Jesus makes himself known as a saviour who gave you the grace of pardon and of peace and of hope, he told you it was the father's eternal love that sent him.

[12 : 53] And the father's sovereign purpose that he came to fulfill. And that for eternal ages the father had you in his mind and heart to give you a blessing.

And you see that the source of your salvation lay deep in the heart and nature of God. And you go away wondering, wondering.

How could it be that it enriches, it deepens your salvation ten thousand fold?

You know, when Zacchaeus got the invitation that day to come down and Jesus would abide in his house. I have no doubt at all, but Zacchaeus was congratulating himself that he went out that morning.

What brought me out, he said, I cannot tell, but I had an urge to go. I'm glad I went up into the tree or he would have missed me. I'm glad I waited till he came for he noticed me.

[14 : 04] And no doubt Zacchaeus would be congratulating himself that things had gone so well with him that day. And then Jesus said to him, Zacchaeus, I have somewhat to say to you.

Salvation is come to this house. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Zacchaeus was staggered, Master, will you say that again? To seek and to save that which was lost. Did you come to Jericho to seek and to save me?
Was it your seeking that made a sicker of me? Did I go this morning because you were coming and you drew me out?

Ah, Zacchaeus was enveloped in a mystery of the Father's purpose, the Father's will, the Father's grace.

[15 : 13] And oh, how it deepened the joy in Zacchaeus half that day. He came to seek and to save Zacchaeus. That's why he visited Jericho.

Friend, salvation is complete when you recognize that you got peace, pardon and forgiveness fully and freely in Jesus Christ.

And that he showed you his hands and his feet and revealed himself to you as the one who bought it all at a terrible price.

And then unveils to you the Father's heart and the Father's purpose behind him. And you say, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ.

He brought me to himself and he introduced me to his Father. Friend, that's what Jesus says. If you exercise faith, if you come trustingly, believingly, I will give you rest.

[16 : 24] Out of my fullness, you shall find the grace you need. And you'll find myself as your personal savior. And you'll be able to say forever after, he loved me and gave himself for me.

You'll find yourself at the heart and at the center of all I did, of my love and my redemption. And you'll find my Father's purpose behind it all.

Oh, what a full salvation. Come unto me and I will give you rest. That is an invitation then to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The rest of faith. But he goes on to say, take my yoke upon you.

Another invitation with another promise. For every invitation that Christ gives, you'll find a promise wrapped up in its folds.

[17 : 35] For you take the invitations of the Gospel and unwrap them. There are promised somewhere. And here it is. Take my yoke upon you and you shall find rest in your souls.

What's that? The rest of obedience. Obedience. Yes, that's what a yoke means. In the old days, when Jesus was well acquainted with tilling the soil, two oxen be sent out to plow.

And they were under a common yoke. Both of them were under the same yoke. And if one of them, if they pulled together, it was easy.

But if one of them lagged behind, the yoke began to hurt. It began to fray their necks. It was painful. But they had to pull together.

And the Lord Jesus said, come now. I've got a yoke. My yoke. And you have to pull with me.

[18 : 52] And if you obey me, my yoke is easy. My burden is light. If you obey me, you'll find rest, he says, in doing my will.

Ah. Do you mean to say, say that that is yes. Your soul got rest when you believed. Your heart is rebellious.

Oh, you're complaining this is hard. That is hard. And you are so disappointed and dispirited, so querulous, so disagreeable, so unpleasant.

Why? Oh, you're living in disobedience to the one who redeemed you. And it's painful. The yoke will hurt. But he says, if you'll take my yoke upon you and pull with me, you'll find my yoke is easy.

How is that? Oh, he's with you under the yoke. It's his yoke. And he's with you there. And he gives you his fellowship, his love and his strength.

[20 : 04] He redeemed you so that you'd carry his yoke with him. There's a story that comes from the United States, the deep south, in the days of slavery and the abolition of slavery.

And there was a Christian gentleman there who on many platforms spoke against slavery and agitated for the deliverance of the slave.

He was well known. And one day he went to the slave market and he began to bid for a slave. And he gave the highest figure and he bought the slave and took him home. And the slave recognized him.

And he said to him, Sir, he said, are you not the man who was speaking against slavery and wanted it abolished?

[21 : 15] Yes, he said, I am. And how, how did you ever buy me? I bought you so that I would set you free.

Break your bands and set you free. Friend, Christ set us free from every foreign yoke. And then he puts his own on us and he says, Pull with me and you'll find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy. My burden is light. Does Christ not give heavy burdens then? Oh yes, very. There's nobody can give such a heavy burden as Christ. You remember when he was leaving his disciples in the world alone. He said to them, what?

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Did he mean it? Yes. Wasn't it unreasonable?

[22 : 19] Yes. Very unreasonable. And were they not crushed? No. Because he said to them, And lo, I am with you all the way.

And that made the yoke easy and the burden light. He was under the yoke himself with them.

Friend, It's the rest that obedience to Christ gives.

Now, there are many Christians who got the rest of faith, the sense of forgiveness. The condemnation is gone.

They have rest of conscience and rest of soul. But they have no rest of heart. Why? They are not living in the will of their master.

And the yoke is hurting, sore. I beseech you then. Listen to the second invitation. Take my yoke upon you.

[23 : 24] And you shall find rest. Deep, ever deepening rest for your soul. Rest of heart. But there's another invitation given.

It is this. Learn of me. For I am meek and lowly of heart. Rest of humility.

Rest of spirit. What the Bible calls your mind. Your spirit. So what do you mean?

I mean this. That if you have a proud spirit, it's going to break your peace and disturb your rest ten thousand times a day.

Oh, I know it. I know it. Good Christian people come to me and say, you know how annoyed I am and such and such a person, you know, always wanting to be first pushing himself and pushing herself to the front and how it annoys one, how it disturbs me.

[24 : 34] Yes, because this person doesn't like to be second, you see. It hurts him to be second. Pride is hurting.

And if we had humility of spirit. But Christ said, learn of me. It's not too late to begin, to enter Christ's school.

He is your teacher and is your lesson too. And if you learn of him, he's meek. Unleak. Unleak.

Unleak. And you shall find rest into your souls. Yes. Humility of spirit. Gives wonderful rest.

Try it someday. What's humility you say? Humility you say is to think little of myself. No, no, no, no it isn't. Humility is not to think of yourself at all.

[25 : 37] That's humility. Don't think of yourself at all. And you'll find rest into your souls. People who think little of themselves, they get in the way such a lot.

Their humility makes them stumble. That's not humility. Humility is a passion who doesn't put himself in it at all. Meek.

Not weak, oh no. The meek passion is a strong passion. He can afford it. He has a strength of character that can carry it out.

He's meek in the sense that he can afford to let others go forward. He can afford to give them place. That strength is not weakness.

And it's lowly in heart. Knowing that he got the grace of God, how could he be proud of heart? He's learned in the school of Christ. And it's a lesson that only the master can teach.

[26 : 42] And it gives rest to our souls. How much unrest, how much dis-peace, we'd have said ourselves, if we went to the school of Christ, and learned the secret of meekness and lowliness of heart.

It would save us many a tear, and save us many a box of aspirates, to ease our headaches, which we got, because our nerves got frayed, and our tempers were hardly, could hardly be subsided.

Ah, in the school of Christ, there is a better way out. Learn of him. He is meek, and lowly of heart.

And what a rest. The prophet said it long ago. And the peace of, no, it's the psalmist, it's the, Paul who said it, to the Philippian church.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. I told you it wasn't reasonable, in the sense that you could reason about it.

[28 : 11] It passes your reason, it passes your understanding. It's God's peace. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep, and the word is garrison, act like a soldier on set now.

You shall garrison, what? The two avenues, by which peace, this peace can come in, your heart, and your mind.

These gates are under watch. The peace of God, keeps the garrison, from being invaded, by the forces of this peace.

The channels by which it comes. The heart, you know that, and mind. The anxiety of heart, and the worry of mind.

And the peace of God, stands sentinel, at the gates. It's the peace of God. It passes our own understanding.

[29 : 21] It contradicts our circumstances. It goes against all our calculations. And you say to yourself, well, well, if I had known that things would have turned out like this, I don't think I could have put up with it.

I don't think I could have carried on. It's strange to say, I don't feel like that now. I have wonderful peace. Yes. It's not your own peace. It's not made up by yourself.

It's not patched up. It's not a great difference between happiness and joy. Happiness depends on what happens.

Joy doesn't. Joy has its roots deep down. You know, that's the peace of the world. You know, the peace of God and will garrison the twin citadels of heart and mind.

Well, that's what the Lord Jesus says. And he says it tonight. Come unto me. Come unto me, take my yoke upon you, learn of me and your peace will grow, your rest will deepen and you'll be more able to detach yourself from every entanglement and serve me in the liberty of salvation.

[30 : 56] Friend, take him at his word. He is the answer to your needs. Test him.

No one ever came in living faith and trust and commitment that was said, threadbare away. Never, never and never shall.

He's got all things. And better than all, you'll meet himself. And when you meet himself, you'll meet his father too.

And you're enveloped in the great salvation that had its roots not in time, but in eternity. And you'll know that the son of man came to seek and to save you that had been lost.

Come. And whosoever comes, he will never cast out. And if he doesn't cast you out, he'll cast you in. Be sure of it. He'll not die on his doorstep.

[31 : 58] He'll cast you in. He'll cast you in to safety and shelter and peace. Let us pray. Our blessed Lord, we have thy bidding.

May we take it seriously to heart tonight. And may we take this invitation with us and say, Lord, you have invited me.

I come. We thank thee, blessed Savior. Thou wilt recognize thine own invitations. And may we fulfill thine own promises.