

Come unto me

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[0 : 00] In Matthew chapter 11, and we shall read again from verse 28. Matthew chapter 11, from verse 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labored and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.

For I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your soul. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Particularly the words in verse 28. Come unto me, all ye that labored and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Now these are words with which we have all been familiar from our earliest days. The smallest person in the Sabbath school knows these words.

[1 : 20] And the oldest person who has forgotten many things can still remember these words from the days of his youth. Come unto me, all ye that labored and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

But the important question we have to ask ourselves is, have these words ever been spoken to our soul in the power of the Holy Spirit, in a way that has brought us to the Savior for this rest.

Because it's not knowing the words, but experiencing the power of these words, when accompanied by the Spirit of God, that will bring a blessing to us.

And it must be a terrible thing for a sinner in hell to be able to quote eternally to himself these words of his Savior, which he was so familiar with.

Come unto me, and I will give you rest. And yet, to be shut out forever from the Savior, and from that rest. And may God in his mercy grant that there will be no one within these walls who will remember these words in a place to which no Savior and no rest will ever come.

[2 : 47] Well, in trying to look at them, the first thing I would like to refer to briefly is the description that is given of the people who are addressed in these words.

All ye that labor and are heavy laden. Now, there's a sense, of course, in which these words can describe every single sinner of mankind.

All mankind, because, as our shorter catechism reminds us, all mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God.

And they are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

That's the condition of every single sinner of mankind, from the moment of birth to the moment of death, is out of Christ.

[3 : 58] Under a burden of guiltiness and corruption, of condemnation and curse. And these words of the Lord Jesus, assuring the sinners who come to him of wrath, are words which we can address to all mankind to come under the sound of them.

Because we have no fear that there will be found a sinner in all the world who will come to Christ and will not get rest. It doesn't matter where you've come from.

It doesn't matter what you've been. It doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter how long you have gone on in the ways of sin and ungodliness. You can be sure from the mouth of the Lord himself that the sinner who will come to the Savior, however great the burden of his sin, will find rest.

So there is no one here that needs to feel that there is something in the purpose of God, or that there is something in their own particular experience and life, which will exclude them from experiencing the benefit of this promise if they come to the Savior.

It doesn't matter what kind of sinner you have been. If you come to Christ, you'll get a welcome, and he will save you to the very uttermost. But I think there's a very particular application in these words.

[5 : 33] It is as if the Lord is putting his hand on the shoulder of a certain sinner. The sinner who has been awakened to a sense of his sin and condemnation.

The sinner who has been awakened to realize that he is obliged to keep the whole law, and he hasn't kept one aspect of it.

The sinner who has been awakened to realize that his breaking of the law has exposed him justly to God's displeasure. The sinner who has come to have a concern above every other concern, to be put right in his relationship to God.

And yet, the more he tries to do what will win God's favor, the more he realizes how utterly hopeless his situation is.

Here is a sinner whose conscience has been enlightened, who has come to see sinness against God, who has come to appreciate that God is just when he condemns the sinner.

[6 : 47] He's looking for a righteousness that will commend him to God. He's trying to obey the law of God. He's trying to repent of his sin.

He's trying to do this and he's trying to do that. And the more he tries, the more lost he feels. The Lord is saying in a very special way, to that awakened and self-condemned sinner, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And there are certain kind of sinners, awakened by the grace of God, to a sense of sin, a sense of condemnation, a yearning for salvation.

And the greatest burden that that sinner has is this, that he feels that his burden of sin is not felt sufficiently by him.

And there may be someone here today who is in that condition. And that person is trying his best, is trying her best to feel the burden of sin more than he has done today too.

[8 : 06] Now, that is an awful burden to be under. The burden that your burden is not heavy enough to your way of thinking to come to the Savior.

That whatever nature the sense of your burden has or takes, a sinner, conscious of sin, conscious of condemnation, desires of a righteousness which will avail in the sight of God, has this invitation, this call, addressed to him, come unto me, all ye that labors and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And the sad thing is that there are so few who are sinners in their own estimation. That's why the gospel is having so little effect.

The gospel is no use to people unless they are sinners. The gospel has no interest to people unless they are sinners. Those who are whole don't need a position.

There's something wrong with a person who's forever going to the doctor when there's nothing wrong with him. Most ordinary people will not go near a doctor unless there's something wrong with them. And that's certainly the way with the sinner in relation to the gospel of Christ.

[9 : 31] There are so few sinners in the world today. There are so few sinners in the church today. so few people who feel condemned are sinners by the law of God.

And therefore there's so little enthusiasm for the gospel. There's so little interest in the gospel. But when a sinner is feeling the burden of sin, then you can be sure of this.

This will be a joyful sound in that sinner's ear. Here is the Son of God from heaven. And he's saying, come unto me and I will give you rest.

Well, the second thing I would like to refer to and really it's the main thing in the text and that is the person who is addressing burdened sinners.

That's the most important subject in any text. The person who is addressing sinners. Come unto me and I will give you rest.

[10 : 36] We can say, as Moses said, come thou with us and we will do thee good. Because if you come with us we will be able to show to you a person who is able to save you.

But there's only one person who can say, come to me and I will give you rest. God himself in his absolute Godhood could not say to the sinner, come to me and I will give you rest.

If you come to an absolute God there is nothing for you but condemnation. No mere man can say, come unto me and I will give you rest.

But here is God in our nature. Here is the eternal God become man so that he can be the righteousness of his people so that he can die the death of his people and he can say come unto me and I will give you rest.

Now there are two or three things about this person that show us how suitable he is to be a savior and that encourage the awakened sinner to come to him.

[11 : 55] And we just confine ourselves to what is found in the context. And the first thing we find about him is that he is the one who was purpled and promised as the savior.

When John the Baptist was in prison he sent messengers to Jesus saying art thou he that should come or look we for another.

And it's something to think of that John the Baptist after all his enlightenment in the knowledge of Christ he had his depression and he had his questions and he had his fears.

John the Baptist wasn't just pretending that he had a question in his mind. John the Baptist wasn't just sending these disciples to Jesus for their benefit.

He had to take the words after his value unless there's any reason to do otherwise. And he said art thou he that should come. His time in prison had depressed him.

[12 : 59] His time in prison had raised questions. If this is the Christ if he has come to preach the kingdom of God how is it that this has happened to me? How is it that I'm here in prison?

Instead of out there with him proclaiming the coming of the kingdom. The Lord's people have their decession they have their questions they have their fears. Art thou he that should come.

But the important thing is his description of Jesus he that should come the promised Messiah the one who was in the covenant the one who was in the promise the one who was in the scripture the one who was the seed of the woman the son of David the lamb of God the great high priest and there's something that is a great encouragement to a sinner burdened by sin when he realizes that he is a person and from all eternity God appointed him and purposed him and promised him to be the saviour of his people he that should come.

Doesn't that raise a little hope in your own soul if you're burdened by sin? Fear is a passion and God himself appointed him from all eternity to save sinner.

Another thing we notice about him is how completely in harmony he is with the severity of God. when a person becomes burdened by a sense of sin that person becomes aware of divine holiness and divine justice and it becomes a question to that person how can God be just?

[15 : 00] How can God be holy and true and yet there be any hope for a sinner like me? The justice of God condemns me. Well you notice what he says here about Korazan and Bethsaida and Capernaum he says you've been exalted to heaven you'll be brought down to hell.

The Lord Jesus when he was inviting sinners to himself was speaking as one who is in perfect harmony with the intention of God to cast the wicked into hell.

He is speaking as one who shares the same divine holiness the same divine righteousness the same divine justice as the Sabbath. there is no one who speaks more clearly of an everlasting hell than Christ.

Who is it that speaks of the warren that dieth not and the fire that's not quenched? It's not John the Baptist it's Christ and the very fact that he came to this world and the very fact that he went to Calvary under the burden of his people's guiltiness and God's just condemnation of them for their guiltiness is the supreme testimony to the fact that he is in perfect harmony with God's justice and when he says come unto me and I will give you rest he is speaking as one who has faced up to the justice of Jehovah one who is in perfect sympathy with the justice of Jehovah one who will do nothing to undermine the justice of God and that's a great encouragement to a sinner he is a savior and he's as committed to the punishment of a sinner as the father is he is as holy and as just as the father is and yet with all that holiness and justice in harmony with that holiness and justice he can say come to me and I will give you rest it's a great encouragement to one who has self-exposed before the justice of

God there's another thing about him and that is his perfect harmony with God the father in the sovereignty of his grace as he says here I thank thee oh father lord of heaven and earth because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babe even so father for so it seems good in thy sight now there's a strong doctrine of the grace of God God is sovereign God is sovereign in his purposes God is sovereign in his choice of the sinner who is going to be saved God is sovereign in the application of redemption God is sovereign in that he can say he will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy what a glorious truth is the truth of divine sovereignty and divine predestination and divine election and yet what a burden that truth has been to many sinners awakened to a sense of sin and you may be here today and you've had this trial or you're having it or you'll have it yet what hope is there for me if salvation comes from a sovereign

[19 : 07] God who chooses whom he chooses and who saves whom he purposes to save and many people try to be much more clever than man can be and to reconcile to their own way of thinking divine sovereignty and divine responsibility the man has never lived who has been able to do that to any satisfaction at all but here is the person who is himself God who is himself an equal partner in the everlasting covenant who has come to save those whom the father gave to him who is in perfect harmony with God's sovereignty and God's election and he says to the sinners come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest you don't know if you're in

God's election and you'll not know if you're in God's election unless you come to the saviour there's not a sinner who has known that in order to encourage him to come not one but here is the person who does know perfectly and what he is setting before it is the fact that there is no contradiction between his calling the sinner his drawing the sinner his inviting the sinner to himself and the fact that God has mercy on whom he will have mercy if you are seeking Christ if your soul is deciding the saviour then you don't have to worry for one moment that perhaps after all you are not in God's election because this is how God's election operates it is

God's sovereign grace it is God's electing grace that draws the sinner that calls the sinner that brings the sinner to the saviour if you are not interested in Christ then the fault is your own but if you are seeking the saviour then you don't have to be concerned that there is something in the hidden purpose of God that will exclude you because the saviour is giving us this authority himself to say that the very coming to Christ is the fruit of God's sovereign purpose and grace labouring heavy laden sinners you can be sure of this that you will never find anything in the purpose of God that will keep you away from the saviour that you are seeking come unto me I am the one he says who is in perfect harmony with the will of

God who knows that will thoroughly and I am assuring you that if you come to me you'll have rest now there are other things about him that emphasise how suitable he is as a saviour when you think of his godhood he is equal with the father only he knows the father only the father knows him he is not speaking as a weak man he is speaking as God and also he is speaking as the revealer of God he says he is no man knows the father save the son and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him when he says come unto me and I will give you rest he is speaking of the one whom God sent to reveal the father to sinners he is not turning people's eyes away from

God he is not encouraging them by closing their eyes to God there are many people who are doing that there is much comfort given to sinners today by this expedient of hiding from them the truth about God you don't hear very much in many places about divine holiness and divine majesty and divine glory you don't hear very much about a God in whose presence angels veil their faces a God in whose eyes the heavens are not clean people are comforted and especially at funerals by men trying to put a veil over the face of God trying to hide the truth about God but that's not the way with the Lord Jesus Christ he's giving this comfort to burdened sinners and he's doing it as the revealer of

[24 : 25] God he's doing it as the one who shows the divine glory and majesty and holiness and isn't that a great comfort to a sinner the one who is saying come unto me and I will give you rest is the one who can show us who is showing us the Sabbath so we'll never find anything in God in his holiness and his majesty which will contradict the comfort which Christ is giving heed but we must pass on and say just a word or two about the invitation which he is addressing to sinners it is Christ in all the glory of his passion as the revealer of God as the saviour of sinners who is saying to burden sinners these words that you are the invitation he gives come unto me come unto me now

I wonder can you find anywhere in the bible from the beginning to the end where there is an explanation of what it means to come to Christ what it means to believe in Christ what it means to trust in Christ A lot of our time is spent trying to explain to people how they can come to the Saviour.

You don't find that at all in Christ or in the Apostles. The emphasis is not on the how of the coming.

The emphasis is on the person to whom we must come. And down through the generations, sinners who have come to Christ have not come because somebody said A, B, C, D. These are the steps by which you come to the Saviour.

They have come to the Saviour because the Saviour in all the glory of his passion has revealed himself to them by the power of his Holy Spirit. And they came to Jesus without knowing anything about the procedures or the processes.

[26 : 38] They were buried in sinners, lost and ruined, awakened to a sense of their need. And the Lord revealed himself to them. And before they knew it, they were trusting him.

That is the way of the grace of God. That is what it's emphasized here. Hither to me. He's setting himself before them. And it's that sight of himself that draws the sinner so that the sinner abandons himself to the mercy of God and casts himself upon Christ as his only Saviour.

This coming is not something external. It's not walking down to the front. It's not doing some outward action.

This coming is the whole heart and mind and will of the sinner going out to the Saviour and resting upon him alone for salvation.

Come unto me. Come unto me. What you need, what I need is Christ. We're needing pardon.

[27 : 46] We're needing repentance. We're needing faith. We're needing love. We're needing all sorts of things. And we've been awakened to a sense of that perhaps by the grace of God.

But what we're needing more than all, and where all these things are found, is Christ. We're needing Christ. And that's what he's saying to us here.

You haven't to go there or somewhere else. You haven't to be seeking after this or that particular blessing alone. What you need is Christ.

And Christ is there in all his fullness to meet your need. Come to me. Don't be looking elsewhere for salvation. Don't be looking to yourself.

Don't be looking to what you can do or what others can do. But be looking only to the Saviour. And you notice something else about this invitation.

[28 : 48] If you come to Christ, if Christ becomes Christ to you and you owe everything to him, this will be true of you.

You will take his yoke upon you. You'll want to be submitted to his will. Now, we haven't time to consider what is involved in taking his yoke upon us.

We just mentioned these points. That when the Lord says, take my yoke upon you, when he says my yoke, he is referring to the yoke which he imposes on his people, his commandments, his revealed will.

He is referring to the yoke which he himself has borne. Because the Lord is not asking his people to do something he hasn't done himself. He was completely subject to the will of God.

And when he says, take my yoke, he is also saying, this is a yoke which I will share with you. You must bear it.

[30 : 01] I have borne it. I will help you to carry it too. The yoke of obedience to the revealed will of God. And the fact that he speaks about his yoke shows us that Christian liberty is not licensed.

That's the mistake that many people are making. They think Christian liberty means you can do what you like. As long as you're a Christian, you can do what you like. But what Christian liberty means is that you have been enabled by the grace of God to like what the Lord likes.

And to be willing to do what the Lord wants you to do. That is Christian liberty. Not to be free to do what you like, but to be free to like what is in accordance with the will of God.

And to seek to do that. Free from the power of sin. Free from the love of sin. Free to keep his commandment. The very fact that it's called a yoke shows that this is a restraint upon us.

And that there is that in us which rebels against it. And I'm sure that the oldest Christians here are the people who are most conscious. That there is that within them which would put the yoke off them if it could.

[31 : 20] And perhaps they're feeling that more so than when they first knew the Lord. Because when we first knew the Lord, we thought there was nothing we wouldn't do for him. Or in keeping with his will.

But we've learned otherwise down through the years. And we've discovered that there's that within us which has its affinity with the devil. There is that within us which would like to break all the commandments.

I see another law in my members. Warring against the law of my mind. And bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.

Which is in my members. Oh, wretched man that I am. You don't find too many people saying that today. But that is what the apostle said. Oh, wretched man that I am.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The yoke shows that there's that in us which is rebelling. But the Lord is saying to us, come to me.

[32 : 22] And if you come to me, then you'll submit yourself. You must submit yourself to my will and to my leading. And you must learn of me. And that doesn't mean only learning the word that he has spoken.

But it means having the spirit which he has himself. Learn of me. I am meek and lowly in heart. Now that's an encouragement for a sinner to come to the Savior.

Here is the great God. And yet, in our nature, he can say, I am meek and lowly in heart. No one ever found Christ to be forbidding when he came to him.

We may be forbidding. We may put people off. But the Lord Jesus is not forbidding. He's not harsh. He's not discouraging to sinners who come.

He's meek and he's lowly in heart. But I think what he's emphasizing especially is, we have to have something of that too, if we're going to be at his yoke.

[33 : 32] Why is his yoke a yoke to us? Why is there so much in us that rebels against the dealings of the Lord? Because we've got so little of this meekness and so little of this lowliness.

The invitation he's giving to us is, come. Come to me. Cast yourself upon me as your Savior. Submit to me as your Lord.

Have my spirit within you. And I will give you rest. Now isn't that a great promise for a sinner? I will give you rest.

You will find it because I will give it. Just imagine that we're left to ourselves to seek this rest.

He says, come to me. And we are seeking him. And we're seeking his salvation. We're seeking the rest that is in him. But how are we ever going to find him?

[34 : 34] Well, we'll find it because he says, I will give it. Ask and ye shall receive. Seek and ye shall find.

Knock and it shall be opened. You notice? Ask and ye shall receive. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened. If you seek it, you'll find it.

Because he will give it. He has promised that. It is from his grace. It is from his mercy. And this rest is deliverance, relief, from what has been our burden.

From the guilt of sin. From the condemnation of God. From our vain striving after obedience and after what will please God.

Deliverance from the overwhelming power of sin. The all-controlling love of sin. This rest is relief. It is deliverance.

[35 : 40] Isn't that what your soul is seeking? Oh, to be delivered from this akashic thing. From the guilt of sin. From the presence of sin. From the power of sin.

From the condemnation of sin. From my own legalistic, self-righteous strivings to be rid of sin. And that is what the Lord is promising. I'll give you rest.

I'll give you that relief which you are seeking. But there's more to rest than relief. There is actual harmony and satisfaction in God.

I think that's the main element of rest, as it's spoken of in the Bible. Deliverance from all these burdens in order that we may find our satisfaction and our peace of mind and conscience and heart in God.

You remember what happened at the beginning of human history. When man had been created, when the creation was complete, we're told that God rested on the seventh day.

[36 : 57] God kept the Sabbath. God instituted the Sabbath for man to keep. God's rest was not the rest of inactivity. It was the rest of satisfaction with what he had done.

Man was to keep the Sabbath day every week to show his harmony with God and his satisfaction with God and with what God had done.

No wonder the Sabbath day has been changed to the first day of the week. Because God has done something more marvelous than creation. And God finds satisfaction in something more marvelous than creation.

God has redeemed his people from their sins. And God finds more satisfaction in the Redeemer and in the redemption of his people than he finds in all the marvelous works that his hands have made.

And the Sabbath day is a permanent institution. It's a creation ordinance. It's in the moral law. The Sabbath must continue as long as time continues.

[38 : 03] But where is the Sabbath day today? It's not on the seventh day of the week. It's not primarily a commemoration of what God has done in creation. It's a commemoration of what God has done in redemption.

Christ is risen. And God is satisfied with Christ. And we enter into rest when we are satisfied with Christ too.

And we're satisfied with the God who gave Christ to us. And that's why we keep the first day of the week as the Sabbath. To show that we find rest where God finds rest and satisfaction.

And that is in Christ. Well, the Lord is saying, if you come to me, I'll give you rest. I'll deliver you from that awful burden.

And I'll give you peace and harmony and satisfaction in God. You'll have your trials and your troubles. You'll be put through the mill many a time.

[39 : 07] Satan will be after you and one trouble after another may pursue you. And you'll be feeling often like the mariners of whom the psalmist speaks in Psalm 107.

They reel and stagger like one drunk. At their woods end they be. That's people who have Christ. People who have salvation. These are the people that the devil is after.

And these are the people that the Lord will try. There are no bands in the death of the wicked. Many a wicked person gets through life much more easily than the Christian.

But the Christian will be troubled and tried. But that's not altering the fact I will give you rest. He'll sustain his people in these trials.

And he'll give them some of their most blessed experiences in these trials. And if not before at least when they get to heaven they'll be able to see that there was nothing more precious in all their experience than the dark days and the days when they went through the valley of the shadow of death and the Lord was with them.

[40 : 21] I'll give you rest and there's nothing in the experience of the Christian that will alter that fact at all. Well the question we ask ourselves is this have we come to feel our need of this rest?

Have we come to Christ for this rest? Has he given us this rest? And can we say today that there is nothing that we thank him for more than that by his grace he has brought us to be satisfied with himself.

Thus far did I come laden with my sin nor could art ease the grief that I was in till I came hither? What a place is this? Must here be the beginning of my bliss.

Must hear the burden fall from off my back. Must hear the strings that bounded to me crack. Blessed cross, blessed sepulchre, blessed rather be the man that there was put to shame for me.

And may we be able to say what Bunyan said as our own experience. Let us pray. Lord, speak these words to us thyself, we pray thee, so that we may come even in accordance with what thy word says.

[41 : 56] I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Pardon sin and part us with thy blessing.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.