"REFRESHING REST"

Matthew 11:28-30
12/10/2017

INTRODUCTION:

In a harsh world of suffering, hardship, and difficulty . . .
***Christ PROMISES a life of <u>REFRESHING REST</u>!**

How can you experience such rest?

I. You must <u>COME</u> to Jesus (Salvation)
("Come unto Me" - v. 28)

II. You must <u>YOKE UP</u> with Jesus (Dedication)
("Take My yoke" - v. 29a, 30)

III. You must <u>LEARN</u> from Jesus (Discipleship)
("Learn of Me" - v. 29b)

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INTRODUCTION: Sing the Hymn: *"How can it be"*

Have you ever felt so weary & pressured that you thought you were about to explode?

Has life weighed heavily upon you?

Have the storms of life blown relentlessly your way seeking as it were to decimate your life?

Have the burdens of this world led you to the point of despair or near collapse?

If so, God has a message for you who are:
Burdened by sin & it's consequences
Unsatisfied by materialism & the vanities of this world
Disillusioned by the rituals & regulations of man-made religion
Struggling with emptiness & loneliness

Illustration: "Princess Rest" (TAN #1876)

Throughout the centuries, these verses have been among the favorite of Christians. They are among the most loved words in the N.T.

These words in verses 28-30 have been:

Soothing to weary eyes as they are read,
Comforting to weary ears as they are heard,
Calming to weary hearts as they are believed.

In a harsh world of suffering, hardship, and difficulty . . .
***Christ PROMISES a life of REFRESHING REST!**

How can you experience such rest?

Note: the 3 verbs: *"Come...Take...Learn"*

I. You must <u>COME</u> to Jesus (Salvation)
("Come unto Me" - v. 28)

"Come" - God's invitation has always been - "Come unto Me"

"Come now , and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins by as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Is. 1:18)

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"
"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near"
(Is. 55:1,6)

The final invitation of the Bible is "<u>come</u>" (Rev. 22:17).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"

Jesus does <u>not</u> say:

"Come to religion"
"Come to the waters of baptism"
"Come to the tables of communion"
"Come to Mass" (Ex. Catholics)
"Come to a canonized patron saint"
"Come to Mecca" (Muslims)
"Come to a healing crusade"
"Come to a psychiatrists's office"
"Come to Friends"
"Come to the power of positive thinking"

But He says: "Come unto <u>Me</u>"

We "come" by <u>faith</u> (trust, dependance, reliance)

Jesus says Come!
False religion says do!
Jesus says come!
Satan says not now (wait)!
Jesus says Come!
The world says what for? (Why)

No one who comes to Jesus will be turned away or rejected (John 6:37 - "All that the Father given me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.")

"All ye" = Christ's invitation is for everyone. His rest is intended for all peoples and nations, regardless of skin color, language, or social status.

"This invitation is open to those who are exhausted and burdened down. That is exactly how the people felt under the yoke of pharisaical legalism (Mt. 23:4; Acts 15:10)." (Wiersbe, p. 41).

Labour - speaks of extreme weariness & *"heavy laden"* - speaks of extreme pressure.

"Labour" - Those who have toiled to the point of exhaustion. Those who are weary and tired.

ILLUS: of the blind dedication of those trapped in a cult (Ex. Jim Jones - Guiana; David Koresh - Waco Texas) or false religion. They work, toil, and sweat with the hopes of gaining favor with god. Yet all the while, they are strangers of the saving power of Christ.

Many in a desperate search for real inner peace, run from "philosophy to philosophy, from religion to religion, from guru to guru" & from cult to cult. Your search s tops when you come to Jesus!

"Heavy laden" - passive participle describes those who have had someone dump heavy burden on their back.

Perfect tense indicates that the burden which was placed upon them in the past has remained and has had adverse effects on the bearers.

Weariness and heavy burdens are very often the result of **sin**.
"The way of the transgressor is hard" (Prov. 13:15).

EX: Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24).

Many do not come to Christ until their burden becomes unbearable! (EX: Pilgrim "Pilgrim's Progress")

"And I" = Emphatic in the Greek.--Jesus Himself gives rest.
--He is the exclusive source for rest.

The Lord alone is the One who gives rest -

Ex. 33:14 - "And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

> *I Ki. 8:56 - "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant."*
>
> *Ps. 37:7 - "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."*

"Will" = rest is a promise
(it is guaranteed)
"Give" = rest is a gift
(it is free; no cost to you; just come!)

"Rest" = to be refreshed; lit. the word means to "pause" or to "cease" from something. It means to find relief from the strain of an unbearable load.

> *"rest"* does not refer to endless slumber or the right to laziness, but to refreshment to your body, soul (mind) & spirit.

How does Jesus give rest?

*He satisfies thirsty souls (Jn. 7:37-39)
*He delivers those who are lost (Lk. 19:10)
*He relieves those who are weighed down by sin
(Jn. 8:11, 36; "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." [v.

36]).
*He undergirds His sheep in His hand (Jn. 10:28-29)

The hymnwriter put it this way: *"O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, and life more abundant and free! Turn you eyes upon Jesus . . ."*

"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. Come home, Come home, ye who are weary, come home. Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling; calling, O sinner, come home."

No unbeliever will experience God's rest (Heb. 3:11, 18); but those who believe will enter His rest (Heb. 4:1-11; Rev. 14:13).

The eternal plight of the unbeliever will be "No rest day nor night" - forever! (Rev. 14:11).

II. You must <u>YOKE UP</u> with Jesus (Dedication)
("Take My yoke" - v. 29a, 30)

"Take" = lift up, take up

"Yoke" = a yoke was a wooden harness that was used to join (unite) two oxen together so that they would plow a field together in harmony and unity.

ILLUS: A teacher read to her class the text, "My yoke is easy." "Who can tell me what a yoke is?" she asked.

A boy said, "A yoke is something they put on the necks of animals." Then the teacher asked, "What is the yoke God puts on us?" A little girl said, "It is God putting His arms around our necks." (TAN # 6833)

"My yoke" - In contrast to the yokes of bondage and hardship.

EX: Egypt - Lev. 26:13;
Harsh rulers - I Ki. 12:4, 9-14
Legalism - Acts 15:10 (cp. Gal. 5:1)

"Take my yoke" - This is a deeper experience. When we come to Christ by faith, He <u>gives</u> us rest. When we take His yoke and learn, we <u>find</u> rest, that deeper rest of surrender and obedience. The first is "peace <u>with</u> God" (Rom. 5:1); the second is "the peace <u>of</u> God" (Phil. 4:6-8).

You <u>never</u> serve, learn, go through trials, toil, raise children, work a job, etc. <u>alone</u> when you are in the yoke with Christ!

V. 30

"My yoke is <u>easy</u>"-

My yoke is a good yoke, a mild yoke, a pleasant, comfortable yoke, not hard, harsh, sharp, or bitter.

Before the Lord Jesus began His public ministry, He worked as a carpenter and no doubt made wooden yokes, perfect well-fitting yokes that would never gouge an animal.

Many wrongly think that if they yoke up completely with Jesus that life will be unbearable, too many demands, too great a task. Yet such thinking is another lie of the devil to keep people from true commitment.

The yoke of Christ is in contrast to the heavy yokes placed upon the people by the Pharisees and false religious teachers of the day.

Note the following context (ch. 12): "At that time..." (v. 1). The Pharisees use the Sabbath (which was supposed to be a day of rest, joy, and doing good for others) against the Lord who established the Sabbath (v. 2, 10).

On the Sabbath, Jesus provided physical rest to people by allowing his disciples to pick grain to satisfy their hunger (v. 1-8) and by healing a man who was tormented by a withered hand (v. 9-13).

"My burden is light" - Christ does place burdens on us but they are easy to bear! The reason is simple - He is yoked up with us and He bears them for us.

Our present afflictions allowed by Christ for our benefit are light and temporary (II Cor. 4:17-18 - "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are not seen are temporary; but the things which are not seen are eternal.").

The Pharisees burdens were not light (Mt. 23:4) - but Jesus' are!

All of our duties as Christians are blessed and eternally profitable. Any weight put upon us by those responsibilities is balanced with strength that is supplied by the yoke of Christ (cp. Jn. 15:1-5 - "Vine and branches").

ILLUS: "Yoke's Heavier End" (TAN # 5213)

Serving Christ in the flesh is hard work. Perhaps the reason why pastors "burn out" in the ministry is because they have not been in the yoke with Christ.

Doing the will of God, in the yoke of Christ, is not grievous (I Jn. 5:3).

III. You must LEARN from Jesus (Discipleship)
("Learn of Me" - v. 29b)

"Take My yoke and learn" - Jesus is actually quoting a well-known Jewish metaphor for discipline and discipleship - "Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction" (Sir 51:26).

To learn ("mathete") from Jesus is to be His disciple ("mathetes").

Christ alone is the Teacher, who by His person and work can instruct men regarding the Father (cp. v. 25-27) (Wycliffe Bible Comm, p. 949).

"Learn of me" = learn from (apo) me.

True learning takes place in the life of one who is walking each day with Christ.

Note: How people took notice how the unlearned & ignorant fishermen from Galilee had "been with Jesus"

To be like Mary of Bethany and sit at the feet of Jesus is the key to acquiring profound spiritual knowledge (Luke 10:39-42).

True humility is learned only from the Master (Jn. 13:15).

True love is learned only from the Master (Jn. 15:13).

True forgiveness is learned only from the Master (Jn. 8:11; Lk. 23:34, 43).

True peace is learned only from the Master (Jn. 17:33; Jn. 14:1ff).

Lest anyone should be fearful or apprehensive to yoke up with Christ, our Lord gives these words of reassurance -

"For I am meek and lowly in heart."

"Meek" = gentle (Jesus is gentle, not harsh) "He upbraideth not" (Jms. 1:5)

"Lowly" = humble (Jesus is humble enough to yoke up with us, humble enough to personally tutor us. Though He is God [exalted above all], He is humble enough to

associate with the lowest of the low).
"Meek and lowly in heart" - The Hymn - "There's not a Friend Like the Lowly Jesus"

"Ye shall find rest" - the implication is that people are looking for rest but have not found it.

The "securities" of this life (EX: stocks, bonds, savings, insurances, etc.) do not provide real rest.

"My faith has found a resting place, not in device nor creed; I trust the ever living one, His wounds for me shall plead."

"Rest **to your souls"** - Souls (psuchais) = your lives.

The "soul" is the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life**.**

God says in Jer. 31:25, "For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."

Jesus gives rest!

EX: Hymn, "Moment by Moment" -

> *"Never a trial that He is not there (Mt. 28:20); never a burden that He doth bear (I Cor. 10:13); Never a sorrow that He doth not share (Heb. 4:15), Moment by moment, I'm under His care.*
>
> *"Never a heartache and never a groan, Never a teardrop and never a moan; never a danger but there on the throne; Moment by moment, He thinks of His own." (Rom. 8:34).*

CONCLUSION:

"I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10)

Concluding Hymn, Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling.