

## Rest Offered

Matthew 11:25-30

Jesus presents the cure for unyielding unbelief. Unyielding unbelief is the root cause of man's problems. Refusing to believe in the Messiah marks a rejection of the one person who brings healing and hope to humanity wrecked by sin. The burdens are heavy and unbearable. But the Savior invites those at the end of themselves to turn to Him.

Observations:

1. The cure rests in revelation – Note v. 25 and 27
2. Revelation rests in divine sovereignty and choice
3. Christ invites all those who are weary to Himself

These represent deep theological water of truth. The reconciliation of these clear statements from the mouth of Jesus Christ lies in the depths of God incomprehensibility and perfect goodness, justice, love and mercy. May the Lord give us the ability to entrust ourselves to Him as we explore the truth.

### THE CURE IS FOUND IN THE FATHER'S GRACIOUS DISCLOSURE

Working on cars is not a fun thing for most of us. All the parts are confusing and the knowledge we bring to the task severely limited. Amateurs might work for hours on a project before finally giving up and bringing the vehicle to the mechanic – who fixes the problem in less than an hour.

Man attempts to fix the problem of sin. Good works, ritualistic religious exercises, and social justice are some of the attempts man makes. The Jews elevated the law by expanding the applications ad infinitum. Thinking the law of dos and don'ts would be their salvation, they strictly adhered to the rules and denounced all who failed to abide by the letter of the law.

Jesus thanks God that the truth of the Messiah and the kingdom of God is hidden from those pursuing acceptance with God through human means of wisdom and understanding. The Lord of heaven and earth locks the vault of salvation to those seeking justification by works and the application of human wisdom to the problem of evil and sin. The problem surpasses man's ability to solve and God refuses to allow it to be solved apart from His revelation.

Ignoring revelation plunged humanity into the depths of sin and evil that we face today. How can we think that continuing to ignore revelation will get humanity out of the depths? God locks us in so that the only valid means of escape becomes visible – the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus expresses gratitude to the Father for arranging the gospel to be so. Later in the epistles we discover the reason God prohibits human ingenuity from discovering the way of salvation. 1 Corinthians 1:31 concludes Paul's argument setting forth God's purpose to use the weak and foolish things of this world with these words, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." In Ephesians 2:8-9 we are told that our salvation is "not a result of works, so that no one may boast." The setting aside of human wisdom to gain salvation exalts the Father to the highest place of preeminence and guarantees that He alone receives the glory for salvation! It is all to the praise of His glory! Jesus captures this in the final statement.

Matthew continues to unfold the necessity of revelation to receive the kingdom of heaven and the King of the kingdom. Matthew 13:11, 51 and 16:15-17 verify that receiving the spiritual truth of the kingdom of heaven and the Messiah comes only as God chooses to reveal. Those chosen as objects of revelation are viewed as “little ones.” They trust in the Lord. And the Lord entrusts to them the mysteries of the kingdom.

What great comfort this ministers to the soul who rests in Christ! You arrived at the place of refuge because of the gracious will of your heavenly Father. Allowing that truth to bear fruit in your soul frees you from any pride associated with your lofty position of union with Christ. You possess no greater qualities than anyone else around you. You hold no greater value than the most reprehensible sinner. Your only point of distinction from those rejecting the Messiah, rejecting salvation, is the gracious choice of the Father. You came to Christ as a child and in that same childlike faith and trust you must grow into Christ-like maturity. Follow the example of Christ and thank the Father that He reveals the truth only to those who willingly trust in Him and removes any possibility for boasting from the wise and understanding of this world. One day their folly will be revealed and the loud boasts of their tongues will be cut short by the appearance of the great King, your God and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Perhaps you are working desperately to figure how you can earn acceptance with God. Doing so only assures that you will be shut out of the kingdom. The best of your good works amount only to dirty rags. The debt owed to God surpasses quantifiable sums. You sinned against the infinitely holy and pure God of heaven. The debt you carry is infinite. Christ alone paid that for you and you must fall back on the foolishness of cross for any hope of salvation! Cease striving against the vault of God! You will never break through. You must go through the one Door, Jesus Christ, the Door provided by God and opened only by the Father.

#### THE MEANS OF THE FATHER’S GRACIOUS DISCLOSURE IS THE SON.

Jesus states to those listening the unique relationship between Himself and the heavenly Father.

First, Jesus states His equality with God (“all things have been handed over to me by my Father”).

Second, Jesus states the exclusiveness of His relationship with God. It exists only in the realm determined by the Father and the Son.

Third, Jesus states the point of access to God – access that He appoints.

Combining these truths give us a splendid perspective of salvation. To know Christ is to know God the Father. Christ is the exact imprint of the Father’s nature, the full disclosure of Himself to mankind.

“Full-disclosure” is a popular term today. Everyone wants everyone else to fully disclose everything, but no one wants to fully disclose themselves. And so our culture is full of authentic hypocrites – people claiming to fully disclose, but who in reality disclose only what they know others want to see. God fully disclosed Himself through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ displayed the Father’s love, justice, righteousness, mercy, grace, power, compassion, and truth. Because of Christ we know God.

But, no one naturally actually desires this full-disclosure of God. No one seeks after God. Man wants a god that he can control, one that fits his agenda and endorses his choices and lifestyle. Thus, we reject God. And turn our own way.

Christ's choice of those who turn to Him is not a hard dismissal of others. No, it is a gracious pulling out of people who, apart from His gracious choice, would remain damnably ignorant. The revelation or "apocalypse" of the Father to those chosen by Christ grants access to the vaults of heaven and opens the eyes to the glories of creation – glories designed by God – as the chosen one begins seeing things in their divinely intended purposes.

Only when Christ reveals God and those to whom God is revealed turn to Christ for salvation does true meaning come to life. Every person naturally lives for the things they want and like. Achieving one's own will constitutes the highest ambition and every conceivable devise of manipulation tactic aims to remove all obstacles barricading the path to my will. As previously seen, even the revelation of truth will be dismissed if it fails to move one closer toward his or her own will. Their thinking replaces the "Woe" of divine warning with their own message of "woe" to any who dare cross their will. The result is an abrasive person wreaking havoc on all around them.

When Christ reveals the Father into the life of such a person, the transformation is radical. The illumination of the Son reveals the closets full of skeletons and the filth of unrestrained selfish priorities. Before the blaze of a holy God, the sinner falls down and cries, "Woe is me!" He realizes that any attempt to clean up his life would be empty because of the depth to which sin penetrates his being. All that he worked for he sees as waste, as the filthy water that one throws out after scrubbing a room abandoned for years.

Turning to the Source of cleansing, God gives him a new heart. And with that heart come new purposes for life. Instead of seeing life as the opportunity to get as much as he can and be as comfortable as he can, a new principle dominates him. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

When Christ reveals the Father, you know. You do not stay the same.

### THE SON'S INVITATION TO REST

To whom does Christ reveal the Father? Jesus answers the question in the invitation of the verses that follow. Two descriptions capture the kind of people to whom the Savior reveals the Father: Those bone tired and worn down.

You know what it is to work until you feel like collapsing. Your energy evaporates and your muscles give out. Another step is out of the question. No resources exist. You're done. These are the weary. These people have attempted every possible means of finding peace in their consciences. From climbing mountains to doing every possible good deed they can think of and refraining from every form of evil they know. Constantly on guard, they obsess over whether they missed something. Their religion is torture and they set those around them on edge. And then, suddenly, like the rich young ruler and Saul of Tarsus, they all at once realize that the "doing" they did carries no worth. With a swift stroke of the intent of Scripture, Christ debilitates everything and they are crushed. In a moment, their countenance changes to look decades older. The confidence of religion vanishes before the vast, insurmountable requirement of true righteousness. Weariness sets in and they feel the weight of their unworthy good deeds. Instead of earning favor with God, all that was done in the flesh only added guilt to the load.

While they blindly thought they were discharging guilt, they heaped it higher and heavier. Now, at the very point of their weariness the crushing weight of unbearable guilt falls like a shooting star, burying them in the crater. The walls stretch up higher than anyone can climb and then weight of the heavenly stone holds them helpless.

And Jesus says, "Come, I will give you rest."

Give up. Submit. Learn.

These three elements constitute the rest offered by Christ.

No longer will you need to labor in vain attempts to divest yourself of guilt. No longer will you need to keep a balance book and see if your good outweighs your bad. No longer will you need to worry about your inconsistencies. No longer will you need to obsess over legalistic standards to obtain a standing granted only through the risen Lamb of God!

The price of your guilt is paid. The load removed. All the bad things and all the ill-motivated attempts for the good things are cleared from your account. The burden is removed. The crushing weight is relieved. Freedom from guilt and freedom to serve are all yours in Christ!

Christ offers a rest that replaces worthless pursuits for eternally significant labor. He provides a yoke specifically designed for you to carry out the labor appointed to you in eternity past. Much work lies ahead (remember, the harvest is great), but Christ will place you in the exact spot fitted for you. Furthermore, he states that you will not be alone. He is with you to teach you and invites you to learn from Him, to be His disciple.

Notice the arrangement of the invitation. Come. Submit. Learn.

Particularly the final two elements. The order is essential. You will not learn until you submit. No one learns from Christ until their will belongs to Christ. You must take the yoke of His commandments. You must commit to being tenderhearted, forgiving. You must commit to change your speech to match the Savior. You must commit to submit to the authorities God establishes. You must commit to following Christ in every way. Tangible points of commitment for believers include identifying with Christ through baptism, committing to a biblically faithful body of believers, choosing to submit to the leadership within the home and within the local church, and working hard to be reconciled to one another all the time.

God voids worship without submission. Until you submit to the yoke of Christ, you will not learn from Christ. You will sit under the preaching of the Word and be utterly confused and confounded. You will leave with your head spinning. You will be incapable of engaging in true fellowship with other believers. Christ calls you to take the yoke of submission as part of gaining rest for your soul.

Come. Submit. Learn.

New things often create anxiety. Meeting new people. Visiting a new church on vacation. Starting a new sport. Learning a new instrument. Theme parks are filled with new experiences, each one requiring the setting aside of your fear to experience the thrill of the ride.

Submission to anyone other than ourselves is a new thing. We are used to controlling our destiny and responding certain ways when things get out of control. When you come to Christ, He requires that you hand in your old ways of thinking, responding and reacting. Paul often refers to himself and others as

“servants of Christ.” The idea is a bonds slave. A bonds slave gives himself completely over to the will of his master. Finding rest for your soul requires resigning your will, your way of doing life, to the Great Shepherd of your soul. He alone knows what is best. Yes, it is a new thing, but you must trust Christ! Stubbornly clinging to your will calls into question whether or not you truly follow Christ. True followers understand that the remnants of their will remain and they grieve over the exertion of their will. When Christ brings circumstances into their lives that reveal the exercise of their own will, they willingly repent and submit. Stubborn resistance shoves the yoke of Christ off your shoulders, demanding that Christ conform to your will instead of you conforming to His. “Take my yoke upon you.”

Come. Submit. Learn.

A follower of Christ embarks on a new task. But a Guide is always there to teach. Christ does not recruit and release. He maintains constant contact.

Some teachers scold and fuss and create all kinds of grief for their students. Christ describes himself as gentle and lowly in heart. His teaching methods employ all the divine compassion that sent Christ to give His life on the cross. He gave His life to purchase you from the slave market of sin. Those who follow Christ are trophies of His grace. He wants only what is best and will guide toward what is best. Yes, at times that teaching will involve firm and stern rebukes and discipline to correct our wayward paths cut out by our flesh. But even in that discipline, He demonstrates His love and compassion.

Christ presents a contrast in the last statement of the passage to the weariness and load introduced at the beginning of the invitation. Instead of the labor and heaviness, His invitation brings a well-fitted yoke and a light burden.

Unlike so many false religions, Jesus does not promise a life of physical ease and luxury. He addresses the fact that life will be work and that burdens will exist. Peter fills out this theology as he writes to suffering Christians in 1 Peter: “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” And many other passages in the NT describe the difficulties that face believers, whether it be from physical maladies and bodily persecution or facing false teachers and the grief they bring in a local assemblies and among families. Life will not be a basket of flowers. But, having come to Christ, the heaviest burdens become light and the weightiest cares bearable.

Why does Jesus claim that His yoke is easy and His burden is light?

God sovereignly designed you to carry your sovereignly placed load. What you bear is no more than what God wills for you to bear. Before coming to Christ, you carried the incredible load of guilt from sin. God did not design you to carry that load. Carrying such a load would be comparable to a light pickup truck attempting pull the heaviest weight at a tractor pull. It is not going to happen! Guilt is foreign to God’s plan.

Many people carry the burden of the sins of others. They place unreasonable responsibility on themselves for others’ failures and even walk with God. Thinking that they are responsible for the salvation of others creates a crushing load. Jesus alleviates that load by directly telling us that the only way people come to Him is through the revelation of the Father. When Jesus places the yoke of making disciples on our shoulders, that yoke calls us simply to declare the truth of the gospel and clearly lay out

the Scriptures. God does the saving. We can rest in the knowledge that we have done our duty and that Christ is the One Who must ultimately reveal the Father. His yoke is easy.

Furthermore, as we learn from Christ, we accept that He is the King of kings. All things reside under His sovereign care and authority. That realization frees us to simply focus on obeying Him. Obedience to His will right now is all that He requires. He simply wants us to do the next right thing. We need not be concerned with what lies outside of our realm of responsibility and care. And if we need to know what that realm includes, Christ will grant the wisdom to determine that through His Word and the counsel of spiritual leaders. His yoke is easy.

God commands us to bear one another's burdens. That seems like a strange command. In context, Paul gives instruction regarding crushing burdens that disable believers. As Christians, and, more importantly, as a local body of believers, God calls us to come alongside one another when a fellow believer becomes ensnared. Perhaps that means being with someone dealing with grief. It might mean rebuking a brother or sister for a sin and pointing them to Christ for restoration. Sometimes bearing one another's burdens means overlooking a personal offense out of Christ-like love. Coming to Christ includes carrying such burdens. But, Christ teaches us (thus He said, "learn from me") and the opportunities to carry burdens are God-ordained. Moreover, Christ Himself always remains with us to help carry the load. In fact, based on our union with Christ, He carries us and the load. His burden is light.