



Matthew 11:28–30

28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Reflection

Rest. There’s something so attractive

about that word isn't there? Perhaps it's because it is so elusive. Where is rest in the pace of modern life? At some point long ago you heard the starter's gun fire and off you ran with all your might. The parameters were set by your parents, your upbringing – now to get ahead. Study, job, career. At some point the youthful energy is spent, time to work smarter, not harder; but still hard. Almost every living moment is filled with something, but that's OK, you've been training for this, you can handle it, just a little bit more, a little bit longer and you will have arrived. Only when you do arrive you realise that to arrive is just to reach the next point of departure, on to something more, something higher, more rarefied air. And when you do get to 'rest,' when you do manage to take a couple of weeks off, doesn't it just feel like the first

week is spent winding down and then the second week is spent winding right back up again? Where is rest in the pace of modern life? Many of us have forgotten what rest looks like or even how to do it.

And underneath it all so many of us feel tired, weary and burdened and so when we come to a passage like our one today where Jesus promises us rest, something deep inside us longs for what Jesus is offering. But we must make sure that we don't read into this verse what is not here.

In these verses Jesus is not offering rest to those of us who work harder than we should, for more than we need, at the expense of what is really important in life. If you are working huge hours every week, with a single-minded devotion to your

career, Jesus would ask you, 'Why?' But that's for another passage.

In today's passage Jesus is not offering rest for our bodies, he's offering rest for our souls. He's not offering rest to champions of the kingdom of this world, mixing it with the best of those who live as ones who have no hope. He's not offering rest to Christians desperately trying to have the best of both worlds; he's offering rest to souls burdened by the brokenness and hostility that members of the kingdom of God face daily in the kingdom of this world. He's also offering rest to people outside the fold of God, scattered, helpless, wandering like sheep without a shepherd, people who've realised in humility or through a terrible experience of sin's effects, that something is indeed very wrong with this

world, and very wrong deep inside of them. These people too carry around in themselves the weariness and burden that Jesus is talking about in our passage today.

Jesus offers rest for our souls. But do you notice that his rest takes the form of work? See verse 29,

‘Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.’

Jesus is using an illustration from agricultural life that would have been very familiar to his hearers. A yoke is what farmers put around the necks of oxen so that they can work together to plough the harvest field. Jesus is saying that true rest is found

in joining him in his mission on earth. True rest comes from working alongside Jesus, in step with Jesus, by the power of his Holy Spirit, becoming an active part of his plans and purposes for the world. Not running contrary to them, and being burdened in your soul, but being part of them and finding true rest in your soul. Not trying to live with a foot in the kingdom of God and a foot in the kingdom of this world, and feeling forever torn between the two, but living wholeheartedly for him. That's the only place you'll find rest in this world. Because true meaning and purpose and fulfilment in life are only found here; true rest is only found here, in the work of the kingdom of God, working alongside Jesus and his church, sharing the gospel and doing good in the world.

But there is a second part to true rest.

‘Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.’

Jesus promises that you will find rest for your soul not only in working alongside him but also by learning from him. Opening up the Scriptures daily as we’re doing in a Year with Jesus and learning from him. Praying to him. Growing in relationship with him. Becoming like him. Increasingly seeing the world through his eyes and not through the eyes of your parents, or your boss at work, or the business leaders that you look up to, or the celebrities that you follow on Twitter. It is only through learning from Jesus Christ, seeing the world through his eyes, and working for him that you will find true rest, true peace in our

world.

Jesus is the greatest boss you could ever imagine, and the job he's offering you is the greatest job in the world. As a boss he's gentle and humble, he leads by example, he always puts your interests first, in fact he'd die for you, he did die for you, and he rewards you for your work in far greater ways than you can ever imagine, and the people that he's raised up alongside you, to work with you are like family, closer than family. He's the only person in this world truly worth looking up to and wanting to be like. And when you work for his kingdom, you often end up working even harder than those who are striving for their own kingdoms. But when you do, you come to understand through experience that his yoke is easy, and the burden

of kingdom work is light. And the work itself, imagine going to work and knowing in that moment that there is nothing more important in the world that you could be doing. And I'm not talking about full-time ministry here, you can experience this in your workplace today.

Think

It's worth just reading and re-reading these verses over again a few times. Why not do that now? Let them sink into your soul. Try and memorise them. These verses contain what everyone is seeking, whether they know it or not. What are you seeking? Step back and have a look at the pattern of your life, the pattern of the way you spend your time. How does your life reflect your priorities? Does your life reflect his

priorities? If not, then I guarantee you that you've just worked out the source of all your problems, your anxieties, your worries and your burdens. Our passage this morning is the solution to any dissatisfaction you feel about your life. Jesus is right now offering you what you're desperately searching for deep within your being. What you may be furiously striving for in the hectic pace of modern life, only you won't find it there, you'll only find it in him. Find it in him, today.

Pray

Pray to him now. Pray that he'd open your eyes to see clearly and that you would find rest in him. Perhaps this passage today finds you in turmoil, amidst a crisis in your life; if so learn from Jesus this morn-

ing, read what he is teaching you again, and find peace amidst this storm in him. If your crisis is more of a slow burn, a life that somehow degree by degree has gone very far off track, confess to him your wayward heart this morning, take up his yoke and bind yourself to him, reorientate your life around his kingdom, and let go of your own. I guarantee you'll never look back.