

INVITING THE WEARY Sunday School- January 24, 2010

Unifying Topic: DECLARED IN PRAYER

Lesson Text

I. God's Way Verses Man's Way (Matthew 11:25-26)

III. Jesus Is Our Connection To God (Matthew 11:27)

III. Jesus Offers Rest And Direction (Matthew 11:28-30)

The Main Thought: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28, KJV).

Unifying Principle: We admire those who are knowledgeable and seem to have all the answers to life. Where does that leave those who don't have everything all figured out? Jesus promised the truth and empowerment to those who follow and learn.

Lesson Aim: To present Jesus as a refuge for weary souls.

Life aim: To allow us to experience one of the benefits of salvation right now. We are happy for the promise of eternal life; however, we should know that we have comforting promises from God which we may rely on when we need to.

11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

11:26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

HISTORY:

11:7-10 Jesus Comments On John

John had just questioned if Jesus was the true Messiah and Jesus answered John's disciples by telling them, *"Go back to John and tell him about the miracles you've seen me do..."* *"When John's disciples had gone, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds."* ¹Earlier, Jerusalem was going all out to see John, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. Many of Jesus' followers were first, followers of John where their hearts had been prepared for the Lord by John's message of repentance. Now Jesus asks those same crowds, *"What did you go out to see when you went to see John?"* *"You went to see a prophet; A real-life prophet in your day. But John is more than a prophet. He is the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy, the messenger preparing the way of the Lord."*

11:11 Greater Than John

The people respected John, looked up to him, and thought he was great. Jesus tells them that John was the greatest. And yet, the least in the kingdom of heaven would be greater than John. Why? because John was the last under the Old Testament covenant. He was the last of the Old Testament prophets. But when someone has faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; their sins are erased; they are made a child of God; the Holy Spirit seals them, and dwells inside of them. They are made a temple of God. No Old Testament prophet ever had privileges like that. Even if you're the least person to be saved under the New Covenant, you've got a better deal than the greatest person under the Old Covenant.

11:12 Suffering Violence

Jesus begins: *"And from the days of John The Baptist until now..."* He's saying from this time until now. This was from the time John began to preach until now. John was raised up to be the herald of the kingdom of God's Son. He was pushing back the darkness with great force, dealing a heavy blow to Satan's authority. He told it like it was; until now. What about now? Well John was in prison. The attack is launched against the kingdom that John preached about. Herod had taken and thrown John into prison.

However, the comment Jesus makes about the kingdom of heaven suffering violence, and violent take it by force is something to give thought. *First*, What is the kingdom of heaven? The kingdom of heaven is the reigning of God

¹ <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/40-Matthew/Matthew1102.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sndayschool.html>

Himself on and over this earth in fulfillment of the covenants God made with the nation of Israel. There's the kingdom of this world, which is earthly and there's the kingdom of heaven, which is spiritual and there's the kingdom of God. The earthly kingdom is based upon force, pride, the love of human praise, the desire for domination, and self interest, and fights against the Kingdom of heaven. While the spiritual kingdom is based on love, sacrifice, humility, and righteousness. And from the days of John until now the kingdom of heaven (the reigning of God Himself) suffereth violence (*aggressive harm, violation*), and the violent (*cruel, vicious*) take it by force (*seize*). You see the devil and the world will not win, and will not understand that the kingdom of heaven has supreme authority. However, the kingdom of heaven will suffer much violence through their attacks. This comes to show us that the kingdom will never be received passively.

Therefore, as the kingdom of heaven was moving forward with power, saving, healing, and delivering, there was John who risked everything, who consciously with full zeal seized the heavenly kingdom as a rightful heir. We must be men and women of strong character and forceful resolve, not "reeds swayed by the wind." But this aggressiveness does not end when a man finds Christ; it then begins to exercise itself in another way. The man who is pardoned, and who knows it, then becomes aggressively in love with Christ. He does not love Him just a little, but he loves Him with all his soul and all his might because it is always founded on God's work on our behalf, and God's work will always produce a response in us. This is one view and there are several others views.

11:13 *"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."* John the Baptist was the last of a long history of Old Testament prophets that looked forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. John opened the kingdom of heaven to sinners and thus became the culminating point of the Old Testament witness.

11:14-15 John / Elijah

The last promise in the Old Testament was from God: *Mal. 4:5-6 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."* In Luke, the angel Gabriel foretold that John the Baptist was going to come. *Luke 1:17 "...in the spirit and power of Elijah..."* He was the fulfillment in the spirit and power of Elijah, but was not received in that way. They ultimately rejected Jesus Christ. John's prophetic role was boldly confronting sin and pointing people to God. If ever they were willing to listen, they were to listen.

11:16-19 Wisdom Is Vindicated By Her Deeds

The generation refused to exercise its capacity to hear, but made excuses for rejecting both John and Jesus. And Jesus tells the crowds that they refused to be satisfied no matter who God sent. Jesus and John were radically different in their coming, and yet neither one was ultimately accepted. *"...John came neither eating nor drinking"* and was criticized for having a devil. Jesus *"came eating and drinking"* and was criticized for being *"gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom would be vindicated by her deeds."* Luke says, *"Wisdom is vindicated by all her children"* We have the saying: *"Actions speak louder than words."* There is also the biblical statement: *"You will know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16)*. The things people do are better indicators of what they believe than just the things they say. In other words, we are not saved by our deeds, but our deeds do witness to what we believe. John and Jesus were justified in either case by their results.

11:20-24 Woe To You Cities

In this section, whole towns are upbraided by Jesus for not repenting. Jesus doesn't just threaten judgment, He declares it. When Jesus had gone out and preached, some cities had rejected Him. The only difference between the two groups of cities is that the repentant towns are Gentile cities and the unrepentant are Israelite cities. He began to name these cities and pronounce *"Woes"* upon them for their unbelief. Chorazin and Bethsaida: where He did mighty works; Capernaum, the center of where He launched His ministry and still the people neglected and rejected Him; No one repented. **Why was the truth not believed?** They saw and didn't see; they heard and didn't hear—Blind to Truth. They would suffer greater punishment than the wicked cities who didn't see Jesus.

LESSON:

Matthew 11:25-26: God's Way Verses Man's Way

The kingdom Jesus offered is available and understandable to anyone who is interested. The spiritual truth is *"hid."* Where? In God! He had taken spiritual truth and locked it up in Himself. The only access to truth is to come to Him. The only Key to spiritual truth is faith and trust in God. Jesus mentions two kinds of people. The wise and prudent, and the babes. The man who considers himself wise and intelligent and sufficient enough without God never comes to God. Therefore, a personal relationship with God is never known. Therefore, the things of the Spirit and of the gospel are hid from him.

In this verse 25 Jesus thanks His heavenly Father, "...Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." "Thank" (Gr. *exomologeō*) is literally to acknowledge. Why?, Because this truth was hidden from the wise and prudent. Why was it hidden?, Because they were wise in their own eyes. They didn't need any of this faith foolishness. Many in the world today are in the same boat: "I'm too smart to have to believe in Jesus."

- The wise and prudent were those who were self-sufficient and prided themselves on their great understanding of spiritual things.
- The wise are blinded to the Lord of heaven and earth and to the truth.

Therefore God is helpless in revealing the truth to them. But God's heart and truths are open to the person who comes in dependency and trust.

The generation was blind to three things:

1. *The people were blind to God's truth.* The words "these things" that is the truth that the cities missed.
2. *The people were blind to God's will, to His purpose.*
 - a. God has purposed to save the world through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - b. He has also purposed that the wise shall not see the truth, but the babe (the needful) will.
3. *The people were blind to the Messiah.*
 - a. Man is blind to the fact that Jesus Christ is of God. Although, Jesus emphatically calls God "My Father!"
 - b. Man is blind to the fact that Jesus Christ has received all things from God. Although, Jesus emphatically declares He has been given "all things by God." (*Matt.28:18; Clos.1:16-19*).
 - c. Man is blind to the fact that Jesus Christ is the Mediator. Although, Jesus emphatically declares that He is the Mediator (*Jh. 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1Tim.2:5; Heb.7:25*).
 - d. Man is blind to the fact that Jesus Christ alone can reveal the Father. Although, Jesus emphatically declares that He alone reveals the Father (*Jh. 10:30, 38; Jh. 12:39; Jh. 14:9-10*).

"Babes" refer to spiritual childlike innocence, who receives God's revelation in simple faith. "...and hast revealed them to babes." The babes are the humble and receptive; they are teachable. What Christ condemns is not intelligence and wisdom, but intellectual pride and self-sufficiency.

Matthew 11:27: Jesus Is Our Connection To God

The authority of the Son and the Father are totally intertwined. The believer can only know the Father through the Son. ²All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of mercy and goodness, are laid up in Christ. "All things are delivered unto me," he said, "of my Father." Sum up all that the sinner wants, and you will find Christ is able to supply you with all. You want pardon?—It is delivered unto Christ of the Father! You want change of heart?—It is delivered unto Christ of the Father! You want righteousness in which you may be accepted?—Christ has it! You want to be purged from the love of sin?—Christ can do it! You want wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?—It is all in Christ! You are afraid that if you start on the road to heaven, you cannot hold on. **Persevering grace is in Christ.** You think you will never be perfect; but perfection is in Christ, for all believers, being saints of God and servants of Christ, are complete in Him. Between hell-gate and heaven-gate, there is nothing a sinner can need that is not treasured up in His blessed person! "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." He is "full of grace and truth." Oh! Sinner, I pray I could force you to feel as I do now, that had I never come to Christ before, I must come to Him now, just now. Directly I understand that:—

*"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in thee I find."*

Why, then, should I not come? He is truly our connection to God in all ways. Praise God!

Matthew 11:28-30: Jesus Offers Rest And Direction

The first great invitation to this generation is, "Come unto me." **Who is to come?** Jesus invites the weary and burdened—the person who is laboring and heavy laden, exhausted and despairing, extremely tired and weighed down, ready to stop and collapse, to find their rest in Him. A person who labors is struggling; one with a heavy burden is overloaded. Some of the things that exhaust us:

- Work—being overburdened with too much.
- Worldliness and carnality (fleshly desires).
- Sin and guilt and the power of both.
- Money & material possessions and the unsatisfying spirit of both.
- Fame and the emptiness of it.
- Power and the loneliness of it.
- The rituals and traditions of religion.
- Rules and regulations.

Why should the weary and heavy laden come to Christ? Very simple, Christ will give them rest no matter how

² <http://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/3502.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sndayschool.html>

intense the struggle and despair of the emptiness and loneliness. No person has gone too far for Christ to inject His rest into them if the person will only call Him.

What's the condition for receiving this rest? There is only one condition: a person must simply "COME" to Christ. However, the answer to rest: • Is not searching after truth through religion. • Is not positive thinking. • Is not seeking the counsel of true and reliable friends. The answer is simply "Come!"

Note the difference between the two rests promised by Jesus Christ.

1. *"I will give you rest."* First there is the rest of salvation or justification. This is the rest of deliverance from the slavery and bondage of sin, the power of Christ to conquer the enslaving habits that damage the human body and destroy the human soul. It is the rest of conscience that comes to a person's soul when he ceases his struggle in the wilderness of sin. It is the rest of conquest and triumph which a person experiences when he conquers the enemies of sin and evil through the power of Christ—day by day. It is the rest of victory through the daily storms of life because sin is conquered.

³Rest such as this the Lord Jesus gives to those who come to Him, by showing them His own finished work on the cross, by clothing them in His own perfect righteousness, and washing them in His own precious blood. When a man begins to see that the Son of God actually died for his sins, his soul begins to taste something of inward quiet and peace.

i. Rest such as this the Lord Jesus gives to those who come to Him, by revealing Himself as their ever-living High Priest in heaven. When a man begins to see that the Son of God actually lives to intercede for him, he will begin to feel something of inward quiet and peace.

ii. Rest such as this the Lord Jesus gives to those who come to Him, by implanting His Spirit in their hearts, witnessing with their spirits that they are God's children, find that old things are passed away, and all things are become new. When a man begins to feel an inward drawing towards God as a Father, and a sense of being an adopted and forgiven child, his soul begins to feel something of quiet and peace.

iii. Rest such as this the Lord Jesus gives to those who come to Him, by dwelling in their hearts as King, by putting all things within, in order, and giving to each faculty its place and work. When a man begins to find order in his heart in place of rebellion and confusion, his soul begins to understand something of quiet and peace. There is no true inward happiness until the true King is on the throne.

2. *"Ye shall find rest unto your souls."* There is a rest of sanctification or of pleasure and satisfaction, of confidence and completeness. The rest is not a rest of inactivity, of no work, of an endless slumber, of the right to laziness. It is a rest of three things.

1. Of refreshment—refreshing one's body, mind, and spirit.

2. That fits one for life—infusing a person with true purpose, meaning, and significance.

3. Of encouragement and motivation of soul—stirs a person to live and undertake his God-given task with enthusiasm and vigor and endurance.

This rest which Christ offers to give to all who are laboring and heavy-laden is the rest for which He invites them to come to Him; this is the rest which He wants you to enjoy, and to which He brings you this invitation this day. May God grant that the invitation may not be brought to you in vain!

The second great invitation to this generation is *"Take my yoke* upon you, and learn of me."* **What conditions are we to follow?** There is only one condition. A person must simply take Christ's yoke and begin to learn of Him.

NOTE:

*The yoke was a double harness in which two animals pulled together. Often one harness was larger and meant for the stronger, more experienced animal, while the smaller was used for the animal being trained. At first the oxen might have rebelled against the yoke, but he soon learned that it eased the burden of pulling.

Why should a person take up the yoke of Christ? And How should a person learn of Christ. There are three reasons of Why you take the yoke.

1. Christ is meek—(to put away our high and angry spirits), and lowly (*humble in heart*).
2. We will find rest.
3. Christ's yoke is easy (well-fitting) His burden is light.

The How: This simply means that we are to learn submission under His yoke to live and labor under His leadership,

³ <http://www.biblebb.com/files/ryle/come.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sndayschool.html>

direction, guidance, and care which is easier lighter. He is "meek;" and then He is "lowly* in heart;" We can learn nothing, even of Christ Himself, while we hold our heads up with pride, or exalt ourselves with self-confidence. We must be meek and lowly in heart also; otherwise we are totally unfit to be taught by Christ. Empty vessels may be filled; but vessels that are full already can receive no more. The man who knows his own emptiness can receive abundance of knowledge, and wisdom, and grace, from Christ; but he who glories in himself is not in a fit condition to receive anything from God.

NOTE:

*Lowliness means near the ground. We cannot be so low that He will not stoop to reach us. *"He receiveth sinners and eateth with them."*

POINT:

From birth man learns from others how to live and how to do his task. Some teachers are hard taskmasters, and most courses in life lead to exhaustion and living under heavy burdens. The only taskmaster who can teach and assure true rest (of body, mind, and spirit) is Christ, and the only yoke that really fits and proves to be easy is the yoke of life and task of Christ.

We are to "come" and "take" His yoke, and He does the rest. There are other invitations from the Lord, with gracious promises to those who come, but note especially the final invitation of the Bible, *"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" (Rev.22:17)*. Yes: rest is a pleasant thing. The rest which the Lord Jesus promises to give is no mere repose of body. Hearts are starving in the midst of worldly plenty; their inward man is sick and weary. The rest that Christ gives is an inward thing. It is rest of heart, rest of conscience, rest of mind, rest of affection, rest of will. It is rest from a comfortable sense of sins being all forgiven and guilt all put away; it is rest from a solid hope of good things to come, laid up beyond the reach of disease, and death, and the grave; it is rest from the well-grounded feeling, that the great business of life is settled, its great end provided for, that in time all is well, and in eternity heaven will be our home. The "Rest" is available, but you have to "Come" to receive it.

SUMMARY:

Jesus thanks His heavenly Father for revealing spiritual truth to the childlike and for hiding it from those who think themselves wise. God made man to think, reason, seek, and search in order to discover and build. But God expects man *"not to think of himself too highly" Rom. 12:3*. Man is to walk humbly. He is to trust God, putting his time and destiny in God's hands. The believer can only know the Father through the Son. Therefore, Jesus invites the weary and burdened to find their rest in Him. The answer to rest is coming to Jesus Christ. ⁴Coming and believing with the heart of simple faith. It is that act of the soul which takes place when a man, feeling his own sins, and despairing of all other hope, commits himself to Christ for salvation, trusts Him, and casts himself wholly on Him. It is when a man turns to Christ empty, that he may be filled, sick that he may be healed, hungry that he may be satisfied, thirsty that he may be refreshed, needy that he may be enriched, dying that he may have life, lost that he may be saved, guilty that he may be pardoned, sin-defiled that he may be cleansed, confessing that Christ alone can supply his need—then he comes to Christ.

APPLICATION:

Maybe you've discovered that you're not so smart and wise that you've figured out life. Life is tough, wearying, and difficult at times. There's an emptiness that you can't figure out. Jesus wants to give you rest today and to fill your empty soul. There are some invitations, perhaps, which are wiser and better to decline. There is one which ought always to be accepted: that one is before you today. Jesus Christ is saying, ***"Come: come unto Me."*** I want you to press onward, forward, and upward, till you have had this personal fellowship with Christ Himself; till you are harnessed and yoked, living life His way, with Him. He does not want to pull, but we come under His gentle holding and teaching, His power and might, and He carries the load of burden. *"...and ye shall find rest unto your souls" Jer.6:16*.

⁴ <http://www.biblebb.com/files/ryle/come.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sndayschool.html>