

## PRINCIPLES FOR SPIRITUAL REST

### *Mathew 11.28-30*

We are living in a very demanding world. We are always tired and stressed out by the demands of life. But God wants us have peace of mind. In these verses, Jesus is inviting us to have rest for our souls. There are different kinds of rest:

- Physical rest
- Emotional rest
- Spiritual rest
- Eternal rest

### THREE KEYS TO FINDING SPIRITUAL REST

#### *I. COME TO JESUS*

“Come to Me...”

#### **A. To really hear what He is saying, you need to hear what he is not saying.**

*1. He didn't say “Come to a church or meeting,” Neither did He say “It really doesn't matter who you come to, all roads lead to rest.”*

- No, Jesus is not a pluralist, he is very exclusive.
- Is Jesus narrow-minded? Yes, in some areas and so are you.

When you find the one thing that works, you eliminate all others that don't work.

Example – gasoline in our car. It's amazing that we will be so precise when it comes to making decisions about our car, but so haphazard when comes to make decisions about our eternal destiny.

*2. He didn't say, “Come unto the temple, synagogue, church, the Bible, or prayer. He said, “Come unto me.” Jesus was saying, “I'm not leading you to the answer, I am the answer.”*

#### **B. When you come to Jesus, who do you come to?**

- You come to God.
- You come to the One who created you.
- You come to the One who went to a cross and died under the penalty of the sin you committed against Him
- You come to the One who knows the worst about you, but loves you anyway.
- You come to the One who loves you, accepts you, sees you as infinitely valuable and precious, and who is always ready to forgive you.

Jesus said, “*Come to me.*” But if you come to Him, you have leave behind something else  
Man made religion.

The first and greatest requirement for you to come to Christ is Honesty.

## ***II. GIVE UP ON YOUR WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS***

*“all you who labor and are heavy laden”*

Jesus was talking to very religious Jewish people - people who were laboring and heavy-laden under the weight of religious rule and regulations.

The Pharisees added 10,000 addition rules to make sure you kept the 10 commandments. The problem with rules is that -You never know if you’ve done enough. You can’t love people, you can only use people. It is very tiring and wearisome to labor and be heavy laden in your efforts to please God. Jesus has said to those kinds of people, “*Come unto Me*”, and when they come unto Him, He has promised to give them rest.

Who can come to Christ?

- Those who are heavy laden.
- Those who acknowledge their sin, feel self-condemned and dejected.

Notice again - What Jesus did NOT say - “Come to church to find rest” Christianity begins with meeting Christ personally. Going into a garage doesn’t make you a car. Going to church does not make you a Christian (you must meet Christ personally). Gathering information about Jesus does not make you a Christian. Joining a group does not make you a Christian. Having Christian parents doesn’t make you a Christian. You become a Christian through your choice in a moment of time to answer His invitation to turn from your own ways and come to Him. You will find that He’s been waiting for you all along.

## ***III. TAKE CHRIST’S YOKE.***

YOKE: “a type of harness that connects a pair of oxen.”

A pair of connected oxen was typically called a yoke of oxen. The term “take the yoke” is used metaphorically to refer to submission to a teacher. In NT times, the phrase, “to take the yoke of” was used by rabbis to refer to “becoming a submitted pupil of a teacher” Used 6 times in the NT, the word ‘yoke’ has two dominant figurative ideas.

### **1. The yoke of rules and religion -man’s yoke**

Acts 15:7-11 spells out the yoke of following rules and religious system to be accepted by God. This is the way most people are familiar with the idea of relating to God – through rules and religion. This is not the “my yoke” that Jesus speaks of. Before we came to Christ, we were also under the yoke of the law (Rom 7:1-4). The law is very demanding but God rescued us from the bondage of the law. We have been crucified with Christ. When we died with Christ, the law lost its dominion over us. Then God raised us

with Christ and we got engaged to Him. Now we live with Christ. Some people go back to the dominion of the law. They become more demanding about others (Gal 3:1) The Church is not run by rules, but by love.

## **2. The yoke of relationship – Jesus’ yoke**

Jesus said that His yoke is easy - “well fitted.” It fits the need. Rules and religion don’t fit the need for personal relationship. His yoke is easy compared to manmade religious yokes. His burden is light compared to the burden of human effort. Jesus’ sign outside his carpenter shop reads, “My yokes fit well!” Jesus said "my yoke:" Jesus commands we take up HIS yoke to find rest. There is no rest in rules and religion, but only in a personal relationship with God based on the finished work of Jesus. Now I obey God, not because of fear or obligation, but by compelled by love. 2 Corinthians 5:8; 1 John 5:3 It is legalism that puts a heavy yoke upon people.

**‘Yoke’ pictures 3 things:****1. Connection** “Be with Me.” Yokes are made for two, not one. We were NOT meant to go through life living apart from God. His yoke fits well and is lighter than the one we’ve been pulling by ourselves. Be connected to Jesus!

### **2. Direction** “Follow Me.”

The idea of a yoke pictures the forward motion of two connected together. You cannot be yoked to Jesus and go your own way anymore. We follow Him and His direction for our life. Follow Jesus!

**3. Cooperation** “Work with Me.” To be yoked together means that we cooperate with His work. Before we come to Him, we were living for this side of eternity. Now we are joined to His work and discover that our lives make an eternal impact. We experience rest only when we obey: COME and TAKE His yoke. Rest is the result of obedience! We rest in Him!

## **IV. LEARN FROM CHRIST**

Christ’s third command is to learn from Him. All of us are ignorant, just on different subjects. When we come and take up His yoke, the learning process begins. Learning does not come automatically, or overnight. It takes time to learn something. In the OT, we only had the Word –on tablets –one had to read it and do it. But in the NT, the Word became took human form. The letter of the law kills but the Spirit gives life. Jesus the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He is our model – He came to reveal the heart of God to us. From Christ, we can learn two important qualities:

### **1. Humility**

Humility is to do with our relationship with God (1 Peter 5:6).

The mighty hand of God may be the situations we are in - accept it and submit it to it.

At the beginning of Mathew 11, we see John the Baptist ..Jesus was submissive to the will of God. He became man – under the foster parents Mary & Joseph. He was subjected to irritating siblings, the reproach of His birth, His insignificant town – Nazareth ( “will any good thing come from Nazareth?”)But Christ humbly accepted all these as God’s hand, so God lifted Him up.

**3 main areas that display the humility of Jesus: His focus was on the Father’s will, not His own.** *Jesus said, “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me” (John 6:38).*

He prayed as he was facing the cross: “*My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will*” (Matthew 26:39).

And if we are going to belong to Jesus and be like Jesus, we have to come to the place where we live to do the will of the One who made us and sent us into the world

You can know that you are Christian if you are no longer living by your own will, but have surrendered and are seeking to live out God’s will in your life.

It is important to seek to be like Christ, who is our Savior and model for life.

The Bible says, “*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!*” (Philippians 2:5-8).

Doing God’s will brings us into a relationship with Jesus, for he said, “*For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother*” (Matthew 12:50).

Doing God’s will takes humility.

It means that you finally understand that you do not know it all, and cannot do it on your own. It means you die to your stubborn pride and surrender to the will of God. ***His focus was on God and others, not on Himself.*** He came to do His Father’s will, not His own.

He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Because we are to be like Jesus, the Bible says, “*Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others*” (1 Corinthians 10:24). Proud people are self-focused people. They cannot stop talking about themselves. If it is not about their accomplishments, it is their illnesses and trials. It is about the minutiae of their lives which no one really cares about, but they think everyone should know about.

**His focus was on serving, not on being served.** Imagine the King of heaven coming down to save the people of earth. Imagine the One who ruled and reigned in glory washing his disciples' feet. Imagine the One who had the power to destroy the world being willing to suffer at the hands of men and then die for them. L. T. Jeyachandran, executive director of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries in Singapore, gives this important insight: *“The image God has given us in the Trinity is an image of three co-eternal, co-equal Persons giving themselves to one another in eternal self-effacement. The glory of our God is not a thunder-and-lighting quality, but a self-giving love within the Trinity. And Jesus’s prayer for his disciples (and us) is that this same glory may be given to us that we ‘may be one’ even as they are one. Is there any question why servanthood and relationship-building is no longer an optional extra for the Christian but essential to reflecting the glory of the Triune God?”*

## **2. Gentleness.**

It is not powerlessness, or weakness, or an absence of strength, but rather power under control. Gentleness is power under control.

Jesus had the power to condemn the woman caught in adultery – He could have been righteously angry at her sin – but He responded with gentleness and used His power in a far greater way by forgiving. Likewise, with the woman at the well. And what about on the cross? Jesus had the power to come down from the cross and smite His accusers, but He kept that power under control and used it to sustain Himself through the grief and pain for the greater good – our salvation. He used His power even to be able to pray that God would not hold the sin against those who were crucifying Him. Even on the cross, Jesus was gentle and kept power under control. Gentleness is one of the fruits of the spirit

The result of coming, taking the yoke and learning from Him is receiving rest - emotional, spiritual and eternal rest. Remember this rest is a gift .... “and I will *give* you rest.” You only have to receive the rest of faith.

### **A. The word Jesus uses for ‘rest’ is a fascinating word.**

#### **1. ‘Rest’ means to refresh or revive, as from labor or from a long journey.**

- Maybe you have been working very hard to please God but you feel like you can never do enough.
- Today your journey can come to an end. Jesus is promising you a rest

#### **2. Sometimes in the New Testament, ‘rest’ is used for “chains falling off from someone’s hand.”**

- Do you feel shackled by your inability to please God? Well it’s time for the chains to fall off. Jesus is promising you rest.

- *In Greek literature, 'rest' is also used of a door that you can't quite open, but that suddenly flies open.*
  - Does it sometimes seem like the door of God's acceptance is blocked?
  - Get ready! The door has been kicked open. Jesus is promising you rest.

**4. 'Rest' is even used to describe a person who is in financial debt. But one day an envelope filled with cash arrives and removes all their debt.**

- Because of your past sins and past actions do you feel like you owe a debt to God that you can never pay?
- Well, that doesn't have to be true anymore, an envelope filled with God's riches is in the mail. Jesus has promised you rest.

**5. In the Old Testament rest is a common theme.**

- The Hebrew word for 'rest' can be used to describe a vacation after a long period of work.
- It's time for a spiritual vacation. Jesus has promised you rest.

**6. When the Hebrew word for 'rest' was brought into the Greek language in the Septuagint it was used to describe the Sabbath day.**

- That's when God rested from His work, not because He was tired but because there was no more to do.
- In His finished work Jesus Christ has done it all. Jesus has promised you rest.

St. Augustine said, "*Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it rests in Thee.*"

**B. How do we enter into Christ's rest?**

- We do it by faith.

Eph 2:8-9 "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*"

- Christianity is not a religion of struggling to do, but a relationship of resting in what has been done.

