



An Amazing Invitation

By Jeff Bedwell on December 7, 2022

READING: Matthew 11

We have in this chapter an amazing invitation from Jesus that can radically reorient our lives.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30, ESV).

The imagery in this passage is of a “yoke,” a heavy wooden bar that fits over the neck of an ox so it can pull a cart or a plow. The yoke could be put on one animal, or it could be shared between two animals. In a shared yoke, one of the oxen would often be much stronger than the other. The stronger ox was more schooled in the commands of the master, and so it would guide the other according to the master’s commands. By coming into the yoke with the stronger ox, the weaker ox could learn to obey the master’s voice.

Jesus is speaking to people who were burdened down with laws, rules and regulations from the religious leaders of their day. Their teaching did not really lead to a genuine relationship with God or a deep rest for their souls. Instead, Jesus invites them and us to:

- **Give Christ the full weight of our sin and trust Him to give us forgiveness and new life found only in Him.**
- **Learn to walk in the joy and freedom of obedience to God.** When we come into the yoke with Christ, He leads us in how to walk with the Father. He enables us to do what we could never do on our own. We obey God, not by our own strength, but with the strength of Christ. In everything we do, it is Christ who is leading us, guiding us, enabling us, teaching us—living through us.
- **Experience Christ’s rest.** Rest is mentioned twice in this passage. There is a rest that is given (v. 28), this rest comes instantly when we first trust in Christ. Then there is a rest that is found (v. 29), this rest comes as we increasingly learn to follow Jesus in our daily lives.

When Hudson Taylor, the well-known missionary to China, came to this realization in his own life, it was said of him, “He was a joyous man now, a bright happy Christian. He had been a toiling, burdened one before, with not much rest of soul. It was rest in Jesus now and letting Him do the work—which makes all the difference. Whenever he spoke in meetings after that, a new power seemed to flow from him, and in the practical things of life a new peace possessed him. How was his faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One.” (Taylor, *Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret*, 159)

PRAYER: Father, help me experience the peace, power and purpose of life "yoked" to Jesus Christ.

TOMORROW'S READING: Matthew 12

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