

Just Checking In
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The Glorious Invitation

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Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am gentle and humble in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

This glorious invitation is found immediately after Jesus' stern rebuke and warning of eternal judgment upon the unbelieving cities Chorazin and Bethsaida! (Matt 11:7-24) He said the day of God's final judgment would be worse for them than for Tyre, Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah! Then he praised the Father for revealing Christ to the hearts of His disciples, whom He called "babes", in that like little children they were untaught and helpless, yet willing to listen and follow. Christ makes it clear that coming to know Him is a miracle; no one can naturally, by human attainment, know the Father or the Son in their fullness. It is only when Christ by a divinely wrought miracle makes Himself known to the hearts of the humbly repentant. Having pronounced such stern judgment on unbelief, and the necessity of sovereign grace as the remedy, He now issues a glorious invitation to come to Him. It is all the more glorious in the face of His justice and sovereignty and our inexcusable and helpless sinful condition. Oh, let this glorious invitation make you run with inexpressible joy and relief to Him who holds out His yoke to the humble and yielded. Soul rest is waiting in His offered yoke and can be found there and there alone.

Let's take this glorious invitation phrase by phrase, and seek to gather up all the treasures to be found therein.

COME – This is an invitation that demands a decision. It is not something to be thrown upon the unaware and unwilling, but something we must come to for ourselves. It is an invitation to take a definite and new direction towards Him. It requires us to hear, heed, change direction, turn, and come to Christ Jesus. Notice, it is not a command to "go", but rather to "come." Jesus is not telling us where to go while He stays behind pointing the way, but rather He is inviting us to come to Him where He stands waiting for us.

TO ME – This coming is not to a place but to a Person. It is a Person who invites us, and to that Person we must come. It is an invitation into a personal relationship that is specific and individual. If we come not to Christ, we find not rest. It is His to give. And to Him we must come.

ALL YOU WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN – Adam and Eve had a gentle yoke and a light burden in Eden. They threw it away, exchanging it for the life-destroying yoke of a self-centered life. We all are born with that yoke and burden. It takes time to realize this yoke to self is horrible, since it is all we have known. As the years go by, this yoke becomes more and more severe and the burden heavier and heavier as we pursue our own agendas. *Ours is the yoke and burden of shame.* The Prodigal Son (Luke 15) thought he had it made when he took his inheritance and ran from his father. But as time went by, he began to see that his seeming success was in reality a choking yoke of selfishness and an unrelenting burden of shame. *Ours is the yoke and burden of guilt.* The Publican (Luke 18) thought his decision to seek the wealth to be found in using and abusing others for his own enjoyment was smart. But as time went on, he began to realize he had nothing but a burning yoke of selfishness and a clinging burden of guilt he was unable to be rid of. *Ours is the yoke of fear.* The Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2) thought they were fully justified in putting Jesus to death, until they were

confronted with the reality of their yoke of rebellion and burden of fear. And the remedy in every case was the recognition of their sin, the yoke and burden they bore by rebellion and were helpless to remove. We are yoked by sin, by Satan, and by the law. (Luke 11:26, Matt 23:4) Death is all that awaits those so yoked and burdened unless they exchange the yoke at Christ's invitation.

I WILL GIVE YOU REST – Oh the wonder of it all. Is there any hope of rest? Is this invitation real? Is there a way to find relief, escape, freedom, a true and lasting rest? Yes. He who is THE TRUTH has promised it. He who is THE WAY calls us. He who is THE LIFE stands with nail pierced hands to lift our old yoke and give us a new one. It is to be found from Him, in Him, and through Him. COME TO ME... I WILL GIVE... The omnipotent, sovereign, merciful Incarnate God gives the rest that no one else can. It is real rest. It is permanent rest. It is soul rest, as we shall see.

TAKE MY YOKE – What? Take another yoke? How in the world can we find rest by taking on another yoke? It seems so completely opposite to what we need and how we think rest is to be found. Jesus didn't say "let ME take the yoke away." Instead, He promised rest when we take on HIS YOKE. "TAKE MY YOKE." The old yoke is removed when, and only when, we exchange it for the new yoke! This is a call to a new Master, a new Owner, a new yoke, a new authority, and a new submission. It is a call to full surrender. Paul calls bond-slaves "under the yoke." 1 Timothy 6:1 He calls the law a "yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1 and as did Peter in Acts 15:10. The analogy is clear – taking on the yoke of Christ is becoming a fully surrender bond-slave who is under absolute control. Rest is found in surrender, not escape! In the exchanged yoke!

UPON YOU – This is the bond-slave's decision to surrender his life to a master. The yoke is His, but we must take it on ourselves. His yoke will not be forced upon you. You must come with your head bowed in submission, your neck surrendered, your feet still, your heart waiting, and your will offered up.

AND LEARN OF ME – to become a disciple and learn (the word "learn" here has the root of the word for disciple) of Christ requires the full surrender to and taking on His yoke of authority and control. His yoke is the means by which real learning and then real would rest takes place. We can learn facts about Him from a distance, but we can only LEARN OF HIM (FROM HIM) by surrender. His yoke is the condition of full discovery. His yoke moves you from observation to participation. His yoke moves you from a spectator to a servant, from an eve's dropper to a disciple, from assuming to knowing, from second hand gossip to first person witness. As Paul put it... "I have suffered the loss of all things (exchanged for His yoke)... That I may know Him! *No yoke, no knowing!* Ephesians 4:20-21 "But you have not so *learned* Christ; If so be that you have heard him, and have been *taught by him*, as the truth is in Jesus"

I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE OF HEART – The Yoke-Holder is gentle, caring, concerned, humble, loving, patient, tender, and not in a hurry. He knows you need to be trained and that it is not natural for you to surrender. But He will teach you of Himself in ways the unyoked will never know. You will discover His gentleness and real rest when and only when you take His yoke and surrender.

AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS – This is soul rest! Real rest is soul rest. Inner rest is soul rest, soul relief and soul renewal. This rest is real, personal, certain, and found under the yoke of Christ alone. YOU WILL. This is as definite a promise as can be found! YOU WILL. Oh, the wonder of the certain, definite, unalterable promise of rest for the soul yoked with the yoke of Christ.

FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT – Yes, there is a yoke and a burden. There is a real surrender to the authority of Christ which means a real direction, a real ownership, a real connection, a real responsibility, and a real control. But His yoke is not harsh, heavy, choking, chaffing, or cruel but is easy,

gentle, and tender is its use. And His burden is not exhausting, draining, overwhelming or devastating, but instead it is light; it is a delightful, life-giving burden to the soul, rather than the life-draining weight of sin.

The solution then, is not to be yokeless, for this is not an option. We shall never be without a yoke. We were born yoked to sin, to our Satan-deceived hearts, and our Self-centered wills. “Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast-bound in sin and nature’s night... as Charles Wesley wrote so long ago. This life-destroying yoke is ours from conception. We are used to it, as bad as it is. But Satan would have us fear the new yoke of Christ by telling us it will be far more demanding, far more restrictive, far more burdensome than his. It’s a lie! The yoke of Christ is glorious, life giving, rest providing, soul renewing!

The question for each of us is this: “Who’s yoke will you bear?” It is our first yoke that binds, blinds and destroys us. It is the second yoke that relieves, reveals, and delivers us. He calls us today to come, exchange the old yoke for His, and find in His absolute control the soul rest you long for. In surrender is rest! In surrender is peace. In His yoke is to be found the life God created you to live.

Self Check Questions

- 1) Why does being “yoked” come before “learning of Him”?
- 2) How has Christ taught you by His yoke? Describe the soul rest you have found in full surrender to Him.
- 3) How have you fought against surrender to Him? Describe the un-surrendered heart and the heavy burden it brings.

For Further Study

Romans 6:16-22 Romans 14:11 Ephesians 3:14 Philippians 2:10

***Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.
Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4 Ron & Val***

Seeing the Invisible,
Embracing the Unapproachable,
Declaring the Unexplainable,
Changed by the Immutable,
Running after the Irresistible
With inexhaustible joy
In our inexpressible sorrows,
Spending our time on eternity,
Owning nothing yet possessing everything
That matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.
Welcome to THE JOURNEY