“Come To Me”
Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV

Our scripture text comes to us this evening from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter eleven. And in verses 28-30 we read these very familiar words of Jesus.

MATTHEW 11:28-30 (NKJV)

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 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.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

PRAYER
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INTRODUCTION

The scripture we are looking at this evening is one of my favorite passages in all the New Testament, and perhaps its one of yours' too.

Over the years I have turned to this passage many times when I have been discouraged or depressed or in despair. These comforting words of Jesus are to the soul what a relaxing, hot bath is to a tired, aching body.
But one of the dangers with a great passage like this is that we can become so familiar with the words that we lose our appreciation of the meaning. And so this evening I would like for us to spend some time pouring over these few verses so we can gain a new and greater appreciation of just what Jesus is saying to us here.

In this passage we see three key thoughts:

First of all ............

I. Jesus Gives Us A WARM INVITATION (v.28a)

v. 28 a “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden.......”

1. When we read these comforting words, it is hard to believe Jesus spoke these words in the context of strong rebuke of the Jewish people for rejecting Him.

2. The Jews had absolutely no excuse whatsoever for rejecting Jesus.

   *Their ancient prophets had foretold the coming of Jesus.

   *Jesus had been born to Jewish parents, in the Jewish village of Bethlehem, and raised in the Jewish town of Nazareth.

   *John the Baptist had preached a message of repentance to the Jewish people to prepare them for Christ’s arrival.

   *Then Jesus taught in the Jewish synagogues and healed the Jewish people of their physical infirmities, and preached messages about the kingdom of heaven in virtually all the Jewish towns and villages.
3. And yet, despite all His teaching and preaching and healing, and acts of kindness and love and forgiveness, the Jewish people, for the most part, refused to “Come to Him.” They chose instead, to reject Him and crucify Him.

4. What a tragedy! What a lost opportunity! “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.”

5. When you place Jesus' warm invitation in verse 28 against the “dark backdrop” of the Jew's hostile rejection, it makes Jesus' invitation even more precious doesn't it?

6. Look closely at this “warm invitation.”

   (A) First, Jesus says, “COME .......”

   It's not a very long word, just four letters, and yet it is filled with meaning.

   To “come” means you leave one thing for another. For example, if I “come” to your house, that means I have leave my house to come to yours.'

   When Jesus invites to “come” He is inviting us to leave our life of sin.......leave our worldliness.... leave our self-reliant ways.....leave our self-righteous, works-based, “me-centered” religion for “the real deal,” which is Jesus Christ Himself!

   That leads us to the next part of the warm invitation.......
(B) Jesus says, “Come to ME ……”

Jesus isn’t inviting us to believe certain truths about Him. He isn’t inviting us to accept certain doctrines. He isn’t inviting us to a particular Church. Jesus is inviting us to HIMSELF.

Perhaps one of the reasons many Christians struggle so much in the Christian life is because they have an “intelligent faith” or a “head-knowledge” about Jesus, but they have never truly come to know Him personally.

Believing certain truths about Jesus doesn’t give us rest. Knowing a lot of facts about Jesus doesn’t give us rest. Coming to Church every Lord’s Day doesn’t give us rest.

True rest, true peace, true joy, can only be found in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus says, “Come to ME!”

(C) Next Jesus says, “Come to Me ALL YOU WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN……”

I believe this part of Jesus’ invitation has a two-fold meaning: one, spiritual, the other physical.

(1) The Spiritual Meaning

We must remember in Jesus’ day, the scribes and Pharisees had placed the Jewish people under the heavy burden of trying to earn God’s favor by their own works. The Pharisees had created so many religious rules and regulations about worship, and fasting, and tithing, and prayer, and washing the body, that it made it virtually impossible for anyone to live up to their religious standards, thus breaking their spirits.
So when Jesus says, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden,” He is inviting people to get out from under the heavy burden of legalism and self-righteousness that had been placed upon them by the Pharisees.

And Jesus invites us to do the same. Living the Christian life is not about “keeping a bunch of religious rules and regulations,” it’s about a life-giving, life-changing personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

(2) The Physical Meaning

But I believe there is also a practical, physical meaning to Jesus' invitation, as well as spiritual.

Most of us live our lives on “overload.” We are busy people, with places to go, and people to see, and work to do, and appointments to keep, and deadlines to meet. Many of us never stop or even slow down! We go “full throttle, with the pedal to the floor” all day long and we feel guilty if we stop to catch our breath.

Brothers and sisters, even GOD rested on the seventh day! The LORD never intended for you and me to live life at “break-neck” speed.

And so when Jesus invites all of us who are weary and burdened down to “Come to Him,” He is offering you and me a better CHOICE.

We can either live our lives independent of Jesus, and do everything by our own strength and earthly wisdom; or we can live our lives in total dependence upon Jesus, relying upon His divine strength and wisdom. Using today's vernacular, “It's really a no-brainer, isn't it?”
After Giving Us A Warm Invitation

II. Jesus Gives Us A WISE COMMAND (v.29a)

v.29a “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.”

1. It isn't enough for you and me to bring all our burdens, and all our troubles and all our problems to Jesus. There is a command we must obey in order to enjoy the “rest” He talks about in verse 28.

2. The wise command is two-fold in nature:

   (A) First, Jesus commands us to “Take My YOKE upon you.”

   We, who live in the west, are not nearly as familiar with what “a yoke” is, as the people who lived in the eastern culture of Jesus' day, and even today.

   A “yoke” was a large wooden crossbar that was carefully carved to fit over the necks of “beasts of burden” such as oxen. The purpose of the “yoke” was to bind two animals together so they could work together and share a load together. The “yoke” was an instrument to tame the will of the animal and bring it under the master's control.

   I think you can clearly see what Jesus' meant when He said, “Take my yoke upon you.” He is commanding us to “bind” ourselves to Him, to work with Him, and share our load with Him. He is commanding us to surrender our will and bring ourselves under His will.

   To “take His yoke upon ourselves” doesn't mean we just sit back and do nothing and let Jesus do everything for us. The “yoke” Jesus is talking about is demanding: Jesus describes that “yoke” for us in Matthew 16:24 (NKJV) “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”
The “yoke” Jesus places us under demands our ALL, and yet at the same time it “lightens” our load by replacing the old burden of the law, with the new burden of living under God's grace.

(B) In the second part of the wise command, Jesus says, “LEARN from Me.”

In Jesus’ day, when someone wanted to learn from the Rabbi, they would sit at his feet and soak in all his teachings; but they would also learn by observing his life and imitating his example.

When Jesus commands us to “learn from Him” He is inviting us to “sit at His feet” and soak in everything He taught us in the gospels; He is inviting us to “hang on His every word.” But there is more to “learning from Him” than learning and knowing His teachings. We learn from Him by observing His character, for He is “gentle and lowly in heart.” We should seek to imitate that same character in our own lives. We must capture the very spirit and essence of Jesus in the way we live our lives.

After giving us A WARM INVITATION and A WISE COMMAND........

III. Jesus Gives Us A WONDERFUL PROMISE (vs. 28b, 29b, 30)

1. Two times in this passage, Jesus gives us the wonderful promise of “Rest.”

v.28b “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST.”

v.29b “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.”
2. Just as **THE WARM INVITATION** has a two-fold meaning, one spiritual, the other physical; and just as **THE WISE COMMAND** is two-fold, “to take Christ’s yoke upon ourselves” and to “learn from Him.”

This wonderful promise of “rest” also has a two-fold meaning.

(A) First, in v.28, Jesus is promising us REST “from” something.

In a spiritual sense, Christ is promising us if we will “come to Him” and pursue a close, personal relationship with Him, **He will give us “rest” from the heavy burden of trying to live a “legalistic, performance-based, works-centered religion.”**

In a physical sense, Christ is promising us that if we will bring our burdens to Him instead of trying to carry life’s burdens by ourselves, **He will give us “rest” from our own self-sufficiency and self-reliance.”**

(B) But then in v. 29, Jesus isn't promising us REST “from” something, but rather REST “in” something.

Remember in the first part of this 29th verse, Jesus commanded us to “take His yoke upon us” and “learn from Him.”

This is the REST that is found “in” SERVING Jesus, and SURRENDERING all to follow Jesus.

This is the REST that comes from being in the WILL of GOD. We cannot have this rest when we are living “outside” of God's will!
This is **A REST** we can enjoy “in” the times of life's greatest trials, losses, and heartaches. It is the **REST** of being in Christ and knowing that nothing can ever separate us from the love of **GOD** that is in Christ Jesus!

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**CONCLUSION**

**ILLUSTRATION**

The story is told by a Philippine minister about the driver of a caribou wagon who was on his way to market one day.

> Along the way, the driver met up with an old man carrying a heavy load. Taking compassion on him, the driver invited the old man to ride in his wagon. The old man graciously accepted the offer.

> After a few minutes, the driver turned around to see how the old man was doing. To his surprise, he found the old man still straining beneath his load, for he had not taken the burden off his shoulders.

In many ways, you and I are a lot like that old man aren’t we? Seeing us carrying our heavy burdens, Jesus has invited you and me to “come to Him”........”to get in His wagon” and He will give us rest.

And yet we continue to carry the weight of our trials and troubles on our own shoulders.

Aren't you tired of the burden? Aren't you tired of trying to do it all by yourself?

Listen to the tender voice of your Savior, **“Come to Me, all you 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 NKJV)