

THE GREATEST PROMISE

MATTHEW 11:28-30 • TV-423B

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Matthew 11:28-30

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

My message today is entitled: **“THE GREATEST PROMISE.”**

And I'd like for you to open your Bibles to **Matthew chapter 11**. This is a very familiar passage of Scripture. I'm sure most of you have read it or heard it read many times. But I call it the **“GREATEST PROMISE.”**

Recently I spent three weeks in Mexico down in Chiapas, in the Yucatan, preaching in several Pueblos and villages and cities. The one night I preached the Gospel of Christ to an open-air gathering. There were so many people there that night that they all couldn't get into the little church so we met out on the patio where they dry coffee.

This is a ranch about 30 miles north of Guatemala. And after I finish preaching; (I speak through a translator; I have a friend who's been in Mexico 25 years and he translates for me when I go there to preach). After the service a man spoke to my translator, missionary Milton Howard. And he said this to brother Howard; “I've heard this Gospel before but tonight I really heard it and I think I understand what I heard and I'll be back.”

Do you know what he's saying? Do you understand what he's saying? Let me tell you again; He said, “I have heard this Gospel before but tonight I really heard it.”

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Now my friends; it's one thing to hear with the ear; it's quite another thing to hear with the heart. It's one thing to hear with the ear and quite another to hear with the understanding. Our Lord said that; He said, "*They, (talking about the unbelievers), have ears but they do not hear. They have eyes but they do not see. They have hearts but they do not understand.*" And He turned to His disciples and He said, "*Blessed are your ears; they hear.*"

"Well these people have ears just like our ears." No, they have natural ears and they hear natural things, but the Holy Spirit has anointed the heart and the soul and the mind. And they're hearing not just with these ears but hearing with the heart and with the understanding. And that's what He's saying there.

And I pray that God will today give us ears like this man in Mexico to really hear what we've been hearing and to really see the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

Everybody, practically everybody is familiar with the name Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus Christ. It's used all the time. It's used in preaching and it's used in cursing. It's used in the history books and it's used in the movies. It's used by politicians and it's used by preachers.

But may we be able to see the glory of God in the face of this God-man, this person. And may God give us hearts to believe. I'm conscience that when I preach whether here or anywhere else that if my voice is the only voice that men hear or women hear, nothing of any consequence will be accomplished, nothing of any eternal value will take place.

We've got to hear Him speak from heaven through His Word and through the man whom He sent. That's right; that's what Paul said, "*I came to you preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not with enticing words of man's wisdom (or intellect or psychology or philosophy I come to you with plain, straight-forward, simple, language) that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, (in the arguments of men) but that your faith should stand in the wisdom of God, in the power of God.*"

You see, that's what Paul said about the church at Thessalonica; "*Our Gospel didn't come to you in word only.*" What in the world is he talking about, "*Our Gospel didn't come in word only?*"

What did he draw, pictures? No! "*Our Gospel didn't come in word only it came in power.*" It came in words anointed with power. It came in words made effectual by the Holy Spirit. It came in words like a sword. The sword of the word is the Word of God, the sword of the Word of God, piercing even between the joints and the marrow, into the soul and the heart.

And that's what Paul said about this Thessalonian church. He said; "*Our Gospel didn't come to you in word only you (just in words and doctrines and facts) it came to you in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.*"

That's how the Word came. And that's what I pray that God will be pleased to do as I speak, not only today, but at other times that He will make the Word to be effectual.

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And this Scripture I want to read for my text; like I said, it's one with which you are familiar and one you've heard I'm sure many times. But let's see if we can hear it, let's see if we can hear it in our heart, Jesus Christ said in **Matthew 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 except the Son and He to whom the Son will reveal Him.*"

And then He said; "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest.*"

Now there are few texts in the Bible more important than this one. It's so clear, it's so plain, it's so rich in promise and purpose; there are few as important. And there are few texts in the Bible which hold out such mercy.

The Lord is not obligated to us. I don't know where people picked up this idea that God is obligated. You know; the only obligation God has to a rebel is to punish him. The only obligation God has to a sinner is to damn him.

The only obligation God has to us is to pay us the wages of sin, that is damnation. God must punish sin. God may show mercy. He doesn't have to. Everybody in the Bible who approached Jesus Christ approach Him on this basis, "Will you show mercy?"

Nobody ever sent Jesus Christ a bill for services rendered; that's stupid. Everything they ever asked for was mercy. And those who asked for it received it. God's not obligated to you and me. God doesn't owe us anything.

We've messed up everything God made. We've perverted everything God's given us. We've twisted and warped everything God's presented to us. Everything God almighty made we've messed it up and we're messing it up more and more every day. The only thing He owes us is the wages of sin, which is death.

So; there are a few texts that hold out such mercy and there are few texts in the Bible so full of comfort and rest; "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest.*"

There's not one person out of a hundred that knows what this "*rest*" is, rest, peace, comfort, joy, rest in mind. The mind of the average person is like the troubled sea; the water dashing cruelly against the rocks. Rest of soul, no depression, no anxiety, no deep feelings of guilt, rest of heart, no hatred and malice, enmity, grudge, and vengeance, rest of heart, rest of body.

Do you know anything about rest; do you know anything about rest? That's the reason I say this, one of the most important texts in the Bible, one holds out such mercy, and one that's so full of comfort because God almighty in the person of His Son is promising rest to the weary.

Well, let's study this text under four headings:

First of all: Who's speaking?

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Secondly: To whom does He speak?

Thirdly: What is His command?

Fourthly: What's the promise?

All right, who's speaking? "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden; I'll give you rest.*" Now who's speaking? "*I'll give you rest.*"

Well, when someone promises you something, especially something as great as this the promise depends on three things. If I promise you something tonight it would depend on three things:

First of all: My ability to deliver, my power to deliver. I may out promise myself.

Secondly: My willingness to deliver; I may change my mind.

Thirdly: My faithfulness to my promise; will I continue, will I persevere?

Isn't that true? If someone promises you something would not it depend, that promise depend on those three things, my power, my willingness, and my faithfulness? As the years go by I may forget it.

All right; the one who speaks here and promises to us rest is the Lord Jesus Christ and He fulfills toward us and toward God the Father all three of those things. He has the power. In fact; He's the only one who does have the power to give you rest of soul, of heart, and of mind. That's right!

The Scripture says, "*He's able to save.*" **John 17:2**; when He prayed in Gethsemane; He said, "*Father; you have given me power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me.*"

When He sent His disciples out to preach He said; "*All authority, all power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and preach the Gospel.*" All power, all authority; He has power and He's able to give rest.

The Scripture says "*He is able to do all that He promised.*" Abraham believed that. "*He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him. He is able to keep you from falling. He's able to present you before His throne of glory with exceeding joy, faultless, and without blame.*"

"*He is able to raise your vile body and make it like His own.*" He is able. He's the only one who can give rest. So, He's able.

Secondly: He must be willing.

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He's willing to give rest. That's why He came to the earth. He said; *"I'm come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."* He said: *"The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost."* He delights to show mercy.

Paul wrote; *"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."* **1 Peter 3:18** said; *"He died the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God."* That's why He came. That's His mission and that's His purpose.

One of the disciples told Him not to go to the cross. He said, *"For this cause came I to the world."* He was born crucified. So, He's able to give rest. He's willing to give rest.

I'll tell you this, He's faithful to His promises. What my God purposes He promises. What He promises He fulfills. He said; *"Have I not spoken it? Shall I not bring it to pass."* *"In hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised before the world began?"*

**"Firm as His throne the Gospel stands
My Lord, my God, my trust
If I'm found in Jesus' hands
My soul will never be lost**

**Because His honor is engaged to save
The weakest of His sheep
All that the heavenly Father gave
The Son will surely keep."**

Paul said, *"I'm persuaded, I'm confident, that what God almighty has purposed He will fulfill."* He'll accomplish that which He has purposed.

All right; we've dealt with this one, who's speaking; it's the Lord of glory. It's the one who has the power, the ability, the willingness, and the faithfulness to give rest.

Secondly: To whom does He speak? Now listen; to whom does He speak?

He says; *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest."* Now, He does not speak here of our labors and burdens in the flesh. We shall always have to work and toil.

Ever since Adam fell in the Garden and God said, *"That man shall eat his bread by the sweat of his brow;"* that's true and will always be true. We're going have to always labor and toil and work till this life is over.

We're going to have tribulation. In fact, Paul said, *"If a man wouldn't work he shouldn't eat."* That's right! Men are expected to work. Women are expected to toil and labor.

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We're going to have burdens. We're going to have trials. We're going to be heavy laden. We're going to have to toil all the way through this life, sun up to sundown. That's not what He's talking about here. We can't quit work. We can't stop working. We can't stop laboring. We can't stop building.

What He's talking about here is this, "*All ye that labor and are heavy laden;*" He's talking about in spirit, in heart. I'll tell you, if the heart and the spirit are right with God the toil and the labor of the flesh is easier and the burdens are lighter.

A man whose heart is right with God can go to work a lot easier than a man who has depression of spirit and mind and heart and labor of body too.

What are the things that cause us to labor and be heavy laden spiritually? What depresses you? What brings you down? What troubles you? What keeps you from having rest and joy and peace and precious sleep?

I'll tell you a few things; our feelings of sin against God. David said that; he said: "*My sins are ever before me. Against thee O God and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight.*"

I'll tell you; we think about our sins, we contemplate our sins; we're concerned about our sins. We feel guilt over our sins because they're against God and that keeps you from having rest. And a concern for your soul's salvation; am I saved?

John Newton said:

**"Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it gives me anxious thought
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His or am I not?"**

It causes great unrest. Thoughts about death; people are afraid to die, did you know that? Oh I hear the quartet singing: "I'll be glad when I have my home over there." If they found out they were going to have heart trouble tomorrow they'd all flip out, you know. They don't want to die. They're just talking.

The average person is scared to death to die, church member included, scared to death to die, afraid of death and afraid of Judgment. The average person here has no rest, no peace, and no joy.

Where will I spend eternity? Will I hear the Lord say, "*Depart from me I never knew you?*" These things are what make us heavy laden, a feeling of sin, a doubt about salvation, our relationship with God, fear of death, fear of Judgment, fear of condemnation, and fear of hell.

And I'll tell you; a person that doesn't know God and doesn't fear those things is a fool. Fools make a mock of sin.

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Well, if we are laboring and are heavy laden in spirit and heart and soul about sin, death, judgment, and eternity, our relationship with God, hear this command!

Thirdly: What is His command?

He said: “*All things (everything) are delivered unto me of my Father. And no man knows the Father except the Son and He to whom the Son will reveal Him.*” “So if you’ll come to me, you that labor and are heavy laden and are filled with depression and guilt and unrest, if you’ll come to me I’ll give you rest.” Now what’s His command? “*Come to me.*”

Now notice, He didn’t say, “To go to the law, go to Sinai and try to obey the law.” Notice, He didn’t say, “Go to church and try to do good works and get involved in a program and get out and doing certain things.”

That’s not what He says. He doesn’t say, “Now; if you’re laboring and are heavy laden go get busy.” No! He says, “*Come to me.*” He didn’t say, “Send someone in your place.” He didn’t say that, “Send someone in your place, send another representative, send a preacher, send Mary, and send a priest. No, “*You come to me.*”

He didn’t say, “Wait and get better so you can come, so you’ll feel worthy.” He says. “*Come to me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, come to me,*” “not go to the preacher; he can’t help you; he can’t help himself.”

Not go to the front of the church; that’s what everybody’s doing now, walking an aisle, back and forth, going down once and rededicating, and keep coming back, you know. That’s a terrible place to try to find salvation.

He didn’t say go to the baptismal waters. He said, “*Come to me, believe on me.*” Now how does one come to Christ, we come by faith, don’t move a foot. Coming to Christ is not a physical move. You don’t move a hand or a hair. You don’t move a hip or a foot. You come to Christ in heart. You believe on Him. You look to Him.

“*Come to me, come to me*” and come now, just as you are, Charlotte Elliot wrote:

**“Just as I am without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me
And that thy bidst me come to thee
Lord, Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot (I can’t do that)
But to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot
Oh Lamb of God I come.**

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**Just as I am thou wilt receive
And welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve
Because your promise I believe
Lamb of God I come.”**

I wish I could make that plain to all my hearers, salvation is in a person. It's not in a procession. It's not in a profession. It's not in a morality, it's not in a denomination, and it's not in all these things, raising your hand and reciting the sinner's prayer.

Salvation is in Christ, trusting Him, believing Him, resting in Him and looking to Him. Do you see that? That's what it says. I don't know how to make it plainer. He said, "The Father's given everything into my hands. Now you come to me, come to me. Don't come to anybody else, come to me. All ye that are laboring and are heaven laden; I'll give you rest, I'll give you rest."

What's His promise? "*I'll give you rest.*" Every word here's important: "Come now," look to Christ. Leave your idols and your false religion. Don't drag them along behind you. "*Unto me,*" Christ alone and the promise, "*I will give you rest.*"

"*He purged our sins by Himself.*" "I'll give, I will, it's certain; I will give, not for sale; it's a free gift; I'll give you personally, individually, I'll give you rest of mind, heart, and soul. I'll give you rest."

What is your fear, fear of sin? Well, "*Christ Jesus' blood cleanseth us from all sin.*" In Christ there is no sin.

**“My sin, O the bliss of that glorious thought
My sin, not in part, but the whole (past, present, and future)
Are nailed to the cross and I bear them no more
It is well with my soul.”**

Can you rest, rest from the fear of sin? What is your trouble? What are you laboring? What are your fears? Rest from the works of the law. We're not under the law; we're under grace. The law has no dominion over us. We're under the grace of God and the love of Christ.

What about trials, disappointments, sickness, heartache, sorrow, and death? "*All things work together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to His purpose,*" that you should rest in Christ.

You know, when something does come your way, an ill wind blows, or a mountain must be climbed or a river must be forded or a burden must be carried. He gave it for His glory and your good.

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Rest from the fear of death; *“To die is gain. He that believeth on me shall never die.”* We’ve already died in Christ. Rest from Judgment, rest from the fear of eternity: *“My sheep shall never perish. I give them eternal life and they’ll never perish. No man is able to pluck them out of my hand. My Father gave them all to me. No man can pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”* Let me ask you this; could there ever be a soul in hell that is trusting Jesus Christ?

No, not at all; why God would lose His honor, heaven would lose its glory if one person who rested in Christ, trusted in Christ, believed in Christ, came to Christ, ever perished.

And then He said in closing, He said now; *“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me and you will find rest unto your souls.”* You see; *“Come to me and I’ll give you rest.”*

“And then as you learn more of Me, learn more of my love for you, my grace toward you, the Father’s covenant of mercies toward you, and all that the Holy Spirit has sent to be the comforter for you; as you learn of Me, then you’re going to find more rest for your souls.”

You see; this victory is not totally won in one day. You don’t just; you pass from death unto life, that’s right, you pass from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God’s dear Son by faith in Christ. You become a child of God.

But a baby is a baby, is a baby. When I was born I was born just 6 lbs. and so many ounces but I had life. I had everything that I’ll have as a full grown man. But it matured and it grew and developed on what, on eating and resting and on food and on nourishment.

And so, as I learn of Christ, I grow from a babe in Christ to a young man in Christ to an elder in Christ. And I grow in rest. *“Come and I will give you rest and then learn of me and find rest for your soul!”*