

Matt 11:28-30  
"Rest for Your Soul"

No commandment of God brought about more frustration for the Jews of Jesus' day than the command to keep the Sabbath. This was not so because the commandment itself was difficult but because the religious leaders of Jesus' day, specifically the Pharisees, made it so. They were notorious for their rule making and heaping these ungodly rules on top of the law of God. And the Sabbath was their sacred cow. Listen to some of the additional requirements created by the Pharisees regarding Sabbath keeping:

- You should not look in a mirror on the Sabbath because you might be tempted to pluck out a grey hair and that would be reaping.
- If the lights were on when the Sabbath came (Sabbath began at sundown), you could not blow them out. If they had not been lit in time, then you could not light them.
- It was unlawful to move furniture on the Sabbath. You were allowed to move a ladder on the Sabbath, but you could only move it four steps.
- You were allowed to eat radishes on the Sabbath, but you were warned against dipping them into salt because you might leave them in the salt too long and pickle them and this was considered to be Sabbath-breaking.
- It was fine to spit on a rock on the Sabbath, but you could not spit on the ground, because that made mud and mud was mortar, and that was work.

And there were thousands of rules like these created and enforced by the Pharisees. Rules they taught had to be adhered to in order to observe faithfully the law of God. It is against this backdrop that Jesus

extended his offer. <sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.” The people were tired. They were burdened and weary because of the religious establishment and Jesus offers a better way. As a matter of fact, the only way. Are you tired? Tired of toiling and getting no where? Tired of putting fourth your best effort and, yet, still falling short? Tired of being burdened by all the rules of others? Is there anyone in need of rest? In need of a better way? Jesus is talking to you! Now that he has your attention four things regarding his offer.

**First, accept the offer. It is not too good to be true.** There is no fine print and no hidden fees. It is everything that Jesus promises it will be. **V29-30** <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy and my burden light”. Turn to him and you will find rest for you soul. You will receive righteousness, hope and eternal life. Church, either we will relinquish the yoke that has been placed upon us by sin, a yoke one only exacerbated by the world and one that will eventually bring about our ruin or we trade it in for the yoke that Christ offers. We can choose to keep trying to no avail or we can accept that which Christ has done. This was the choice the Jews of Jesus’ day had and the same choice we have today. I implore you to except the offer!

**Romans 6:22-23** “But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**John 6:39-40** “And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father’s will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.”

**1 John 2:2** “He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.”

**Second, let us not bring those Pharisaic tendencies with us.** We are under the tutelage of a new teacher, and we must toss Pharisaic ideology. List making and list taking. We must let go of the idea that there is something we must add to what Jesus offers. It is never Jesus and. Only Jesus. We have nothing to bring or add. We have much to let go of and much to receive, but nothing to add or offer. **V28** “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”. The only thing for us to do is let go and let God. Jesus has done what’s required to bring about true rest. So, rest in that!

**Psalm 4:8** “In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe.”

**Psalm 127:1-2** “Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the Lord protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good. <sup>2</sup>It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.”

**Heb 4:1-3a** “God’s promise of entering his rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it. <sup>2</sup>For this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good

because they didn't share the faith of those who listened to God.<sup>3</sup> For only we who believe can enter his rest."

Church, that which our souls' thirst for cannot be received by works, only by faith in the Lord Jesus. Faith in Christ equals rest!

**Third, this offer is not a call to idleness.** There is much to be done in the name of our Lord but nothing to be done on our part to secure the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God has been credited to our account through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus says, "I will give you rest". No toiling to earn that which God freely gives through faith in His Son. This is the grace of God. But make no mistake about, there is work to be done out of gratitude and in effort to proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Resting in Christ allows us too just be, to be followers of Jesus.

**Romans 10:4** "4 For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God."

**Eph 2:8-10** "8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

**Finally, rest does not mean a life free from trial.** Jesus is not offering us a trouble-free life. No such thing in this world for the disciple or for the one who has yet to be discipled. Trouble will surely come. The sun and the rain shine and fall on all people scripture declares. Tribulation is to be expected but it could never rob us of our rest.

**Romans 8:31-39** "31 What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? 32 Since he did not

spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup> Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself.<sup>34</sup> Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.<sup>35</sup> Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? <sup>36</sup> (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") <sup>37</sup> No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. <sup>38</sup> And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. <sup>39</sup> No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Brothers and sisters let us take his offer and in doing so find rest for our souls. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.