

## **FINDING NEEDED REST FOR OUR WEARY SOULS**

Matthew 11: 28-30 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Today, ask yourselves a few personal questions. Are you torn up? Seemingly forgotten? Burned out? Cried out? Tired out? Worn Out? Are you without Jesus at the center of your life? Hear the voice of Jesus calling out to you. Hear His gentle voice—I sense His words are saying, in essence, “Come to Me. Let Me recover your life from the weight of being heavy laden. Let Me show you how to rest, really rest, even in your work, even in your unemployment. Let me show you how, not only to work with Me, but how to rest with Me. Watch me pound nails and do it with Me. Watch Me catch fish and do it with Me. Come and join me in the wonderful joy of being my saved son or daughter, my Bride. My child, salvation always precedes surrender. You can’t live like a married man or woman until you are married. After you are saved, I call on you to live like a saved person. I want you in yoke with Me.”

Most of us probably need rest and lots of it. makes this invitation from Jesus very appealing. If you know anything about planned vacations, you all know that vacations can be the most expensive times of our lives that we end up paying dearly for them. What is the cost of an all expenses paid rest for our souls from Jesus? A poet said it well, “Payment God will not twice demand, First at my bleeding Surety's hand, And then again at mine!” Rest for our souls is all expenses paid. If Jesus paid it all, there is nothing left for you and me to pay. In the knowledge that the burden of the cost is lifted, rest then in what Jesus has provided for us. In Him alone is true rest. From our text, **what are five ways we must come to Jesus for rest for our souls?**

**COME TO JESUS WITH A DAILY HUMBLE HEART.** (I.) These words, “Come to me,” are kneeling words. What I mean is that these words suggest a posture of our spirits, regardless of the place where we are at the moment. We can be standing, lying in bed, on our knees, seated at a table, driving in our car, but wherever we come to Jesus, it is a kneeling of our spirits that precedes and supercedes any kneeling of our flesh. We can never come to Jesus once, and say, “Well, that’s done for the day.” How tragic! This coming to Jesus is a verb in the present tense, continuous, a daily moment by moment coming that is mirrored in Jesus’ specific words in Luke 9: 23, where He said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” Whatever it means to come to Jesus, it is to be a daily matter. “Daily’ in the Greek is **hemera**. This

word is more than from dawn to dark. It signifies a period starting with now and going until this time tomorrow—or it is what happens in each 24 hour period. Coming to Jesus is to be a daily coming to Him, coming after Him, following Him. Slacking off in coming to Jesus is not acceptable as His Bride any more than it would be acceptable for you to fail to come home to your spouse at night. Slacking off in coming to Jesus is no more acceptable than looking at lustful images on the internet or having an affair. Daily means every day we humbly give Jesus all our surrendered heart. Beloved, spending time with Jesus daily is either a daily humbling before Him or it soon becomes a non-issue very soon. And soon after that, our calloused spirits justify our lack of discipline. Soon, in our pride, we hate to admit that deep within, we know why the enemy is defeating us. Humble souls win. Proud souls lose. Humble souls bow. Proud souls brag. Humble souls bend. Proud souls break. Humble hearts coming to Jesus is as vital as drinking water to live. Without coming to Jesus daily, we get spiritually dehydrated and soon we are spiritually sick. There is a second way we come to Jesus:

**COME TO JESUS AS A DAILY HOLY HABIT.** (II.) These first words in verse 28, “Come to Me,” are words calling us to a beautiful holy life. Blaise Pascal explained it, saying, “Next to the might of God’s Spirit, the serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world.” Do you have a daily holy habit of coming to Jesus? It has been called by many names, but whether you call it a daily “quiet time,” daily devotions, or a daily time in your closet with Jesus, the name is not important. What is important is not the name, but if you have it, if you do it daily with Jesus—coming to Him. Is this holy habit your personal habit? Do you insist on this daily obedience as Jesus calls you, saying, “Come to Me!”? The Greek word for “come” in our text is **deute**. It is pronounced like our word duty. It means “Come here or come hither.” Back in Luke 9: 23 when Jesus said daily come after Me, the Greek word is **erchomai**. It means to come or to appear before Him. When God says, it is your duty, and He says, Deute!—Come here! He wants us to come to Him now. And when He says Come after Me, it means “Show up today. Let me see you are present.” It’s as simple as roll call when I was back in our one room school—1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Whitaker Fork School. When Mildred and Troy Fields called the role, it was our duty not only to be there—to come there, but to speak up, so as to appear on the roll. Our job was to say “Present.” Beloved, daily when God calls us, saying, “Come to Me!”, do we show up, are we present? It’s as simple as reporting in with the Lord. When I come home from work at night, I am not truly home until I obey an unsaid call from Jinny of “Come to me.”

She wants me to kiss her hello and I want to do it. Beloved, Jesus is our Bridegroom. He calls us to a daily holy habit to read His Word, to pray or talk with Him, to think and meditate on His Word, and to make it every bit as habitual as brushing our teeth in the morning. Is coming to Jesus your daily necessary agenda? This daily holy habit makes us ready to face our daily battles. Daily we will face temptations. Irwin Lutzer, former president of Moody Bible Institute says it well. He says, “Temptation is not a sin, it is a call to battle.” Pity the believer called to battle, who has not first come to Jesus. Thirdly, there is a way we come to Jesus for rest for our souls:

**COME TO JESUS AS OUR DAILY HOTEL.** (III.) Notice in verse 28, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden/overburdened, and I will give you rest.” Jesus is our Hotel, our Sabbath rest—fully paid for and better than Marriot, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, or whatever hotel you like. He does more than leave the light on for us. He is waiting for us to arrive and always welcomes us in a room that is always open and never taken. Paul’s experience in Romans 7: 19-25 tells of him wanting to do better than he was doing, and instead, doing worse than he planned. Isn’t that true at one time or another for us all? It’s no different from a smoker with good intentions of quitting his or her habit, but who is overcome by the drive and the cravings of nicotine. It’s no different from the executive who has good intentions of spending more time at home with his family, but due to the expectations of his job, he often fails miserably. It’s no different from being one who is out to simplify your lifestyle and to consume less, but instead you find yourself constantly succumbing to the hook of advertisers. Those advertisers tell us that their product or service will help us achieve tranquility and fullness of life. It’s no different from wanting to lose weight until we smell good food and we find ourselves enslaved one more time.

Coming to Jesus is God’s promise to us that the way out from under our weariness and despair of unmet expectations, the way out from these forces that cripple our ability to be what we want to be and what Jesus wants us to be—the way out is to offer ourselves to Him, just like we turn in for the night at a hotel. Jesus is calling us to turn in for the night and quit trying to change on our own. He is calling us to trust Him, to rest in Him, and to pair up with Him to overcome the overwhelming forces of evil that are seeking to destroy us. The Spirit of the Living God is telling us, come to me and let me set you free from the “O wretched man that I am” syndrome, that wretchedness of running on the wheels of life like a wasted gerbil that

cannot run another turn on the wheels. Romans 8: 1,2 tells us that Jesus, our daily hotel sets us free from the law of sin and death. Fourthly,

### **COME TO JESUS AS A DAILY HARNESS OR YOKE FOR LIFE.**

(IV.) Notice in verses 29 and 30, “Take My yoke upon you... For My yoke is easy, and My burden/load is light.” When Jesus speaks of a harness or a yoke, He is referring to the way farmers in His day, even as today in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries, till their soil by harnessing or yoking two oxen together. These wooden yokes went over both the oxen’s heads and then rested on their shoulders. The classic yoke was made out of wood 6” by 10” with large rounded notches that went over the neck of the two oxen as they stood side by side. Then a piece of bent wood shaped like a capital U would go over each animals neck, and then up through two holes in the main part of the yoke. This would hold the yoke firmly against the ox’s shoulder. This is odd at first, and seems contradictory. Jesus is speaking of a person being burdened down with an enormous load on his back, piled so high he is staggering under the load. And what is the alternative Jesus is offering that is rest for our souls? The alternative is not the end of carrying a burden, but rather suiting us to a different load. This yoke Jesus is offering is a custom fit yoke, ideally suited to each one of us. Such a fitted yoke enables the ox to bear an even greater load than it could have before. What Jesus is saying is not, “Let me come into your life, and you can go on doing everything just the same way your were doing it before.” No, never! Jesus is not saying, “Let Me take your yoke upon Me. We’ll do your career, your desires, and your ambitions your way.” God isn’t saying, “Let me help you be a better workaholic, married to your job.”

No, what does Jesus say to do? Take My yoke upon you...for My yoke is easy and My load is light.” Jesus is saying, “My yoke means My direction, My work, My training, My fitted load, and My help in yoke with Me. Let’s look at these 4 aspects of Jesus’ yoke which He calls “My yoke.” **(1) “My yoke means going Jesus’ direction. It means Jesus is charting our course, the future is in His hands, not ours,** when we take His yoke on us. As we pull with Him, we abandon our outcomes to God. We learn in the harness that it is far more important to be obedient to Jesus than it is to be successful. We go where He leads, where He points, where He prompts by His Spirit, and not where we desire. **(2) “My yoke” means doing Jesus’ work.** “My yoke” means doing Jesus’ work. He doesn’t call us to rest by laying our head down on a pillow. Rather, Jesus invites us to take His yoke upon us and work with Him. That is an amazing rest from doing things our

way. **(3) “My yoke means receiving Jesus’ training.** In countries where yokes are still used, it is the common practice to put a new young animal into the harness or yoke with an older trained animal. The older animal knows what to do and when and how to pull the load, plus that older animal has learned to follow orders. The young animal learns from the older animal. Learning to think, feel, move and act like Jesus means training even as a marathon runner trains under an experienced runner to run or as a pianist takes piano lessons from an accomplished musician to become a pianist. **(4) “My yoke” means accepting Jesus’ perfectly fitted yoke along with His help.** We are not equally strong as Jesus is. Guess who is going to carry the greatest part of the load? He is! We need to remember that. Jesus wants us in yoke with Him. He will carry the front end of the yoke. The yoke He gives us involves submission to His instructions. 5thly,

**COME TO JESUS IN DAILY HALLOWED LEARNING** (V.) Jesus calls us in verse 29, saying “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.” William Booth, the great founder and entrepreneur of The Salvation Army said, “The greatness of man’s power is the measure of his surrender.” Anyone in the world can be stubborn and rebellious, proud and unbending, or critical and bitter to the core. That doesn’t take an ounce of education. We come by it naturally in our sinful old nature. That kind of person is not resting in the Lord and in being a learner from Him. I tremble for you if your walk with God is not a daily hallowed walk of learning. I tremble for you if you take in the Lord on Sunday mornings and float freely from the sanctuary to immorality, from conviction in God’s house to drinking at the bar, from sitting at the feet of Jesus to looking at pornography. We can talk ourselves into compartmentalizing our walk with God. We aren’t learning even if we take excellent notes on the Pastor’s messages. Learning from Jesus involves snuggling—spiritually. It means getting as near to Jesus as we can and letting His presence rub off on us, rub off in our habits, and rub off in our music until others notice we have been with Jesus.

Are any of us playing around in unhallowed walks that cry out to the Lord, “I could care less about You.”? I hear the Lord Jesus reminding us all of His words in James 4: 4. There He addresses those living an unhallowed walk saying, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” We can’t snuggle up both to Jesus and to a bottle, both to Jesus and to disobedience, both to Jesus and to drugs or

weed, both to Jesus and to lying lips, both to Jesus and to bitterness, and both to Jesus and to being un-teachable. We can't learn from the Lord in a daily hallowed walk that is compromised with sin. It's a lot like learning a new job. We need to be mentored as apprentices by journeymen who have learned from the Master for years. Dallas Willard, in his book, "Renovation Of The Heart, on page 228, writes, "Our walk with Christ, well learned, is a burden only as wings are to a bird or an engine is to an airplane. "

This kind of a burden is really no burden at all. It is a necessity. Jesus pleads with us, "Learn of Me. Most of us will never get to go to Bible School or seminary, but we can all come to Jesus and learn of Him. If it is a burden for you to learn of Jesus, it is a burden no greater than a fish having to learn to use its fins. So how do we find rest for our souls? God has a 5-fold plan. (1) Come to Jesus with a daily humble heart. (2) Come to Jesus as a daily holy habit. (3) Come to Jesus as our daily hotel. (4) Come to Jesus as a daily harness or yoke for life (5) Come to Jesus in daily hallowed learning. Repeat Matthew 11: 28-30. Amen.