

Finding Rest

Video Devotions for weekend of September 5

Matthew 11:28-30

Scripture

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Message: We are “in between” this week. We finished up a series of sermon studies from the book of Psalms last week. I am planning to begin a new series of studies next weekend. We are going to be looking at some “**Habits of Christians who Live out their faith, every day, not just on Sunday.**”

Today, I just want to talk briefly about these words from Jesus.

The Offer – Rest. Rest is an important word in the Bible. We see a reference to it right away in the beginning of the Bible. The first chapter of Genesis tells us about God’s work of creation. The story of creation is broken down into 7 pieces – days. Some people believe that the days of creation are 24 hour days. Some believe that they refer to 7 periods of time. In the first 6 days God created everything. But on the 7th day, God rested. I don’t think that means God was tired. He had brought the universe into existence. It was complete. I believe that the reference to God resting was to establish a pattern for our lives. We are to find a regular rhythm to our lives, that includes a time of **rest**. Life is more than working and accumulating.

The idea of rest is also used in the story of the people of Israel on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land. God offers His people the **rest** that comes from His presence with them. They would experience **rest in the land** that He promised them. They would experience **rest from their enemies**. But the Rest that God offered them was conditional – on their faith. The writer of the book of Hebrews writes about this rest that God offered His people. If they would believe Him and trust Him, He would lead them into the promised land where they would experience His **Rest**. But most of the people died in the wilderness because they did not trust God and they disobeyed Him. They did not receive the rest that God promised them.

Now in this passage from Matthew, Jesus offers **Rest** to His people. Jesus offers Rest to those who are weary and burdened. As we take our understanding of Rest from the Old Testament, we understand that Jesus is offering the **Peace of His Presence**. Just as Israel was safe because **God was in their midst**, so Jesus protects us from the

enemies that oppress us – fear, guilt, sin, temptation, worry, the devil. Just as God offered Israel the **hope of rest** in the promised land, so **Jesus offers us the hope of rest in heaven**. The promise of **rest** is an eschatological promise – heaven – but as Jesus offers us that hope, we already begin to experience the blessings of **rest** in this world. Jesus offer of **rest** is a gift that he gives us. If we are weary from trying to find peace and rest on our own, we learn that we only need to respond to Him.

But we learn that Jesus’ offer of rest is not an offer of a life free from responsibility. He challenges us to take his yoke upon ourselves. His yoke was a device that keeps the beasts on the right path. The yoke that Jesus offers is a yoke of learning. It was a yoke of **Rest**. But we must not fear the yoke. Jesus accused the religious teachers of His day of putting burdens on their students that were impossible to bear. But Jesus assures us that His yoke is easy and his burden is light. It is not Jesus’ intent to see His followers fail or turn back. Jesus’ teachings are easy to bear, because He empowers us to follow His teachings.

So Jesus longs for his followers to find rest – **the rest of walking in His presence**, knowing that he will never leave us or forsake us. He offers **the rest of no longer striving against enemies that threaten our equilibrium**. He offers us **the rest of eternal life in heaven**. That rest is not something that only comes after we die. We can begin to experience Life as it will be, Life as it should be while we live in this world. But we must respond to His invitation. We must accept His invitation to **Come to Him**. We must **take His Yoke** – that is to accept Him as the Lord (teacher) for our lives.

If you are tired – physically, spiritually, emotionally, relationally – Jesus offers you the gift of a heart at rest.

Prayer