

## Come and Be Rested

### Matthew 11:20-30

**Proposition:** Those who are chosen come to the Son and share in his experience.

**Organizational Sentence:** To communicate this truth Jesus reminds his listeners what they already know, tells them what they need to know, instructs them concerning what they need to do.

### Introduction

This morning, my plan is to comment on verses 20-24 and dig a little more deeply into verses 25-30. That is not because 20-24 is unimportant or worthless. In fact, this denouncement by Jesus constitutes the result of the misled expectations of Jesus that Nick preached on last week. It is rich and deep and worthy of study. However, if we studied everything in Matthew to the utmost depth, our journey through the book would be truly endless.

For this reason, we will treat verses 20-24 as they function in the text: as a transition of sorts between the truth presented in the beginning of the chapter and the truth presented in the end. After addressing this transition, we will dive into verses 25-30.

### Pray

As I said, verses 20-24 function as a bridge of sorts between the section we looked at last week and the section we looked at this week. It serves to contrast that incorrectness with

the correctness that will soon be presented, and here is the point Jesus is making:

**Your wrong expectation lead to a wrong identification which demands right condemnation. (v.20-24)**

In other words, you were looking for the wrong thing, so when the right thing came you missed it, and because of that you will be held responsible. The cities Jesus had revealed himself to are compared to the historically unrepentant cities of the Old Testament. In fact, they are far worse because they have rejected not a prophet of God, but God himself. In short, God was doing something, and they missed it. Let me say that better. God was doing the biggest, most important thing he had ever done in the whole history of redemption in becoming the fulfillment of all the promises he had ever made, and they attributed it to Satan. Indeed, their condemnation is just.

But let us not point fingers here. What is that book sitting in your lap? Is it not the Word of God, which, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit is sufficient for all life and godliness? We may not have walked with Christ, but we have the perfect account of who he is, why he came, and how we should respond. **Friends, we fool ourselves if we think that our plea of ignorance before the Judge of all things is any more legitimate than the people of these towns**, especially if you are sitting here this Sunday, listening to this warning. Do not reject Christ as they did, because if you do your condemnation will be swift and terrible and perfectly just.

Fortunately, Matthew does not leave us with this dismal picture and goes on to give us verses 25-30. And his point in this section is this:

**Proposition: Those who are chosen to know the Father come to the Son and share in his experience.**

And, as I have done in the past, I will give you an inside look into life at the Callahan household to help us understand the text.

Laundry Analogy

**In the same way, Jesus in this passage communicates his point by reminding his listeners what they already know, telling them what they need to know, instructing them concerning what they need to do.**

So, let's jump in. First, he reminds his listeners of the thing that they already know:

**1. The Father chooses whether his ways are hidden or seen, and he does so contrary to human reason. (v.25-26)**

To the predominantly Jewish audience that Matthew is writing to and Jesus is speaking to, this would not be new information. God had always worked this way. He came and made covenant with Abraham and nobody else. He showed himself in the burning bush to Moses but not to Aaron. He gave the gift of Law to Israel and nobody else. His Spirit remained with David and left from Saul.

And now, God had revealed the pinnacle of his redemptive plan in the person of Jesus, but, according to what was pleasing to him, some recognized it and some did not. In other words,

the fact that these cities rejected Jesus was not evidence that God's purposes were thwarted, it was evidence that his plan was being enacted. It was not according to their good pleasure that they rejected Christ, it was according to God's. In 20-24, Jesus makes sure that these cities understand that they are responsible. Then, in this statement, he banishes any trace of the thought that somehow their responsibility disqualifies God's sovereignty. As he has always done, he hid his ways to some and revealed them to others.

However, there is more to this point than just the fact that God reveals himself at his own choosing, isn't there. The other thing that Jesus notes is that he "hides these things from the wise and intelligent and reveals them to infants." The reminder is not just *that* God reveals selectively, but that he reveals selectively to those we would least expect. Though the Jews had certainly forgotten this idea, it was not new either. After all, had God chosen them because of their size or greatness? Certainly not, according to Deuteronomy 7:7. Israel was chosen because God loved them and had chosen them long ago, according to his good pleasure.

Some say that the point here is that we ought to humble before God like little children. And, though that certainly is true, we must be humble before God, I think that misses the point Jesus is making. If Jesus is praising the humility of the little children that God had revealed himself to, why would he begin the statement with "I praise you, *Father*."

I would say that Jesus, rather than making a statement primarily about how people should act, is making a statement about how God acts. He does what human beings do not expect him to do. He does not fit into the frameworks that we tend to set up, and he is not compelled to follow our rules. He works in a different way than men do. After all, what person, upon discovering the cure for cancer, would sprint to the nearest

orphanage, push his way to the nursery and present the molecular structure of the new miracle drug to a room full of infants? **This is preposterous to us, but the glory of the working of God is not just that he does this, but that the infants he shows the gospel to do not give him blank stares of confusion.** Rather, they see the incredible work that he has done and sing his praises from eternally joyful hearts, astounded by what he has done. Just as Jesus does here, they praise the Father for working in the way that pleases him.

And, friends, whether this is new to you or an old reminder, it is much needed. **All of us are expecting God to act a certain way, do certain things, and be a certain kind of God.** And, unless these expectations are formed by the Word, they will be incorrect and they will cause us trouble. We will attribute the work of God to the hand of Satan or of man, and we will attribute the folly of man to the mind of God. Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, using the words of Jesus himself, implores us to reconsider the way God works. This text begs us to know the God of the Bible and sing his praises not for working in the ways that we want him to, but for working in the way that he does. After all, would we want God to work like people? Would we want God to govern like men have governed or rule like men have ruled or be the kind of father that men have been. **No, you can have your worldly father or governor or congressman or President or prime minister or king or supreme court justice. I want the Father to be the Fatherless, Great I AM, the beginning and the end, the Almighty God, . . . the Lord of the heavens and the earth.** According to Jesus here, the otherness of God is not just acceptable, it is praiseworthy and supremely desirable. Let us praise and desire it this morning.

Now we move on to the new information that the listeners do not know, which is this:

**2. Because of their unique relationship, the Son chooses who knows the Father and who does not. (v.27)**

Verse 27 is the point at which Jesus ceases to be a reminder and takes on the role of the revealer.

Read Verse

The sentence structure in the original language places the most emphasis on the “all things” and the “to me.” Jesus is not shying away from the shocking nature of this statement. Rather he is firmly establishing that he has a unique relationship with the Father which is based on perfect mutual knowledge. And this knowledge, it should be noted, is not simply factual, it is familiar. The Father and Son know one another intimately. They are 1000 times more familiar with one another than a couple who has been married for 70 years. On every level and in every sense there is perfect reciprocal knowledge, and this intimacy results in the entrusting of “all things” to Jesus by the Father himself. This claim by Jesus is shocking and amazing for two reasons.

1. Jesus puts himself on the same level as God by claiming to be the originator of divine revelation. All through the Old Testament prophets had been speaking the words of God, providing divine revelation to the people of Israel. However, they were not the initiators of the process, they were only the mouthpiece. In other words, when God wanted to reveal himself to man, he chose to use the “telephone,” as it

were, of prophecy. The prophets were no more the origin of the words of God than your cell phone is the origin of a call from your mom.

But this is not what Jesus is claiming to do. To say that Jesus is simply another installment in the prophetic line as is claimed in religions like Islam is absolutely preposterous in light of this verse. Jesus does not say, “Nobody knows the Father except the Son and anybody the Father tells the Son to reveal him too.” He says, “Nobody knows the Father except the son and anyone THE SON chooses to reveal him too.” **In the very same way that the Father is the chooser in verses 25-26 the Son is the chooser in verse 27.** Jesus is applying the otherly nature of the work of God that we talked about in our last point straight to his own work. Jesus, this amazing but ordinary looking man of Matthew 1-11, grabs us by the shoulders and proclaims “I am no ordinary man!”

2. The second reason this statement is so shocking is that Jesus is presenting himself as the central player in the plan of redemption. The hope of mankind is no hope at all without him. He is the wind that propels the ship. He is the engine of the car. He is the purifying fire that identifies the real in the midst of refuse. He is the gate, the gatekeeper, and the road that passes through them. He is the lynch-pin without which the rest of the machine is for naught.

Friends, in light of this passage, we cannot have too high a view of Christ. He is on the same level as the Father, who is infinitely higher than any other thing. He is the primary factor in our salvation in his position as the only means to relationship with God. He is the very Son of God. All of us have too small a view of Jesus, and we must push our hearts and our minds daily to see more of him. We must never be content with how much of Jesus we see. Push your lens wider,

that you might see all of his excellency in a majestic symphony of pure glory. Squeeze your lens narrower into his deity and centrality and invaluable work, that you might see every detail and seam and count every thread of his radiant robe of perfection. Today, you are not seeing enough of Christ. Absorb the Word and plead with God for the enlightening of the Holy Spirit that you might see more and tremble.

The Father is doing a work that is far different from and far above the work of man in revealing himself to people. The Son is integrally involved in that work and, in fact, doing the same type of work as the Father. So, now the question must be asked, what are we to do? How are we to respond? Thankfully, Jesus gives us the answer, and it can be summed up like this:

### **3. We come to the Son. (v.28-30)**

In light of all that has been said about the sovereign revelation of the Father and the sovereign revelation of the Son, Jesus gives an ironic command. Rather than saying, “Now, wait and see if you get to know God,” he says, “Come to me.”

Before we get into this point, allow me to make a clarification. A human yoke is a way to carry a load. In other words, it is not a thing to carry as much as a means to bear the thing that already needs to be carried. It is a tool to complete a task rather than a task in itself. Now, back to the command.

The first thing to note about this command is who it is addressed to, “all who are laboring and burdened.” This is an apt description of life without Jesus isn’t it? our minds and hearts and bodies are always working. Working to survive, working to be accepted, working to be happy, working to find some sort of respite from all of the work. There is always a new burden to be carried as well. Family to be cared for,

friends to make, a job to keep, anxieties to push away. And apart from Jesus, God is just another reason to work and a burden to carry. I have to be good and do right and come to church so that I can be in good standing before God. Indeed, Jesus is talking to everyone who doesn't know him.

The second notable thing, and I believe this is the whole point of the passage, is why he tells us to come: "And I will rest you." Here's the question we need to ask at this point: Why does Jesus seem to change the subject and begin to talk about rest rather than continuing to address the topic of knowing God and the gospel? Why doesn't he say, "and I will teach you and show you the Father?" Here's the answer which I am convinced is correct, see what you think:

### **Knowing the Father and rest in this world are inseparable.**

When a person, through the willing and work of Jesus, comes to know the Father as the Son does, his soul inherently enters into a deep rest that was not previously known. And, on the flip side, anyone who is truly at rest has come to Jesus and knows the Father. This is why Jesus says, "I choose who knows the Father," "I will rest you" and "learn from me" all in the same breath. It is because the realest, truest, and only eternal respite from the laboring and burdensome lifestyle of this world is the intimate, deep, relational knowledge of the Father that only the Son can grant. And this makes perfect sense, doesn't it.

The heaviest burdens to carry are the ones that are carried for no reason at all. However, when we know the Father we know that he would never give us a burden that doesn't have an awesome and glorious purpose. Likewise, the hardest work to do is the work that seems to never end. However, when we know the Father, we know that the end of

our work is incalculable reward as we live out eternity in his presence. When we know the Father, all that seemed to be work and burden is found to be the outworking of our new found blessed rest. But what about the new yoke and new burden that are from Christ?

Well, this is where this passage really fits together. Our new yoke, the new means to carry to the load of life, is that I know in the deepest part of my soul that God does not ever, in anything forsake his children. When the world throws new burdens at me to carry, I can laugh, strap them on to this new yoke, hand carved by Jesus Christ, and carry on because I know that every single ounce on my back, whether pain or comfort or trial or prosperity or death itself, is nothing less than pure, joy-producing, faith-authenticating, reward-earning, glory-radiating grace directly from the hand of the Father that I know and love. Without this yoke I crumple, but with it, empowered by the very Spirit of God, I cannot fall.

And this new burden? This new burden is that we know the Father in a world that does not. Oh how light this is compared to what we were carrying before, but it is a burden nonetheless. We will be questioned. We will be scoffed at. We will be mocked. But we know that all who do not know Jesus are working and working towards what is actually loss compared to the all surpassing of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord (Phil. 3:8). The truth of this must be our comfort, but it must break our hearts as we shine light into a dark, dark world. This is the burden of Jesus: to maintain communion with the Father and call others to do the same. May we recognize the presence of this load but also delight in its lightness.

### **4. Application**

I believe that this passage calls us to reflect on our lives and the things that characterize the way we live. Allow me to suggest two questions for you to reflect on now and through the week. Writing these down may be helpful.

1. Which lifestyle described by Jesus is a more accurate description of mine?

Is the essence of my life laboring or coming to Jesus? Is my response to adversity coming to Jesus, expecting to be rested and learn the heart of the Father, or is it to cast off the yoke of Christ and carry the burden on my own? Do I know God, or am I content to simply know about him?

2. Do I bear the burden of Christ using his yoke or the burden of this world using its yoke?

Do I feel the tension of knowing God in a world that doesn't or do I feel right at home here? What is the reoccurring care that occupies my thoughts and affections? Does the way I respond to added burden differ from the way of one who doesn't know God? Is my work permeated with a deep soul rest?

The beauty of the news in this passage is not that God changes my situation, but that he changes my heart from a working heart to a resting heart through experiencing the beauty of the Godhead. I don't stop doing hard things, but the condition of my heart in the midst of these things need not change. I get to participate in the only eternal and original love and knowledge in the universe: the love of God. When I come to Jesus, he rests me by giving me the gift only he can give: intimacy with the Father.

So, wherever you are this morning, come to Jesus. See the glorious work of the Father, See the glorious work of the Son, and come. He is waiting for you in his word. He is waiting for you to enjoy his resting presence in prayer. He longs for you to accept the invitation to relationship that Jesus has offered. This is no time to wait, this is a time to come.