

On Aug 6, 1930, Joseph Crater, a very successful NY supreme court judge had dinner with friends in Manhattan, hopped in a cab, and was never seen again. Being a judge, people suspected murder but no evidence was found. Lots of speculation and theories but nothing conclusive. Only one piece of evidence. He left a massive check in his apt with a note to his wife. It said, "I am very weary. Love Joe." Can you resonate? Are you weary today? If so, Jesus' invites you to find rest in our passage this morning. We continue to work through the Gospel of Matthew (p. 766). Let's consider two points: a prayer of praise for sovereign grace, and an invitation to the weary to come find rest.

I. A Prayer of Praise for Sovereign Grace – 25-26 – As we have walked through the Gospel acc to Matthew, some have embraced Jesus and some have rejected him. Why is that? Why do some receive Jesus and others reject him? Why do some find these things puzzling and irrelevant but others receive them as treasure? Jesus says it is because the Father conceals and reveals. In fact, he doesn't only say it, he declares a prayer of praise. I thank you Father and Lord that you hide the things of the Kingdom from the wise and learned but reveal them to children.

God is the One who hides and reveals. The "these things" are the things of the Kingdom. Jesus praises God for hiding them from the wise and understanding. Of course, God is not opposed to wisdom and learning, quite the contrary. Read the Proverbs! Here Jesus means those who are wise in their own eyes. Those who think they have nothing to learn. Those who are self-sufficient.

Little children are those who are dependent, humble, desiring to learn. They are child-like. Little children do not rely on their own resources. They are dependent. They are humble, not proud. Pride may be the #1 culprit for keeping people from the Kingdom. God opposes the proud but gives to the humble. Whoever exalts self will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. As Mary sings in the Magnificat: "he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their heart; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate." Prov 3:34 "Toward the scornful he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor."

Jesus says, yes Father, this is your gracious will. It was your good pleasure. It pleased you to do it this way. It is the Father's gracious will to hide from some and reveal to others. Ps 115:3: our God is in the heavens he does all that he pleases. God is utterly unfrustrated, undefeated, unthwarted. Eph 1:11: "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will."

It pleased God to do this so it pleased Jesus as well. Jesus delighted in what God delighted in. Really what we are talking about here is election. God's sovereign choice. "Some form of the word election or predestination appears around fifty times in the New Testament."¹ Salvation is of the Lord. God is sovereign in all things, including our salvation. Redemption is truly freely given. Unearned. Unachieved. We have nothing we did not receive. Sometimes people paint a false portrait (SWBTS). In John 6:44 Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." The clearest passage is probably **Rom 9:14-24**. God's love is truly unconditional.

Jl Packer says the doctrine of predestination resolves three vital questions:² 1st, how is it that I am a Christian today? Because God chose from eternity to make me one. 2nd, what confidence can I have of getting to

¹ Orrick, 57.

² *Evangelical Influences*, 175.

heaven? Every because God promises to keep us and finish what he started. Those whom he pred, called, J, glorified. 3rd Q: what have I to thank God for? Our entire Christian life.

That's what Jesus is doing here. Don't miss this: Jesus thanks God for his sovereignty in salvation, for hiding from some and revealing to others. This is so counter cultural. Jesus thanks God for failure in his ministry. He thanks God for hiding it from some. This is a prayer of praise. Jesus thanks God for his sovereign choice. WWJD? Jesus would be grateful for predestination. I wonder how you respond to predestination? Jesus offers a prayer of praise. Do you? When election comes to Jesus mind, he responds with gratitude. As Spurgeon put it, "with thanksgiving" is the only right way to think about election.³ So be thankful for sovereign grace.

Paul agrees with Jesus. When Paul thinks of every spiritual blessing, what is the first blessing he praises God for? Eph 1:3-5 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will." Election should not be a matter of polemics but of praise, not of controversy but of comfort, not of debate but delight.

How can we know we are "the little children" tho whom these things have been revealed and not hidden? Have you come? Do you trust Jesus today? Then there you go. Jesus says, "whoever comes to me I will never cast out."

27 – The Father has handed all over to the Son. As Cody showed last week, Malachi prophesied that Yahweh would send a messenger before he came. The gospels show that the messenger comes before Jesus – Yahweh in the flesh. Our faith is Triune through and through: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

No one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and whoever the Son chooses to reveal himself to. No one can know God apart from Jesus. Friends, we have to be clear and bold about the fact that the Christian faith is exclusive. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through me. Acts 4:12: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Only Christian know God. But that is no reason to boast, we just saw that the only reason we know God is because he has made himself known. Gal 4:9 says, "But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God." The only ones who come to know God are those the Son has chosen to reveal him to. **22:14**. So this should lead us to humble praise and it should compel us to go and make the name of Jesus known.

Btw, what an astounding statement if Jesus is not divine. If this is only a supposed wise sage, then he's nuts. This is not just a good human teacher. He is either God or he has lost his mind. He is calling God his father. He is saying no one knows God unless he reveals it. He is either making this stuff up, or he is telling the truth. If he is telling the truth, you must reckon with his words.

II. An Invitation to the Weary to Come Find Rest – (28-30) – **28** Notice this universal invitation. Come, all. Wait, but didn't Jesus say that no one can know God unless the Son chooses to reveal that to them? Is God sovereign or are we responsible? Yes! The Bible affirms both. God is absolutely in control of all things and

³ Boice, 199.

mankind is responsible for our actions. If you can't get that straight in your mind, that's okay, there is a bit of mystery here. But to be biblical, we must affirm both.

All are invited, but we know that only those that the Son chooses to reveal Him to will come. Many are called, few are chosen. I once heard an illustration of a huge cross with an invitation on one side: whosoever will may come. But once those who decided to come walked through the cross, they turned around and saw the other side of the cross which read "chosen before the foundation of the world." We come, but realize the reason we came was because God chose us. We seek him because Jesus sought us when a stranger. We have faith, then learn that even that faith was a gift of God.

So the Christian message is exclusive, but inclusive of any who come. All are invited and what a glorious invitation it is. What is the invitation to? Better, *who* is the invitation to? Jesus says come to *me*. The Messiah, the King, the Lord invites us to him. He has open arms.

Only a certain kind of person is invited. The beat-down. Are you fatigued? Overwhelmed? Has life become a grind? Is existence laborious for you? Are your biscuits overcooked? Are you stretched thin? Are you burdened? You are qualified to come. This invitation is for you. To all who labor and are heavy-laden. All who are weary and carry heavy burdens. I love the old hymn, "Come Ye Sinners," written in 1759: "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, Weak and wounded, sick and sore, Jesus ready, stands to save you, Full of pity, love and power, Come, ye weary, heavy-laden, Lost and ruined by the fall, If you tarry 'til you're better, You will never come at all, Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream; all the fitness he requireth, is to feel your need of him." Don't dream that you'll make yourself fit. Nor of fitness fondly dream. All the fitness he requires is to feel your need of him. Ps 34:18 "The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Ps 145:14 "The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down." Isa 66:1-2: "Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." Jer 31:25: "For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish."

We naturally but wrongly think Jesus invites the holy, the polished, the learned, those who have it all together. Wrong. He doesn't invite the healthy but the sick. He doesn't invite the Scribes and Pharisees but the tax collectors and sinner. God is concealed from the wise in their own eyes but revealed to the child-like. That is who the Kingdom is for. **5:3-6**. It is the Kingdom of misfits, the upside down kingdom. This Kingdom is for the inadequate, the incompetent. Calvin said "failure makes us fit to receive his grace." This is where so many get Christianity wrong. They confuse Christianity for moralism. Be goodism. Christianity is not for the put together but for the burdened.

What does Jesus offer? Jesus invites the worked over and burdened to come to him and find rest. He mentions it twice: "I will give you rest" and you will find "rest for your souls." What is rest? In some ways it has been the goal from the beginning. There were 7 days of creation and after each we read "and there was evening and there was morning, the first day" second day, third day until the 7th day. It is the only day and it is intentionally left open-ended. God finishes his work of creation on the 7th day and he rests. Not from exhaustion but completion. And we were meant to live in that rest. But we blew it in Gen 3 and the Fall. Rest is gone. Thorns and thistles and the sweat of the brow from now on. When will we find rest? As Israel grows and takes the

promise land, we read that the land had rest (Josh 11:23). These just pointed forward to a true rest that would be secured by a new “Joshua/Yeshua/Jesus. He is our Sabbath rest.

Col 2:16-17: “Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” Heb 4:8-10: “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.”

Rest is salvation by grace through faith. It is ceasing from your works. Rest is spiritual refreshment. It is salvation. It is the joy of the Lord. It is rest at the deepest level. This is not rest for the body but rest for the soul. This is not a rest from any and all demand:

29-30 – Jesus invites the weary to take up his yoke. What is a yoke? A tool for oxen to help with the plow. **PIC.** Jews would often speak of the yoke of the Law and Jesus already went up on the Mount as a new Moses delivering his Law, the SOTM. Some may think that Jesus removes the yoke altogether! To add a yoke to the heavy leaden is to add affliction to the afflicted, isn’t it? Jesus says take my yoke, not come lay on my mattress. Jesus is offering a new way to live, a new way to operate and find life. His yoke is the call to follow him.

Notice that connection: take my yoke and learn from me. He says learn “from” me not about me. Learn me and learn from me: he is the curriculum and teacher. The Greek root is the same for learn and disciple. Come, follow me and you will find rest. For. Because I am gentle and lowly in heart. Meek and humble in heart. Remember that in the Bible the heart is causal core of our personhood. It is the motivational headquarters. It includes feeling yes, but also thinking and reasoning. It is the mind, will, and emotions. And Jesus says he is gentle and lowly in heart.

There are around 89 chapters in the four gospels and only here does Jesus tell us about his own heart. There are so many things he could have said. Serious. Holy. Austere. Uncompromising. Demanding. Strict. But he said, gentle in heart. Now, as we saw in verses 20-24 with the woes, we see that he is not gentle and lowly to all. Not to the impenitent. He is fierce toward those who remain opposed to him. But toward his own, gentle.

This word means meek or humble. He is not harsh, or short-fused. Not easily irritated or exasperated. He does not stand with a pointed finger but with open arms.⁴ He not only gentle, but lowly in heart. This word overlaps with gentle and humble. Same word is Rom 12:16 where Paul speaks of the socially unimpressive: do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. He is accessible. He is approachable. He doesn’t snub his nose at us or roll his eyes or hold his nose. As Thomas Goodwin says, he does not have a “a severe and sour disposition” toward us sinners. There are no qualifications (besides being unqualified), no hoops to jump through, no long lines, no tests to pass, no tickets required, no security to get through. All you need is need.

His yoke is easy and his burden is light. His yoke is easy. The word is translated in other places as kind (Eph 4:32). It is a kind and easy yoke. His yoke is a non-yoke. It is like asking a drowning man to bear the burden of wearing a life-saver.⁵ Jesus makes his commands a delight. In two ways: because it is finished, and because his way is the path to flourishing. First, his yoke is easy because his finished work on the cross. We serve Jesus,

⁴ *Gentle*, 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

not in order to gain his love, but because we already have. We are not working for a position, but from a position of forgiven. The gospel makes his yoke easy.

Unlike the religious leaders that were opposing Jesus. Jesus offers rest for the burdened but the religious leaders were doing the opposite. **23:4.** Listen to Peter speaking to the Jews in Acts 15:10-11: "Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

If you are spiritually exhausted, on the brink of burn out, heavy-laden, it may be because you are not laboring from the gospel. Why are you doing what you are doing? What is your motive? Are you trying to earn God's love and favor? If so, of course you will be burdened. But when we get the gospel, that God saves sinners by faith alone, we can labor hard but be refreshed. You may need to rid yourself of the yoke of legalism and put on the easy yoke of Jesus.

Second, his burden is light because his way is the path to flourishing. His commands are an invitation to joy. When God says don't do this, it is because his way is better. He is not a killjoy but the fountain of joy. Don't look to broken cisterns when the fountain of living water is available. His yoke is kind. So we can say with the poet, "make me captive Lord, then I'll be free." True freedom is wearing his yoke. A bird is not free when it tries to lose the weight of wings. A fish is not free when it wants out of the tank. A tree is not free when it is cut from the roots. Jesus offers a new kind of yoke that makes the burden light.

Some need to put the yoke on. You're not at rest because you are not following Jesus. You are those Jesus rebuked last week: you are apathetic about Jesus. Augustine prayed, our hearts are restless (weary) until we find our rest in you. Christ is all you need. He is the bread of life, who provides nourishment for the soul. He is the door, the only way to the Father. He is the great physician, where the sick find healing. He is the truly wise man, who has the words of life. He is the light of the world, making our path straight in a world of darkness. He is the fountain of life in the dry desert, he is the lily of the valley, the bright morning star. Look to him and find rest for your soul.