

J.J.

THE GREAT INVITATION

Matthew 11:28-30

Matthew 11 : 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

PRAY

LABOR DAY CELEBRATION

- Started in the United States, workers in New York celebrated first Labor Day on September 5, 1882 (that's 140 years ago). 10k to 20k workers marched across lower Manhattan
- Two men who were present there proposed a "general holiday for the laboring classes"
- It became a federal holiday in 1894

Why celebrate it? Before Labor Day in the U.S.

- American workers worked 12 hours a day and seven-day weeks in order to eke out a basic living.
- Some states had children as young as 5 or 6 toiled in mills, factories and even mines and earns a fraction of their adult counterparts.
- The very poor and recent immigrants faced extreme unsafe working conditions, insufficient access to fresh air, sanitary, facilities and breaks.

Nowadays because of unions, government have recognized that they need to protect worker's rights – from their safety and their pay and there's even what you call a consciousness when it comes to work/life balance.

Now even technology has allowed a lot of people to work remote, wherever they are.

Working is very Biblical.

Examples : When God created the world, the first thing that He asked Adam and Eve is to manage what He has given them.

Genesis 1:28 Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

The Bible even says :

2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

Of course, for a Christian, the secret of finding joy in working wherever you are and whatever you do is this verse... this is in the corkboard of my study and work area.

Colossians 3: 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Quote : Work becomes an act of worship when you are doing it for the Lord.

Again, we're not working for any boss, we are working for the Boss of Bosses – our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But since this is Labor Day, the Bible is also very clear that we need to rest.

Exodus 20: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

We all know sometimes, it's not only our body that gets tired but even if we are not doing anything sometimes, - our mind, our soul and our spirit are still laboring.

Our mind and our soul are tired because of

- Worrying about the future. Worrying about finances.
- Relationship problems – husband and wife, parents and children,
- Worried about your loved ones on what might happen to them

Illustration : I was talking with one of my workmates and she shared with me that she's having a hard time sleeping because she thinks about lots of things and then when she finally sleeps and when she wakes up, the first thing that she thinks about are all the problems, or the stresses or what needs to be done throughout the whole day.

In short, her mind is not resting at all.

But here's the promise of the Lord and this is why I call this sermon, THE GREAT INVITATION ;

Matthew 11 : 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

You see the promise of the Lord here.

I will give you rest
you will find rest

Etymology : anapauo “rest” - “ana” among, in the midst “pauo” restrain, release, cease, refrain, refreshed

It's like in the middle of your “labor” and “hardship”, our LORD IS SAYING...take a break with me. I will give you refreshments...

Even in the midst of your trials, your sufferings, your labor, **you will find rest for your souls**

No, it doesn't mean He will take out the problem or the trials or the sufferings...what He is saying is that even in the midst of all of this, your soul is refreshed...there's no struggle inside of you.

Now, let's talk about, where do we need rest from?

all you who are weary

This is a very interesting word.

Etymology : **weary** “kopiao” from **kopos** – means **beating (bugbog)**; from **koptos** “to cut, to strike, to smite”

Illustration : I remember the time when Chicay was having her first chemo cocktails and the cocktail that was given her was aggressive. When I say aggressive, at Juravinski, they have what it's like a chemo lounge. There will be like La-z-boy chairs around the room. She will be the first one to there at 8 a.m., then other people with cancer will be arriving but, they will be leaving after 1 or 2 or 3 hours and she will still be there and she will be the last one to leave at around 4 p.m. That's how strong and how many bags of chemo cocktail is being put in her body. I can literally see her difference when we come in the morning, that her skin will be full of life and then in the afternoon, it's like everything life was sucked out from her.

The doctor explained it to me in something like this, that the chemo cocktail, after she received it, it's like the inside of her body went through 10 rounds of a boxing match. In short, bugbog sarado... no wonder,she can even barely stand after the session.

I never knew what it meant, until in one of the work activities, there was a boxing match and they asked for volunteers and I volunteered. It's boxing with those huge big gloves. I tell you...it was just three rounds and I kept getting hit and hit and after that match, I can't barely stand and I thought I was going to die.

Boxing analogy : A lot of us are going through life like that. One trial gives us a punch on the cheek, and you think it's finished, then a punch goes into your side and then another trial gives you an upper cut....that's what's happening inside of you, with your soul.

The promise of the Lord is, I will put a stop to that. I will restrain that beating (bugbog) inside of your soul. The trials are still there but I will give you rest from the beating inside of you.

Isn't that what our Lord said in

Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.

burdened

Another interesting word.

Etymology : phortizo - to load a burden;

The idea is something has been placed on you. It's not something that you put on yourself. It was placed on you.

Luke 11:46 Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

These are the problems or responsibilities that was placed on you by circumstances or by the actions of other people.

- Like sickness or being left by a spouse, a death in the family or a financial problem caused by a loss of job or health.

These are really heavy problems.

Being *weary* is caused by the frequency or hardness of life and being *burdened* has to do with the heaviness of life.

Later, I will show you what our LORD OFFERS IN EXCHANGE!!!! WHAT IS THE REST HE IS TALKING ABOUT.

Now listen carefully,

When life is hard and heavy because of all the problems, trials and challenges. The problem is we are the ones trying to take matters into our own hands in order for us to HAVE REST IN OUR SOULS.

- Some people turn to alcohol. Some people turn to drugs.
- Some people turn going out with friends
- Some people think by having more money, or by shopping,

You will find rest (anapao)a break from the hardness and heaviness and the pain of life.

THE TRUTH IS IT JUST NUMBS YOU TEMPORARILY BUT AFTER YOUR VACATION, YOUR DRINKING, YOUR DRUGS, YOUR NIGHT CLUB, YOUR MONEY, YOUR WORKING OR YOUR SHOPPING.... THE HARDNESS AND HEAVINESS OF LIFE IS STILL THERE.

WHERE CAN WE GET REST IN OUR SOULS OR FIND REST? THIS IS NOW WHAT YOU CALL THE GREAT INVITATION

Come to me

What does it mean when the Lord says, "Come to me."?

Let's look at the context.

The context of this verse is that

Matthew 11: 20 Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

In short, Jesus was performing great miracles to these cities but yet they still did not believe on who He is...that He is the Son of God and very God Himself who became man.

This is the reason why Jesus said,

25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

In short, people are trying to find ways and means to find happiness in this world, finding their own ways and means to have that inner peace, finding their own ways and means to go to heaven, WHEN WHAT HE IS SAYING, "COME TO ME."

It means, LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN, BELIEVE ON WHO JESUS IS – HE IS THE SON OF GOD, VERY GOD HIMSELF AND PUT ALL YOUR TRUST IN HIM.

Quote : It's saying to the Lord, "LORD I PUT MY LIFE IN YOUR HANDS, I ENTRUST IT TO YOU."

AND WHAT WILL HE GIVE YOU?

I will give you rest

What does this entrusting mean?

ILLUSTRATION : One of the things that I love doing when I'm on the beach and then I go to the water if it's calm, since it's the sea and it's salty water, it's easier to float. I would just lie down, floating, resting, relaxing, looking at the blue sky but then I know there are waves and then it hits me, "Oops, I might be too far away from the shore." Or "there might be shark underneath" which might be true, then I panic and then I stop the resting and the floating and the relaxing.

Going to Jesus and entrusting our life unto Him means literally floating in the hands of the Lord and saying to the Lord, "Lord, I'm giving you my life with all of the trials and the sufferings, take me wherever you want to take me."

It's like when Christ led Ezekiel to a river in Ezekiel 47

First, the river was ankle deep, then Christ led him further to become knee dip, then our Lord led him deeper now waist deep, and then Christ led him deeper into the river that his feet could not touch the water, that he needs now to float and trust where the water takes him.

THIS IS THE REASON WHY GOD ALLOWS TRIAL AFTER TRIAL AND BIGGER TRIALS AFTER BIGGER TRIALS...WHY? SO FROM ANKLE DEEP FAITH, OUR FAITH BECOME KNEE DEEP FAITH AND THEN WAIST DEEP FAITH AND THE FAITH THAT HE WANTS IS FAITH WHERE WE CAN'T DEPEND ON ANYONE ELSE EXCEPT HIM.

That's the meaning when our Lord says, "COME TO ME." And when you do that, He will give you rest.

The next one :

Take my yoke upon you

I know I've explained this to the church several times when a water buffalo has the same yoke as the other water buffalo.



So what does it mean?

IT MEANS WE NEED TO WALK WITH THE LORD SIDE BY SIDE. We need to be aware of His presence always.

Exodus 33:14 The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

It's by walking step by step...not tomorrow, not next month... step by step...that's how you find rest for your souls.

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO FIND REST...THEY GO FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER...BUT REAL REST IS BY WALKING SIDE BY SIDE WITH HIM...THAT'S WHY HE IS CALLED "THE WAY" TO REST. BY WALKING WITH HIM, YOU WILL FIND REST.

AGAIN, IT'S STEP BY STEP... IT'S RIGHT NOW, AT THIS MOMENT...DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE NEXT PART...BE WITH HIM RIGHT NOW.

We need to follow His lead and live how He lives....that's why He said,
and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,

THAT IS THE GREAT INVITATION FROM THE LORD.

It's an invitation to fully surrender ourselves to Him and to walk side by side and step by step with Him.

IF WE DO THAT....LOOK AT THIS.

This is life without the Lord.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened

But look at the promise of the Lord.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light

Illustration : Zak and I had a wonderful 1:1 fellowship this weekend. While we were having coffee, the subject came on what would I have changed in my parenting style. I said to him, "I would like to learn to relax more." If you're walking with the Lord and your children are walking with the Lord, then we need to not be so uptight because God is in control.

Look carefully here.

WHEN YOU WALK WITH THE LORD.

I shared with you earlier, weary has something to do with the hardness of life and burden has to do with the heaviness of life.

If we fully surrender our lives to Him and walk with Him...

The hardness in our souls...becomes easy and the heaviness in our soul becomes light.

STORY :

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego chose to entrust their lives to God.

Daniel 3 : 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Then of course, they were thrown into the fire heated seven times hotter than usual. It was so hot that the soldiers who accompanied the three into the furnace got killed but look at the three young men.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?”

They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.”

25 He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

GOD DID NOT PROMISE THAT THERE WILL BE NO TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS IN LIFE BUT WHAT HE IS PROMISING IS THAT...

Hebrews 13:5 I will never leave you nor forsake you.

We just need to trust that He is with us and entrust our lives fully to Him and walk with Him from now on every step of the way. THAT’S HIS INVITATION, WILL YOU COME AND WALK WITH HIM.

MAY THE LORD GIVE YOU REST IN YOUR LABOR TODAY.

S.G.D.