

JESUS IS MY RESTORER  
Matthew 11:28-30

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

Good morning! Happy Labor Day! Tomorrow is Labor Day and no one is working, right? We just want to rest, take the day off, go on vacation, take a break, take it easy, so thank God for another holiday. This holiday was first celebrated in 1894 as a Federal holiday when President Grover Cleveland designated the first Monday of September as a national holiday. The purpose of this is to pay tribute to working men and women. But actually, even before 1894, there were Labor Day celebrations already by certain labor unions and they were the ones who chose the day because they reasoned that it was halfway between Independence Day and Thanksgiving Day.

We all deserve a break, right? Many of us have been laboring too hard. In fact, some of us are laboring under the weight of a heavy burden. And the burden just keeps piling up because of financial problems, health problems, relationship issues, work issues, even church issues, that sometimes we feel it's hard to go on. We've been laboring too hard on all of these things. One burden is enough to make us want to give in. Imagine when we have more than one?

Jesus is acutely aware of our situation. He became one of us, didn't he? He knows what it means to be a human being. He sympathizes with us. He wants to give you the rest that you need. He is your restorer. He can restore what you lost – your joy, your enthusiasm, your health, your strength, your relationships, even your sanity.

This morning, we're ending our series on Jesus is My All in All by talking about "Jesus is My Restorer". Please read with me these words of Jesus from Matthew 11, "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*"

What kind of rest do you need this morning? Rest from financial troubles? Rest from physical pain? Rest from emotional turmoil? This morning, I'd like you to see and get assurance from Jesus, that he is you will ever need. Let me tell you one thing though. He will not make all of your problems go away instantly. He can do that, if he wants too. But what he wants you to learn is how to put all your trust and faith in him so that in the midst of all the pain and difficulty you can experience his joy and peace. The Bible says, "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" That's precious, knowing that Jesus will give you his peace.

So, let me share with you this morning what to do if Jesus is to be your restorer. The first thing is for you to

### **1. Come to Him**

If we want rest and peace of mind, we have to take action. Jesus says, "Come to Me". If we desire rest, we can't come to the first thing that looks like a solution. The destination of our movement has to be toward Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us to fix our eyes upon Jesus and put away any sin and anything else that would cause us to look somewhere else. Jesus is the only true place for us to find rest, because everything else is going to pass away.

Jesus goes on to qualify who is eligible to come to him. He says, "Come to me all who are weary and burdened". Jesus's invitation is only extended to those who realize that they need help. Have you ever tried to help a little child get dressed only to be told by the child, "Stop! Let me do it by myself." You go ahead and let the child do it. Five minutes later you see shoes on the wrong feet, buttons uneven, and hair that's messy. That's what we look like to God without Jesus--a mess.

Jesus did not come to help people who could do it all themselves. Notice that Jesus does not put a limit on what kind of burdens we need to have, or how large the burden has to be. All that's needed is a recognition of burden, a heartache, or a pain. They come in all forms. Husband or wives that won't do right. Children in trouble with school or the law. Burdens of loneliness. Burdens of taking care of sick relatives. Burdens for the church. Burdens of disappointment, of rejection, of death, of addictions. Burdens of not knowing which way to turn next.

Life can be very hard and difficult. But these are the very burdens that Jesus wants us to bring to Him, so that He can share the load and give us strength to overcome. Jesus is always on the lookout for people who are hurting, who are weary, who are tired. People who are bold enough to admit--Lord I need some help. I cannot carry these problems alone.

I remember the time I was attending an old Baptist church in Australia many years back. There was this lady named Emmy, about 60 years old, a bit on the heavy side, who came to church regularly. We had two services on Sunday, one in the morning and one in the evening and she was there at all times. She lived several blocks from the church and she didn't have a car. She wouldn't be able to drive anyway because she actually had down syndrome. She had the mind of a thirteen year old.

When I learned that she walked to church by herself with the help of a cane I felt sympathy towards her. So I offered to fetch her from the place where she lives, a facility where those with her condition are taken care of, and walk her to church and then walk her back to her home after the service. Twice every Sunday. The walk was a journey because she walked ever so slowly and sometimes she stopped to catch her breath. Unfortunately, I didn't have a car too. I didn't know how to drive a car back then. Even if I did, I was not earning that much to afford one. Good thing I was still single and so I had all the time in the world.

So I did this for a few weeks. My friends in church started to tell me to stop it already because I was missing the fellowship in church. They told me that Emmy actually didn't need help. She had been coming to church for sometime like that and it posed no problem to anyone. But I just felt burdened for her I told them.

So I kept doing it. The weeks turned to months. Until the burden I felt for her became a real burden for me. I became tired of doing it. I wished I could stop it but I couldn't because I didn't know what excuse to give her. She always expected me to do it because I made a commitment to her. And so, it came to the point that I dreaded going to church on Sunday.

Then, one Sunday morning, I fetched her with a really heavy heart and a very sour face. But I smiled when she showed up at the door. I was complaining silently to the Lord. "Lord, please take away this burden." I didn't mean that I was wishing something wrong to happen to her. But that God would just intervene. God didn't.

Then, evening came. I had to fetch her again. The same prayer, the same result. My feet felt like they were lead as we walked. I didn't have any motivation to walk to church but I knew I would feel worse if I left her. So we arrived in church. I sat away from her, maybe a couple of rows down. I didn't want to see her. But she called me and I sat close to her grudgingly.

Then at the start of the service the pastor did something different. He asked someone from the church to suggest a hymn to sing. I saw Emmy opened her hymnbook and then she raised her hand. She shouted the number of the hymn. I don't remember the hymn anymore but as we sang, the lyrics were affecting me. It was talking about turning over our burdens to the Lord. How Jesus is faithful in giving us strength for the journey and all that stuff. As we sang, I was crying. The Lord was convicting me of my bad attitude. I saw how foolish I was and asked for his forgiveness. Then, the Lord through the song also encouraged me to go on because he would enable me. And after the song, I felt good again. He restored my joy and strength.

The next month, God spoke to my heart and called me to be a missionary. By the end of the year, I was preparing to leave Australia for missionary training. And that's how my walking Emmy to church ended.

So, you come to him. Simply come to Jesus and he will restore you. The next thing you do is

## **2. Take His Yoke**

Before the advent of modern farm equipment, most of the heavy work was done by oxen, horses or another strong, powerful animal. The farmer would link two animals together with a yoke, usually a wooden pole & U-shaped pieces that would go around the animals necks and attach to the pole. (Show slide) Then as a group, they would be till the soil and prepare it for planting.

These animals became known as beasts of burdens, for they were carrying the burden of the work-load for the farmer. Usually, one of the animals is experienced, a veteran, having worked the field for several years. The other one is a newbie, perhaps just starting, and needed guidance and help. Together, however, they are a powerful force, able to pull much more than a single animal can.

And the newbie essentially is carrying a light burden as much of the burden is actually shouldered by the veteran.

Now everybody has some kind of a yoke. The thing you are yoked to determines how you deal with the challenges and crises in life. Maybe you are yoked to something or someone that prevents you from moving forward. It doesn't help to lighten your load at all.

Some of us are yoked to guilt, for example. You are ashamed of something horrible you have done in the past. Perhaps, a word you said, an unkindly act, a sinful past. Because of this you're afraid of people and you're afraid even of God. You feel you're not worthy.

Or maybe you are yoked to material things. Your life consists of working for the American Dream. As a result your credit cards are maxed out and you don't know how to get out of the financial mess you're in.

Or perhaps you're yoked to a temptation. There is an unpleasant habit that you keep doing and returning to despite our numerous attempts to fight it. The devil keeps on dangling it in front of you and you feel so weak and helpless in turning away from it.

How about being yoked to unforgiveness and bitterness? You can't forgive that person who hurt you. Your hearts is so steeped in bitterness that it's eating you inside and it's affecting your nerves. You can't sleep, you can't work, you can't do the things you normally do.

Being yoked to any of these and perhaps to anything else I haven't mentioned is a terrible thing. It is because they prevent us from experiencing rest and peace in our lives. They deprive us of joy and power in our lives. The problem is, some of us are not willing to let go of this yoke. As crazy as it may sound, we feel that we have more control if we keep on holding on to this yoke. Like that person we can't forgive.

We don't forgive because if we do, that person will go scot-free. And we're crying for justice. If we forgive, that person doesn't have to bear the brunt of our anger anymore.

Or like the pet sin we secretly keep. Even though we know it's wrong we really don't despise that temptation, maybe subconsciously even expect it and welcome it because of the pleasure that sin gives us.

There are so many reasons why we can't let go of the yoke that gives us a heavy burden. But it is in recognizing it and seriously dealing with it that we can experience rest in our lives. In Isaiah 30:15, God says to the Israelites, "*In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.*" The Israelites were a stubborn people. They wouldn't repent of their sins and that is why they continued to go through a lot of troubles.

To experience rest and peace then, first is the willingness to let go of the yoke. But you don't stop there. You must replace it with a better yoke. Because remember, life is burdensome. We each carry a burden. And to carry this burden, we need a power that can only come from someone we can trust and someone who is able. That someone is Jesus.

Jesus says, "*I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33 NLT)

Only Jesus can give you the peace and rest you've been longing for. Nothing else will. All he asks is for you to take his yoke upon you. What does it mean to take the yoke of Jesus? It means surrendering the control of your life to him. It means allowing him to set the direction of your life. It means voluntarily giving him full rein of your life. You see, you will discover that his yoke is easy as he promised. It is easy to put on. It's not complicated.

When you wave that white flag of surrender to Jesus you're saying, "Lord, I am all yours. Do what you want with my life. I commit everything to you." And that's when he starts to work in your life. When you surrender, you're emptying yourself of yourself and you become a vessel in which God can fill with his grace and power and strength.

Folks, as you take the yoke of Jesus, you'll discover that your burdens become light because Jesus carries them for you. God's grace will enable you. You will find rest.

So, you come to Jesus. You take his yoke. And finally,

### **3. You Learn from Him**

How many of us can say we make the most of our opportunities to learn from Christ? Our tragedy is that we don't make learning the Word of God a high priority in our lives. We can name all the major actors in the soaps, the shows, and the movies. We know the best quarterbacks and famous basketball players. Yet we would die if we had to stand up and name five prophets from the Old Testament. What more than anything else keeps you out of Bible study or prayer time with Jesus?

We cannot have real peace and real rest unless we learn from our master, Jesus. He is the true picture of serenity and calmness and patience and self-control and strength in the midst of trials and difficulties. Wouldn't it be nice to have all these characteristics? But we have to learn first. Learning is a gradual process. After you surrender, you have to learn. If you don't you easily slip and go back to your old ways.

Learning from Jesus means spending time with him. Abiding in him as John says in his book, "*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*" (John 15:7 NKJV) To abide means to take residence in, to dwell in something, making it your permanent abode.

Jesus wants us to remain in him and not be looking to something else. He wants us to learn from his feet continuously, not leaving his feet because he has so much to impart to us. When you study the lives of great men and women of God in history, the reason they have accomplished so much for God is that they were always in tune with God through prayer and the reading of his Word, the Bible.

As I close this message, I want to share with you the miracle that Jesus did in the life of someone. I've shared this with you before but it was incomplete. Today, you're going to hear with your own ears this extraordinary event. Something you've never heard before. I'm going to play an audio recording of a miracle but let me give you the background first. Actually, I heard the story of this person on a Focus on the Family program years ago when James Dobson was interviewing him.

Duane Miller was the senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Brennan, Texas. After a bout with flu in January 1990, he suddenly developed a very, very sore throat. After two weeks, the symptoms of flu weren't there anymore but he still had a very sore throat. So, he went to see a doctor who said that his throat was swollen and the infection was bad. He was put under medication and after two weeks, the swelling went down and the infection was arrested but the thing is his voice was still very hoarse and raspy. All the doctor could say was that the infection had caused his vocal chords to work hard whenever he tried to speak which strained his vocal chords and affected the sound it produced. After a few months, his condition didn't improve. His voice still sounded very hoarse. The church was very gracious with him all throughout this time in that they continued to give him his salary despite the fact that he didn't preach anymore and they just asked substitute preachers to take his place.

Duane struggled hard with his situation and in the end, because he didn't wasn't to be a burden anymore to the church, he resigned.

He turned to writing and a publishing company actually was ready to publish his book but when they learned of his condition, they changed their mind saying that Duane wouldn't be able to properly promote his book because he couldn't speak well. Duane complained to God because speaking and singing were his gifts. He couldn't understand why God would take away those things that were the lifeblood of his ministry. He didn't know now also how to provide for his family. He was confused and depressed. The burden was so great that one day, when he was alone in the house, he put a gun to his mouth. He was so close to taking his own life but he didn't do it.

The next day, he went to his former church who had actually invited him to teach in a children's Sunday school months before. He didn't want to but they insisted he should and they promised they would listen very carefully to him.

Now, listen to what happened while he was teaching.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuBV3uPxaAc>