

The Invitation of Jesus

Disciple: Following and Learning From Jesus (Part 5)

Matthew 11:28-30

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This is my last sermon I will deliver as the campus minister of HFC. I've thought a lot about what my last message to you will be. I feel at peace with this being my last message. And my prayer is that if you forget everything else I've ever said, you'd remember this:

Following Jesus is absolutely worth it.

And if I were to choose a text to discuss the worthiness of following Jesus, how amazing His invitation to follow Him is, and how good Jesus is to us, it would be *Matthew 11:28-30*.

- Dane Ortlund makes this observation about *Matthew 11:28-30*:
 "In the four gospel accounts given to us in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John--eighty-nine chapters of biblical text--there's only one place where Jesus tells us about his own heart."¹

Matthew 11:28-30

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."²

Matthew 11:28-30 from Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of this text in *The Message*

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

¹ Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 17.

² All biblical references, unless otherwise indicated, in this document are taken from the New International Version (NIV). *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Discipleship Review

- This is the last message of our series on discipleship. Before we get too deep into the text we will look at tonight, let's do a quick review.
- "What is a Disciple?"³
 - The word "Christian" is only used three times in the whole Bible (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16); "disciple" is used 281 times in the New Testament.⁴
 - The Greek word translated as disciple in the New Testament is *mathetes*. When translated literally it means *learner*.⁵
 - Mike Tanaro - A disciple is a follower/learner of Jesus.
 - David Young - "A disciple is someone committed to following Jesus and becoming like Him"⁶
 - Dallas Willard - "[A] disciple, or apprentice, is simply someone who has decided to be with another person, under appropriate conditions, in order to become capable of doing what that person does or to become what that person is...it is what [Jesus] calls us to by saying, 'Follow me.'"⁷
 - "I need to be able to lead my life as he would lead it if he were I."⁸
- "Growing into the Image of Jesus"⁹
 - Discipleship is about growing, transformation, and maturing.
 - An illustration: the goal of a parent is not just to give birth, but to raise a child into a mature adult.
 - For Jesus, the goal wasn't converts, but disciples. Baptism isn't the end goal, but the starting line.
 - The goal is for Christians to grow into the image of Jesus.
- "Three Marks of Growing Disciples"¹⁰
 - I've never met a mature Christian who does not do these three things, and I've never met an immature Christians who does these three things.
 - Mature Christians...
 - are regularly immersed in the Bible, the Word of God.
 - have a vibrant prayer life.
 - are active members of a Christian community.
 - These are not the only marks of mature Christians. This is not an exhaustive list.

³ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EiVYyRig4GixVIZGirBWPYxhPCIPejaMBZ1bt7lz8Y/edit?usp=sharing>

⁴ <https://jdgreear.com/are-you-a-christian-or-a-disciple/>

⁵ Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture: How to Release a Missional Movement by Discipling People Like Jesus Did* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3 Dimension Ministries, 2011), 21.

⁶ David M. Young, *New Day: Restoring the Revolutionary Mission of Christ's Church* (Murfreesboro, TN: New Day Press, 2016), 155

⁷ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperOne, 1997), 282-283.

⁸ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 284.

⁹ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1druz_lyhqISN12-5yUQ7vWSdSseFdiHTgN_1MoFaCBxM/edit?usp=sharing

¹⁰ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-iftrmpSwdNpun0WV0aV07im9VKUgCPxRQR4UfDg_8Q/edit?usp=sharing

- “Disciples make disciples.”¹¹
 - Matthew 28:19, Jesus’ last words: “Go and make disciples”
 - Three aspects of making disciples
 - Be a disciple yourself.
 - Invite those who are not Christians to become disciples.
 - Help other disciples of Jesus in their discipleship.

Matthew 11:28-30

Matthew 11:28 - Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,

- So many people are weary and burdened.
- Mental health is an epidemic in our country in our generation. Anxiety and depression are at an extremely high level.
- Quotes from Max Lucado’s book, *Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World*
 - “According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety disorders are reaching epidemic proportions. In a given year nearly fifty million Americans will feel the effects of a panic attack, phobias, or other anxiety disorders.”¹²
 - “Anxiety disorders in the United States are the ‘number one mental health problem among...women and are second only to alcohol and drug abuse among men.”¹³
 - “The United States is now the most anxious nation in the world.”¹⁴
 - Anxiety is a part of the American culture. “Citizens in other countries ironically enjoy more tranquility. They experience one-fifth the anxiety levels of Americans, despite having fewer of the basic life necessities...When these less-anxious developing-world citizens immigrate to the United States, they tend to get just as anxious as Americans. Something about our particular way of life, then, is making us less calm and composed.”¹⁵
 - In a study of over 200,000 college freshman research showed that “students reported all-time lows in overall mental health and emotional stability.”¹⁶
 - “The average [American] child today exhibits the same level of anxiety as the average psychiatric patient in the 1950s.”¹⁷

¹¹ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xaM0FifUFLVQcgYrfZKOk8DA5-GNwOoWDTMqvlPnOl/edit?usp=sharing>

¹² Max Lucado, *Anxious for Anything: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017), 5.

¹³ Lucado, *Anxious for Anything*, 5.

¹⁴ Lucado, *Anxious for Anything*, 6.

¹⁵ Lucado, *Anxious for Anything*, 6.

¹⁶ Lucado, *Anxious for Anything*, 6.

¹⁷ Lucado, *Anxious for Anything*, 6.

- We as a culture have a major problem with anxiety.
- Mental health is an epidemic in our country in our generation.
- Even if there's no serious mental health issues, everyone has so much going on. When someone asks you, "How are you?" the most common answer from most of us would be "We're good, but busy."
- A recent study where people would randomly ping people on their phone and ask them, "What are you doing?" and "How happy are you right now?" People's minds were wandering 47% of the time to either the past or future.¹⁸
 - 47% of waking life, people are not living in the moment, but preoccupied with what already happened or what will happen. Nearly 50% of waking life we are not present.
 - It was also discovered that a wandering mind is not a happy mind. People are happier when they are living in the present.
- We don't live in an emotionally/mentally healthy culture.
- But there is an invitation from Jesus. He invites us to come to Him.

Matthew 11:28 - and I will give you rest.

- Who needs rest?
- Especially in the week before finals, most of you could use some rest.
- How great is rest? One of the best feelings is going to bed and not having to set an alarm for the next morning.
- Do you even remember what it feels like to be well-rested? Do you remember what it is like to be bored?
- Most of us could use some rest, and not just physical rest, but spiritual and emotional rest.
- Are you tired of striving? Tired of trying to earn your keep, earn others love, or earn your identity?
- Are you tired of having to live up to society's expectations (having a certain car, vacations, clothes, social media posts), expectations of others, expectations of yourself, or even perceived expectations of God?
- Most of us need a true rest, a true rest that is not found in our ability, circumstance, love or acceptance of others, or achievements, but a rest that only comes from your Maker, Redeemer, and Provider.

Matthew 11:29 - Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,

- Jesus invites His followers to take His yoke and put it upon ourselves.
- "A yoke was a common idiom in the first century for a rabbi's way of reading the Torah. But it was also more: It was his set of teachings on how to be human...It's an odd image for those of us who don't live in an agrarian society.

¹⁸ "That Anxiety You're Feeling? It's a Habit You Can Unlearn," *The Ezra Klein Show*, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-ezra-klein-show/id1548604447?i=1000517873238>.

But imagine two oxen yoked together to pull a cart or plow a field. A yoke is how you shoulder a load.”¹⁹

- Jesus has an easy yoke.
- The way and teachings of Jesus help us through life. He gives us a framework through His life and teachings for His followers to navigate this life and world.
- Let me be clear. Jesus is not saying that life will be easy if you follow Him and take up His yoke. He actually says the opposite. When He invites people to follow Him, He tells them to pick up their crosses to follow Him (*Matthew 16:24*). Life will not be easier when you follow Jesus and take His yoke, but He will give you tools to thrive in the midst of the craziness of the world.
- Notice the emphasis Jesus puts on learning (The Great Commission - *Matthew 28:20*). We, as His disciples, lifelong learners of Jesus. We will forever be His students. Like an apprentice or intern, you learn from Jesus to be like Him.

Matthew 11:29 - for I am gentle and humble in heart,

- Do what He would do if He were you.
- This is the heart of Jesus. Jesus is gentle. Jesus is humble.
- Jesus is gentle.
 - Jesus is approachable.
 - Little children were comfortable going to Him (*Matthew 19:13-15*).
- Jesus is humble.
 - *Philippians 2:5-8* - In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!
 - Even though He was worthy of all the praise and worship in the universe and was seated at the right hand of God and the most powerful being, He humbled Himself and came to earth for us.

Matthew 11:29 - and you will find rest for your souls.

- We need rest. We're tired. We're tired of the striving, tired of the guilt, tired of the anxiety and stress, tired of the guilt and shame, tired of the constant earning.
- The only way we can find true rest is in Jesus.
- In Jesus we have security.
 - We are secure in the forgiveness we receive from God
 - Secure and restful in our identity

¹⁹ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2019), 77.

- Secure in knowing that we are completely loved by God

Matthew 11:30 - For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

- Again, coming to Jesus will cost us everything, but it is worth it.
- Let Jesus carry the burden for you.
- He has great plans for your life.

Three Goals of Discipleship²⁰ (taken from John Mark Comer's book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*)

- Be with Jesus.
- Become like Jesus.
- Do what He would do if He were you.

Be with Jesus.

- The Great Commission - And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (*Matthew 28:20*)
- Grow in awareness of His presence.

Become like Jesus.

- *2 Corinthians 3:18* - And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."
- *Romans 8:29* - For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Do what He would do if He were you.

- I absolutely love this quote from Dallas Willard: "I need to be able to lead my life as he would lead it if he were I."²¹

Discussion Questions

- The invitation of Jesus to come to Him is the offer of true rest for those who are weary and burdened. Do you need rest? What do you need rest from? With what are you weary and burdened?
- Jesus offers rest. What are some ways Jesus offers rest to us?
- Ryan mentioned three goals of discipleship: Be with Jesus. Become like Jesus. Do what He would do if He were you. Which of these goals do you need to lean into the most?

²⁰ Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 77.

²¹ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 284.