

Psalm 62: 1 – 12; 1st Peter 5: 6 – 11; Hebrews: 3: 7 – 14:11; **Matthew 11: 28 – 30 (Sermon)**

There are three parts in this passage: the invitation, the promise, and the condition.

The invitation is in verse 28. *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened ...”*

Weary means physically, mentally, emotionally, and /or spiritually tired and fatigued.

Burdened means worried, stressed, and /or oppressed.

We all have things in our life that put stress in our life.

Everybody faces things every day that make us weary and drag us down.

We all have some kind of burden that we carry around each day.

Some of us have financial burdens.

Some have lost their job and others have an impossible situation at work.

Some of us have a sickness or a handicap that drags them down.

Some have marriage difficulties that weigh heavily on them.

Some have dysfunctional families and some have rebellious children.

The list goes on and on. We all have something that puts a lot of stress on us from time to time.

Job said, *“Mortals, born of woman, are of few days and full of trouble”* (Job 14:1).

The sad thing is if we are not careful our burdens can rob us of our joy and our burdens can prevent us from experiencing the abundant life that Jesus planned for us.

Jesus issued this invitation to *“all”*; Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, young and old, religious and reprobate, sinner and saint.

The people Jesus was addressing were weighed down by the religious laws of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The Pharisees and Sadducees told the people they must keep all of the 400 plus man made laws in order to please God.

Those Jews relied on their own strength to please God.

However, since God’s word is eternal, Jesus is inviting each one of us today who are weary and burdened to come to Him.

Please note Jesus is **not** inviting the people who think they are self-sufficient or the people who think they are sinless.

Jesus' invitation is restricted to the weary and the burdened.

Jesus' invitation also includes all people who love Him and are doing a good job of serving The Lord but are tired of carrying their load.

Jesus' invitation also includes those people who don't know The Lord and their guilt is getting them down.

Jesus is calling all who admit they are weary and burdened to come to Him for rest.

Notice Jesus begins with the word "**come**".

If we want to experience the rest that Jesus promised we must learn to stop what we are doing and we must come to Jesus.

Then we must put our burdens down and we must leave our burdens at Jesus' feet.

The promise is also in verse 28. "***I will give you rest.***"

The Greek word for rest could also be translated as refreshment.

Please note Jesus said, "***I will give you rest***", Jesus did not say, "*I may*" or "*I might*", but Jesus said "***I will give you rest.***"

The verb "***will give***" is in the Greek perfect tense.

This indicates Jesus is not talking about a distant prospect but Jesus is promising that we can experience His rest immediately.

God's intention is for us to experience rest for our body, our mind, and our spirit now.

However we must come to Jesus completely trusting in Him.

We must choose to lay our burdens down at Jesus' feet and the hardest part is to leave our burdens there.

That means truly surrendering all of our burdens to Jesus.

It is easy to let go of our daily burden for an hour on Sunday morning in the church sanctuary.

The hard part is to let go of our burdens on Monday morning when the reality of all of the cares of this world set in.

God promised rest to the Israelites in the Land of Canaan.

However Psalm 95 tells us the Israelites did not enjoy the rest God promised because of their unbelief and disobedience.

Jesus is offering rest for our body, peace for our minds, and refreshment for our souls.

Psalm 91:1 says, ***“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.”***

Jesus is offering genuine rest and refreshment that lasts.

You all have heard the saying, *“There is no rest for the weary.”*

However in our lesson from Psalm 62 we saw this is false.

If anyone was ever weary it was David.

David spent 15 years running and hiding from King Saul because Saul was trying to kill David.

Later on in David’s life David also ran and hid from his son, Absalom, after Absalom led a rebellion and tried to take over the throne of Israel.

When David was so tired and worn out that he was ready to fall down and collapse David said, ***“My soul finds rest in God alone”*** (Psalm 62:1 and Psalm 62:5a).

David found rest in The Lord and David tells us we can also find rest in The Lord.

Also please notice God’s rest is free. Jesus said ***“I will give you rest.”***

Isaiah put it this way, ***“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”***

We all are faced with choices in life and when we reach a crossroad we must choose The Lord’s way and walk in it if we want rest for our souls.

Jeremiah 6:16 says, ***“This is what the LORD says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”***

You see there is no rest for the weary when we chose our own way rather than The Lord’s way.

The good way Jeremiah wrote about is none other than Jesus Christ. John 14:6 says, ***“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”***

The condition to receive Jesus’ promised rest is in verse 29. Jesus said, ***“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.”***

A yoke is a part of a harness used to join two animals together.

Oxen, donkeys, horses, and mules are yoked together to perform work such as pulling wagons, plowing fields, and grinding grain.

At first it seems ironic that Jesus tells us that the prescription for rest is based on us putting on a yoke.

So we need to look a little deeper.

Remember earlier I said that two animals are yoked together to do the work.

When we are yoked with Jesus, Jesus actually helps us carry our load.

When we are yoked with Jesus, Jesus gives us the strength and the power to live a Godly life.

The world views being yoked to Jesus as a negative thing and something they want to avoid.

The Bible refers to sin as a yoke around a person's neck.

But the symbolism Jesus expressed in verse 29 is positive.

Being yoked to Jesus means walking along with Him, doing what Jesus is doing, and letting Jesus help us with our problems.

When we lay our burdens down and we choose to be yoked to Jesus we have the power, the resources, and the wisdom of Almighty God working alongside of us.

The yoke is also a symbol of our submission to Jesus.

When we are yoked to Jesus we are surrendering our will and we accept God's will for our life.

The yoke is a symbol of our connection to Jesus.

We are one in Christ.

When we are yoked with Jesus, Jesus walks down the road of life with us.

The yoke Jesus is speaking about is a symbol of partnering with Jesus to do the work of The Lord.

Jesus does more than guide us and encourage us.

Jesus actually works alongside of us.

Jesus doesn't just give us strength to pull the load; Jesus actually pulls the load alongside of us.

The Greek word for "*easy*" used in verse 30 means, "*easy fitting*" or "*well-suited*".

The yoke was made of wood and each yoke was individually carved to perfectly fit each animal's neck and shoulders so that it did not hurt the animal.

That is why I like the way The New Living Translation of the Bible states verse 29 this way. ***“For my yoke fits perfectly and the burden I give you is light.”***

Jesus does not promise that we will be exempt from work, but rather Jesus provides the right tools and Jesus helps us to complete the jobs He has given us.

The yoke is also a symbol of discipleship.

You see, Jesus lived what He taught.

That leads us to the second condition: ***“Learn from me”***.

It is interesting that Jesus did not call us to do things just to please Him but rather to learn from Him. God gave us His Word so we can learn about Him but sadly most Christians do not make learning God’s Word a priority.

I recently read a survey that reported that only 32% of church-going Christians read the Bible once a week and only 16% of those church-going Christians read the Bible each day.

That same survey reported that only 37% of church-going Christians that read their Bible stated that the Bible made a significant difference in the way they live their lives.

When we study the Bible we learn how Jesus faced difficulties and how Jesus got strength to face life’s problems.

When we are walking close to Jesus we learn how much Jesus loves us, how much Jesus does for us, and how much we depend upon Jesus.

Jesus is inviting you to do more than study His Word.

Jesus is inviting you to learn more about Him and learn His way of life.

The question for each of us this morning is: *“Am I taking advantage of the opportunities that Mt. Paran offers to learn more about Jesus?” “Am I applying God’s word to my life?”*

Jesus offers us an incredible invitation in this passage.

Jesus is saying, ***“I am here for you”, “I want to help you”, “I understand your pain”, “I want to refresh you”, “Just come to me I will be gentle with you”***.

Israel was God’s chosen people but because of Israel’s disobedience and their lack of faith Israel never realized God’s rest. (Psalm 95: 10-11)

The same thing can happen to us today. Remember obedience is the evidence of faith which leads to rest for our souls.

The only way to enter God’s rest is through faith in Jesus and obedience to His Word.

In our lesson from Hebrews we saw that we, like the Israelites, will never enjoy God's rest **if** we fail to trust Jesus and **if** we disobey His Word.

“Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed” (Hebrews 4:1-2).

Jesus invites His people to enjoy complete physical rest, emotional rest, and spiritual rest both now and throughout eternity.

No one but God Himself could make such a promise.

We receive God's rest by faith but we can only experience The Lord's rest in our daily life when we come to Jesus, learn from Jesus, and obey Jesus' commandments.

Jesus' invitation and promise enables us to be totally refreshed and completely renewed when we have a close personal relationship with Him.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

The condition is we have to walk close to Jesus and we have to learn how to face life's difficulties from Jesus.

People try all sorts of things to relieve stress and they spend millions of dollars to get away from their burdens and to enjoy life.

But remember only God Himself can forgive the past, provide for the present, and take care of the future.

If you are tired and carrying a heavy burden Jesus invites you to come to Him, walk with Him each day, and learn how to really enjoy life from Him.

AMEN