



Rest for the Shepherd

It is a remarkable work of the Holy Spirit when you study a passage you have read for years and discover principles found within it in a new and different light. Those moments are both reminders of the depth and richness of God's Word and a prompt to be fully tuned in to the Father when digging into His Word.

I am not sure why I saw the famous "Come to Me" passage differently on this particular morning, but I suspect it was because the Holy Spirit had been speaking loudly to me about the need for and importance of rest. He knows that time with Him, time away from the routine of life, and time with those I love will enable me to more fully live into the calling the Father placed on my life as wife, mother, grandmother, friend, volunteer, member of the body of Christ, and champion of the shepherding message.

Matthew 11:28-30

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Jesus calls us to come to Him... and in return He provides rest. Jesus invites us to take His yoke... and in return provides gentle and humble teaching so we grow

in maturity and are lead to rest in the innermost part of our being – our souls. Jesus states quite simply that His yoke is easy and the burden He gives us is light.

So, I began to wonder, what is the origin of this hurried, frenetic pace that I often demonstrate? Have I come to Him and then wandered off on my own to a place of strain and stress, restlessness and noise, agitation and clamor?

As I pondered those questions, the Holy Spirit prompted me to explore the context of Jesus' invitation.

Matthew 11:27

"My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

There was the key to rest – the trust that comes from intimacy with the Father.

In the midst of Jesus' commission – to live as God-man on this earth, to be falsely accused, to suffer, be tortured, die, and rise again – in essence, to settle a new covenant between God and man... in the midst of that commission, Jesus rested in the Father... because Jesus knew the Father well enough to know that He could trust Him. He called His disciples, then and now, to do the same. To come to Him, to take

from Him, and to learn from Him. In return, they would find a trust that results in rest: cessation, a quiet, silence, pause, and peacefulness.

In that time of ceremonial law, of 613 rules the Jews were required to follow, Jesus called His disciples to move from doing to trusting. The invitation was and is open to all who are exhausted, overwhelmed, burdened by their responsibilities, by the decisions they or others in their lives have made, by the expectations they have placed on themselves. The offer is open to me, to you, to all who serve as His under-shepherds.

In return, He promises rest. From the power of sin to a well-grounded peace of conscience, to a regular order of the soul that abides in our Father and His love. To intimacy which leads to trust.

And the yoke He asks us to take? He invites us to be His disciples and, through surrender and obedience, find rest. Rest even as we shepherd well those He has placed in our care. Rest even as we offer Provision, Protection, and Presence to those we encounter. Rest because the yoke He provides is well-fitted, tailor-made for our lives, for how He wired us, and for our needs.

In response, He brings gracious and humble teaching, the instruction that includes more and more about Him and leads to knowing Him well enough - intimately enough - that we trust Him deeply, unconditionally, in every situation we face, in every circumstance we encounter. And in that, we find rest for our souls. An easy burden. A light load.

Come to me. Take my yoke. Let me teach you.
Find rest for your souls.

I have a long way to go and am excited about the journey. Will you join me?

Digging Deeper Questions

1. Just as Holly asked herself, have you come to the Good Shepherd and then wandered off on your own to a place of strain and stress, restlessness and noise, agitation and clamor?
2. Do you believe you can rest and still shepherd the sheep in your life?
3. Do you schedule times of rest into your schedule? If not, when will you begin?