



REST FOR YOUR SOUL

Living in the Pace, Practice, & Presence of Jesus

1. Jesus and the Easy Yoke

Matthew 11:28-30

Sunday, November 5, 2023 / Travis Osborne

Please open your Bible to Matthew 11:28

You are busy. I am busy.

We have lots to do.

Good things. Important things.

- I use a pocket notebook to record the things I need to do each week.
(people to call, meetings to set up, items to study, needs to attend to)
- I begin the week by “carrying-over” a few items from the previous week.
(leaving room for tasks that are yet to arise that week)
- I find I’m carrying over MORE and MORE items
(filling up the page before the week even begins)

We are busy because we are responsible & diligent to do good work (not lazy)

But our PACE of LIFE can get out of hand.

We are prone to skipping the practices that refresh & restore us,
We lose sleep, rise early and work late.

The balance of WORK and REST that God intended...

is traded for WORK and WORRY and DISTRACTION & ANXIETY...

...void of the REST and PEACE and JOY that God has for us today.

As we head into November...a month of GRATITUDE & FELLOWSHIP,
and then December...the season of ADVENT & WORSHIP as we
celebrate the birth of Christ...

I have selected four passages from the gospels to study this month.

Passages that teach us the Pace and Practices of Jesus that lead bring us
His peace and rest today...

Today’s passage is a teaching of Jesus found only in Matthew.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

- 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.”

We will come back and study this later today.

I have a confession to make: I am a FAST-WALKER. I walk fast.
I noticed this as a Campus Pastor at Simpson University.
I often passed people in the hallways...
people going the same direction as me!
(and I notice that I walk fast around church as well...)

Now, there IS an Olympic Sport called RACE-WALKING:



...but I'm not walking fast because
I'm in a RACE...
I walk fast because I'm in a HURRY.

I didn't say "I'm BUSY." We are all busy.
Jesus was busy (He had things to do)

There is a difference between being BUSY and being HURRIED.
- "Busy" is an *outward condition*; a condition of the BODY
which occurs when we have many things to do.

But HURRY is an *inner-condition* of the SOUL.

- Hurry is an unsettled, undercurrent of anxiety that rarely stops.
- Hurry is the constant list of "to-do's" that keep mounting and never seem to end.
- Hurry is a state of constantly feeling RUSHED.

(I've been learning a lot about HURRY these past few years from authors like **Dallas Willard, John Ortberg, Ruth Haley Barton**, and a book by **John Mark Comer** called "*The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*"... which I had our Ministry Team Leaders read together as we were in the process of adding our 3rd service).

(Much of what I'm learning comes from these Christian authors...an my own experience)

Psychologists & Mental Health Professionals have an actual diagnosis called "Hurry Sickness":

- A behavior pattern characterized by continual rushing & anxiousness.
- Feeling chronically short of time; performing every task faster.
- Easily flustered at any type of delay. (Anybody?)

Here are some clues you might have "hurry-sickness":

- Moving to another checkout line because it looks shorter/faster.
- Counting the cars in front of you at a stoplight then switching lanes
- Accidentally putting your clothes on inside-out or backwards
(my friend got dressed in the dark...and accidentally wore his wife's jeans to work)
- Sleeping in your daytime clothes to save time in the morning.
(OK, that's just wise. I slept in a sleeping bag on top of my bed for a year just to avoid making my bed in the morning. Genius!)

OK, those were fun...but here are ten symptoms of hurry sickness...**do any of these ring true for you?** (From Ruth Haley Barton & John Mark Comer):

1. **Irritability** - you get mad, frustrated, and annoyed easily.
2. **Hypersensitivity** - a minor comment hurts your feelings; a grumpy email sets you off. Ordinary problems of life wreck you emotionally.
3. **Restlessness** - you try to slow down, but you can't relax. You give Sabbath a try, and you hate it. You try to read Scripture, but it's boring. You try to pray, but you can't focus. You can't be still or quiet.
4. **Workaholism (or nonstop activity)** - you work all the time; you're available all the time. When the day ends, you have nothing left to give your spouse, your kids, your loved ones.
5. **Emotional Numbness** - you don't have the capacity to feel another's pain. Empathy for others is rare.
6. **Out-of-order Priorities** - your life is filled with things that are urgent, but not the most important. Your life is reactive, not proactive. Your life is busy but you don't have time for what really matters.
7. **Lack of Care for Your Body** - lack of sleep, exercise, healthy home-cooked food. Lots of caffeine, sugar, processed carbs, and alcohol.
8. **Escapist Behaviors** - Instead of doing something life-giving and refreshing, you turn to your distraction of choice: scrolling on your phone, binge-watching shows, overeating, over drinking, pornography...
9. **Slippage of Spiritual Disciplines** - prayer, reading the Bible, worship, Sabbath rest.
10. **Isolation** - disconnected from God, others, and your own soul.

Life becomes about quickness and efficiency...**but some of the most important responsibilities in life are meant to be SLOW & ATTENTIVE.**



Illustration:

We live life at 45, not 33

(anyone know what I'm referring to?)

A Record Player: has two speeds.

33 RPM & 45RPM.

An album is designed to be played at 33RPM...

(but we can get this done quicker...so we play it FASTER).

I believe God designed us to live at 33 rpm, not 45 rpm.

Hurry and Love are incompatible....they don't mix.

- Hurry kills relationships. Love is painfully time consuming.
- When we HURRY, we are never at our best.
- Some of my worst moments as a parent, as a friend, as a pastor...are when I'm in a hurry and rushing things.
- Our worst moments as DRIVERS are when we are in a HURRY!

When we are HURRIED, it affects us mentally and physically.

We ooze anger & tension...others pick up on our vibe.

Hurry kills joy and gratitude.

People in a hurry don't have time to enter the goodness of a moment.

and...**Hurry wears us out...it's tiring...**

Hurry causes our SOUL...our innermost being...to be fatigued

(and whatever is happening on the INSIDE of us ALWAYS makes its way to the OUTSIDE).

John Mark Comer tells a story in his book, *“The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry”*

“It’s the height of British colonialism.

An English traveler lands in Africa, intent on a rapid journey into the jungle.

He charters some local porters to carry his supplies.

After an exhausting day of travel, all on foot, and a fitful night’s sleep,
he gets up to continue the journey.

But the porters refuse.

Exasperated, he begins to bribe and plead, but nothing works.

They will not move an inch.

He asks the porters, “Why won’t you continue the journey?”

The answer?

They are waiting ‘for their souls to catch up with their bodies.’”

Lettie Cowman, in her telling of this story, wrote,

“This whirling rushing life which so many of us live does for us
what that first march did for those poor jungle tribesmen.

The difference: *they knew what they needed to restore life’s
balance; too often, we do not.*”

Dallas Willard said, "Hurry is the great enemy of the spiritual life."

Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama said,
"God walks 'slowly' because He is love...Love has its speed."

Walter Adams, spiritual director to C.S. Lewis, said, "To walk with Jesus is to walk with a slow, unhurried pace. **Hurry is the death of prayer.**"

Corrie Ten Boom, the Dutch Saint who saved many Jews from the Nazis, said, "If the devil can't make you sin, he'll make you BUSY."

- She is referring to a toxic-busyness that crowds out the spiritual life.

In Matthew 11, Jesus offers us something better than hurry: **He offers REST.**

- REST is what our soul needs.
- REST is what our soul craves.
- We can find TRUE REST only in Jesus Christ.

If your soul is fatigued...

If you carry heavy burdens...

If you feel deep in your body the low-grade murmur of anxiety and fear that rarely goes away...

If you are worn out from trying your hardest to please God, to be a good person, and to secure your place in heaven...

Then turn your ear to Jesus and hear what He offers us in Matthew 11:28-30.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

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.”

Jesus begins with an invitation: Come to Me. Come to ME.

- When I first met Annette, who is now my wife, I worked so hard to get an invitation from her.
- I learned that she and some friends were going to the symphony that night...I had no idea what a symphony was...but I didn't care. She was going to the symphony and I wanted any excuse to sit next to her for a couple hours.
- “Symphony, eh? I LOVE the symphony! I gotta get me some of that. When is it, you say? How much are the tickets?” Where?
- Finally, I got what I worked so hard for: an invitation.
“*You wanna go with us to the symphony?*” The rest is history!

But you don't have to **earn** an invitation from Jesus. He freely invites you to Come to Him...to trust Him with your life...to walk with Him at His pace.

(v. 28) “Come to Me, ALL you who are weary and burdened,”

- **Weary & burdened:** this covers all human SIN and SORROW.
 - This applies to each one of us today.
 - Those who work and work and work.
 - Those who endure burdens that others have heaped on you that you must now carry.
 - The weight of broken relationships, people who have stolen things from you, people who have hurt and abused you.

All of us are pinned by the weight of our own sin.

The Bad News: there is no one righteous; all have been born into sin; separated from God because of our own evil behavior.

The Really Bad News: There is nothing we can do to cover our own sin. We are helpless, without hope, and far from God. We need rescue.

The GOOD NEWS: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners! To pay for our sin. To do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

(v. 28) “Come to me...and I will give you **rest.**”

(v. 29) “Take my yoke...and you will find **rest for your souls.**”

Let’s talk about the “rest” Jesus offers.

1) First and foremost, **Jesus provides a FUTURE ETERNAL REST** (aka Salvation...eternity with God in heaven) **for every person to comes to Him in faith to seek forgiveness for their sin.**

- **“Come to me...and I will give you REST”:** Here is His gracious invitation to the burdened sinner. This invitation to the sinner was offered based on the Savior’s work on the cross which He was soon to accomplish.
- All your work and effort can never get you into heaven.
- Jesus came to do for you what you could never do for yourself.
- He took your sin...all of it...upon Himself...he went to the cross and died as your substitute...so that the punishment for your sin would be upon Him...that through His death and resurrection 3 days later...YOU could be made alive!
- Welcomed into God’s family as His child to live with Him forever in eternal rest. (Revelation 14:13...blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will **REST from their labor,** for their deeds will follow them.”)
- **Have you ever “COME TO JESUS”?...trusted Him as your only hope for salvation?**
 - o There is no spiritual rest for any who will not trust in Christ as Savior, and as a result remain in their sins separated from God.
 - o Unless the gospel message is believed, a person will never experience the rest of soul that only God can give.

2) The rest that Jesus offers is not just future; It's also a present reality

- Jesus offers you rest for your soul TODAY.

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.**"



What is a YOKE?

-An actual yoke was a wood beam.

-It was laid on the necks and shoulders of oxen.

○This yoke would link two animals together in order

to carry a load that was too heavy for one to carry alone. (*keep this in mind*)

- In the Bible, a YOKE was also a symbol of a burden, or of slavery.
 - In the New Testament, a “YOKE” could also be as a metaphor to represent **a Rabbi’s set of teachings**...or his way of interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures.
 - So a student (or disciple) was spoken of being “under the yoke” of his teacher.
 - Jesus was a Rabbi/Teacher. **Like other Teachers, had a YOKE**
 - Not a literal yoke; but a set of teachings on God, salvation, & life.
 - If you were a disciple (a student, or an apprentice) under Jesus, you would “metaphorically” place yourself under His yoke.
 - You would obey His set of teachings.
 - You would follow His way of life (and carry on your Rabbi’s work)
 - **How do you “take [Jesus’] yoke upon you”?** (*Look closely at v. 29*)
 - “Take my yoke upon you and **learn from Me.**”
 - Be a student of mine...a disciple...an apprentice.
 - “Place yourself under/in submission to My Word/My Teaching”
 - “Travel through life by My side, learn from Me how to shoulder the weight of life.”
 - Jesus came to bring us NEW LIFE & model a NEW LIFESTYLE.
 - He empowers us to carry life’s burdens with a soul that is at rest!

Jesus was unique among all the other Rabbis/Teachers of His day:

- Jesus was neither a tyrant nor an oppressor like other leaders.
 - *(The “heavy laden” find REST when they come to Jesus)*
 - “I am gentle” (meek; power under control)
 - “I am humble in heart”
 - Jesus was unique from other Rabbis in that “My yoke is EASY and my burden is LIGHT.”
- Jesus’ Yoke was the opposite of the Yoke that the Pharisees laid on their disciples.
- Jesus describes the yoke of the Pharisees with a WARNING to run away! Why?

Matthew 23:4 (ESV)

4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

- The Pharisees would not lift a finger to help.
- It was oppressive & crushing to sit under the teachings of the Pharisees
- It was a righteousness based on works, not the grace of God.
 - It was crushing, burdensome...and impossible to attain.

What makes Jesus’ yoke “easy” and “light”?

Jesus’ yoke is easy because He bears the load with us. (I’ll say it again).

- Remember: a yoke was used to LINK two oxen together in order to carry a load that is too heavy for one to carry alone.
- **When we trust Jesus has our only hope for salvation...we are UNITED with Him for eternity, superglued to Jesus, yoked with Him!**
- We become yoked with Jesus.
...He does the heavy lifting! (“Cast your anxieties...burdens...on me”)

The “rest” Jesus offers is not a removal of work, or responsibilities, or an exemption from obeying God. (Not an “Easy Life” but an “Easy Yoke”)

- It’s odd that Jesus talks about a “yoke” in the same breath as “rest”.
- Frederick Dale Bruner is a scholar on the book of Matthew we’re reading from today.
 - He says, “A yoke is a work instrument.”
 - Don’t you think tired workers who are heavy laden need something like a mattress, or a hammock, or a vacation?
 - Instead, Jesus offers a yoke.
 - “Jesus realizes that the most restful gift He can give the tired is a BETER WAY TO CARRY LIFE,
 - A FRESH WAY to BEAR RESPONSIBILITIES.
 - Jesus doesn’t offer an escape from work...He offers equipment.”

And He offers Himself...at your side.

Like two oxen linked shoulder to shoulder...

With Jesus doing all the heavy lifting.

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May you rejoice in the good work God has for you...

...the responsibilities, the tasks, the growing To-Do lists...

May you go about your busy-ness with your soul at rest in Jesus...

May you walk slower...

May you take time to enjoy those walking alongside you...

As you walk side by side with Jesus,

learning from Him how to shoulder the weight of life.

And with your soul at rest because you cease from all efforts at trying to EARN and MAINTAIN your salvation through your works.

Your soul is at rest because your eternal destiny is secure in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross and His resurrection three days later.

Jesus said, “Come to Me...and I will give you rest.”

Have YOU responded to Jesus’ invitation to TRUST HIM as Savior and receive His gift of salvation?

Jesus took your sin...all of it...upon Himself.
He went to the cross and died as your substitute...
...so that the punishment for your sin would be upon Him...
that through His death and resurrection 3 days later...
YOU could be made alive!

Jesus stands ready today to receive you.

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How does someone receive the free gift of salvation that Jesus offers?

You simply receive it.

Are you willing to say YES to Jesus and receive His gift of salvation?

To “take Jesus’ yoke upon you”? To submit to Jesus as Lord and walk in His ways?

Come to Jesus in faith today...

(Let’s pray)

PRAYER

CLOSING:

- Come forward to receive prayer

BENEDICTION: Matthew 11:28-30

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Verbal Announcements for November 4, 2023

Welcome. For those who are **first time visitors** we ask you to fill out a **Get Connected Card** which is in the pocket of a chair in front of you.

MEN'S MINISTRY - Come enjoy a hearty breakfast on Saturday, November 11th. We will be serving pancakes, eggs & sausage at 8am for a \$5 donation. Our speaker will be Mister Brown. Please RSVP at the sign-up table outside after service.

Membership 101 Class - If you want to become a member, or find out more about what we believe, sign up in the lobby or fill out a Get Connected card. Our next class will be November 14th at 6pm. It will last about two hours. No childcare provided.

SEASON OF GIVING: 1st opportunity is coming to a close, 2nd is starting:
SAMARITAN'S PURSE OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD - Bring in your filled shoeboxes with \$10 for shipping, by NEXT WEEK, November 12th.
GOOD NEWS RESCUE MISSION Holiday drive is a great opportunity to give to those who are struggling. Donations need to be in the barrels by December 3rd. See Cindy in the lobby for details on this, and/or to sign up to serve lunch at the mission on Sundays.

Ladies, join us for a fun time of fellowship, coffee, and crafting on Saturday, November 18th, from 10am-12pm! Sign up in the lobby TODAY, as space is limited.

LADIES CHRISTMAS TEA will be Saturday, December 9th, 10am-12:30pm. Join us for a wonderful time of feasting and fellowship as we hear about following Jesus' example of sharing our gifts with the world. Register in the lobby in between 2nd & 3rd services.

BAPTISM CLASS is TODAY at 12:30pm. If you want to know more about baptism, or you want to get baptized; join us in the Fellowship Hall.

OFFERING

Today, we get to remember Christ together in Communion.

(Communion is available to anyone who has trusted Jesus Christ as Savior)

- *If you did not receive the bread & cup, lift your hand & we will serve you.*
- *We also have **BREAD WITHOUT GLUTEN** for those in need of this option.*

When Jesus instituted this practice among his disciples, He simply said:
"Do This in Remembrance of Me."

Please retrieve the bread first, then peel back the cover on the cup.

**The BREAD represents the BODY of Christ, given for us.
The CUP speaks of the BLOOD of Christ, shed for us.**

Let us take a moment to EXAMINE our hearts before the Lord
as we remember Christ's sacrifice for our sins on the cross
and His resurrection from the dead.

1 Corinthians 11:23b-25

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,
And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,

*"This is my body, which is for you;
do this in remembrance of me."*

With this Bread, Let us remember the body of Christ together...

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying,

*"This cup is the new covenant in my blood;
do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

With this Cup, Let us remember the blood of Christ, shed for us...

2 Cor. 5:15 And Christ died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.