

Resting in the consolations and care of Christ (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 00] Lord may help me and I shall attention to the gospel as recorded by Matthew chapter 11 and verses 28 to 30.

Matthew chapter 11 verses 28 to 30. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. How important it is, as we come to the word of God, and for us to speak from a particular part and portion of the word of God, that we do not isolate it from the context in which it is found.

I know these words before us this evening are undoubtedly very familiar, and they are most blessed and precious truth, except for in what our Lord Jesus speaks here.

[1 : 28] And in turning to them this evening, I want us help to notice one or two things, in regard to the context in which they are found, and pay particular attention to the one that speaks here, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and with regard also to whom are such words as this, that our Lord speaks, are addressed, and what surely is contained and set forth in that.

For oh, what words of grace and truth, has brought home the blessed teaching of the Holy Spirit, to the heart of a burden, exercised, troubled, and needy sinner, indeed to the child of God.

I'm sure we have brought, and I trust it is so, to realise how vitally important is that gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit, if indeed the word is ever made effectual in a sinner's heart, indeed if there is the very imparting, both of instruction, encouragement, and consolation to the living family of God.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

I say again, how vital is that gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit, to all that pertains to life and godliness, as it concerns the living family of God.

[3 : 30] And with respect also to the work of grace in the hearts and lives of sinners, even those whom the Lord hath ordained unto eternal life.

But this juncture let me notice, as I intimated, one or two things from what is brought before us in this chapter that I have read.

And particularly in regard to John the Baptist, we find John at this juncture incarcerated in one of Herod's dungeons.

And that because of how faithfully and boldly he had witnessed against the particular wickedness of Herod.

And we know also what was eventually the consequences of the same, who through the wickedness of that wife of Herod, John was eventually beheaded in prison.

[4 : 47] Now it might appear, what a sad end did John come to. And yet do not forget that all these things were in the outworking of the sovereign purposes of God.

Yes, the grievous wickedness that was committed and was that which lay at the door of those that committed it.

And we see here, even with John himself, ah, was there not likewise in his life, as it is in respect to each of the living family of God, an over-ruling providence.

Yes, he dies a martyr's death, but oh, his redeemed soul enters into the joy of his Lord.

And what's more, does that which John witnessed in his ministry, ah, does not, friends, that remain?

[6 : 00] And does not the ministry in that sense of John, even still with us, to our day and generation, in the testimony that he bears, to the glorious person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Though according to human relationships, John was related to the Lord Jesus, having been Elizabeth, his mother, and Mary, the mother of our Lord, being cousins.

And yet John, apparently his life until manifest unto Israel, was spent much in isolation.

And as John says, with regard to that ministry that he bore, and the witness that he bore, to the Lord Jesus Christ, I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God. Again, the testimony of this faithful servant of Jesus Christ, the immediate forerunner of his Lord, as he cried, as he saw Jesus coming unto him, Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

[7 : 54] O friends, do those words, do those words, do John have any meaning for us? Do we know what it is to bless God for the glorious truth that is testified there through this faithful servant of God?

And are to know him, not only of whom John bore witness, but of what John heard when he baptised the Lord Jesus there in the waters of Jordan, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Hear ye him. But we find then John incarcerated in one of Herod's dungeons. Well, how trying and distressing must this have been that a John who practically all his life had lived in the open and to be confined and incarcerated in such a situation in which he was.

And we find him sending two of his disciples with this request, Art thou he that should come?

Or do we look for another? Many have expressed surprise that John, as it were, should send his disciples with such an inquiry.

[9 : 33] And particularly, after what John had witnessed, indeed of what had been made known unto him, is he now beset of with doubts with regard to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Ah, do not, friends, forget how active Satan is and always has been and still is in seeking to undermine the confidence of the people of God in those things that they have heard, received, and believed.

It is as one of our hymn writers illustrates it, does cause, disperse the scope of Satan and his powers against hope to believe in hope, my brethren, as should be ours.

I just want briefly to bring out is this, as I said, some have expressed surprise that John should send such an inquiry.

Art thou he that should come? Or do we look for another? Ah, but remember, friends, this, was it not so with him of whom the scripture bears witness that John the Baptist came in the power and in the spirit of Elias?

[11 : 08] As our Lord Jesus, witnessing of John, we have read in this chapter, saying, this is Elias, you will hear it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

Just look at what was evident and found in the life and ministry of that faithful servant of God as Elijah was.

Oh, see what he witnessed. See how boldly he stood before Ahab. There should neither be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

See how there at the brook Chirin, see him there in the house of the widow of Zarephath. And ah, see him there upon Mount Carmel when the Lord answered his prayer and fire from heaven descended and not only burnt up the sacrifice, but the very stones of the altar that Elijah had built and the water that was in the trench round about it.

Oh, what a witness there. The Lord, he is God. The Lord, he is God. See him and as we find him there, send him that message to Ahab.

[12 : 39] Arise and get thee up for there is the sound of abundance of rain and see him there in the mouth praying unto the Lord and as he sees the wondrous answer of the Lord to his prayer which is leading up to us this as it was with Elijah so with John the Baptist and no less so concerns the people of God still.

They were men of like passions as we are. Ah, remember how Elijah fled at the threat of that wicked woman Jezebel.

Ah, does it seem surprising thing that Elijah should react in that way as here with John the Baptist?

Art thou he that should come? Or do we look for another? What I want friends to particularly notice is this. Yes, we see I do not say the failures far from it but even the weakness of the faith at times as it is even in the life and experience of the people of God oppressed and bowed and bowed down with those things and the situation in which they are found.

But oh, here see the cry as it were of a child of God the very cry of faith ah, even in the weakness of it is that which enters into the ears of our God and Saviour.

[14 : 28] Oh, did not the Lord indeed impart gracious consolation to his servant? Ah, does the Lord friends forget?

Does he neglect his own? No, indeed not. what a testimony does Jesus bear not only of John the Baptist but what friends a message is returned and that's it what confirmation is given to John the message the Lord returned to him through those disciples yes, that he indeed is the Christ.

John had not been a mistake that one in whom he trusted are as it is with each and every child of God they that trust in the Lord shall never be put to confusion but as I said we have the witness of the Lord Jesus to his servant John but I just mentioned that briefly I just want particularly to notice we come to these words of our text who is who it is that speaks as such words as we have here oh you will say surely it's not that obvious that the words of the Lord Jesus Christ are undoubtedly I do not friends for one moment it will differ from the same but what

I'm wanting to emphasize oh do we realize that what is what is the very witness and testimony that is given of this one that he speaks that he is indeed God manifest in the flesh I know that these words our texts are often as expressed as indeed sweet invitations of the gospel and I would not either deny that but oh friends remember this they're not just words of invitation that are uttered that the words of him who has authority and power the words we remind in the scriptures where the word of a king is there is power so it is with what our Lord

Jesus speaks here ah does it not direct us and it's not this what is the Bible point and that is that he that speaks here come unto me or ye that labor and heavy laden and I will give you rest not only that he means what he says but that he is able to impart that of which he states and our this there is no question with regard to our Lord Jesus Christ oh friends is it not this of which that faith which is the gift of God in a very real sense not in that it centers in but indeed finds that ever that wherein is the rest of the soul of a sinner thus taught of God the Holy

[18 : 26] Spirit it is in the authority and power the greatness and the goodness of him that is revealed to us in the gospel our Lord Jesus Christ just put it in this way yes our Lord Jesus is set forth as the one and only saviour of sinners ah can that friend be established blessed be God it is so both in what is revealed to us in the world and what is also made known and realised by sinners as taught of God the Holy Spirit so what I just want in here then to emphasise is this it's one that speaks ah it is with authority that he does so what the

Lord Jesus here declares is that which is faithful and true and it is that upon which the soul can most surely rely for none that are brought to come unto him as these words direct ever friends are sent empty away oh view it in the very context again of the words of our Lord Jesus remember his discourse recorded in John chapter 6 and those well known words when he says all that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out does the Lord say any different here in these words before us and in the immediate context in which they are found but it is important

I verily believe to keep this always in view and what our Lord states when he says when he rejoiced in spirit and thanked his heavenly Father oh Lord of heaven and earth because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes even so Father for so it seemed good in thy sight ah is not this the glory of the gospel of the grace of God that it is rooted and founded not friends in the response of man but in the outworking of the sovereign purposes of our God our salvation as a word reminds us is of the Lord ah did not

Jonah testify to that the situation in which he through his sin and folly found it ah could he friends deliver himself can any sinner indeed not only deliver themselves but does any sinner have any desire for and after salvation outside and apart from the sovereign distinguishing grace of God surely we cannot we we witness to this but ourselves if we have known we know anything of the glory reality of the blessings of pardoning mercy and redeeming love cannot we well join in for the hymn says t'was not t'was not the will about my soul's new heavenly birth began no not of him that will it nor of him that run it but of

God that showeth mercy ah that has not friends every sinner and are we not brought I trust to know it for ourselves that every sinner brought to know the blessings of pardon and peace for the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ oh rejoice in this never seek to give the glory to God that it is all of the Lord it is that which not we that were not we in any way contribute to but what he fully and freely imparts for no other gospel there is no other gospel as one says we can own but that which sets Jesus Christ upon his throne and proclaims salvation full and free as obtained on Calvary a rugged tree our Lord states here all things are delivered unto me of my father no man knoweth the son but the father neither knoweth any man the father save the son and he to whom soever the son will reveal him does not that underline

[24 : 13] I say the sovereign distinguishing grace of our God ah see he our Lord Jesus Christ he through whom alone the father is revealed he alone in whom all that pertains to the blessings of salvation for ruined sinners is contained as the apostle said none other name given under heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved it is thus our Lord that speaks he that has authority and power they said where the word of a king is there is power come he says unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest oh what a word of authority what a word of power is this come unto me or ye that labor and are heavy laden ah see who it is to whom friends such words of our

Lord here are addressed ah it is not it is to those that for it is his grace and behold and does not lose sight the very reality of this as the apostle says in another place he giveth grace of four grace as it is grace that which is the work of God the Holy Spirit that truly convinces a sin and him only and as his grace we are brought to realize our sinfulness and need it is of his grace here as expressed in these words that he thus speaks and speaks to burden guilty needy sinner still I know friends the one here bowed down on the sense that that's the guilt and that sin and that need

I know I know as Satan is ever ready to suggest in our unbelieving hearts also we're ever ready to back it up ah but such words do not apply to such as you ah look at what you are look at what sin you're being guilty of look what is found in your how can you ever expect or think that such words as this apply does he court as the Lord Jesus call such as you what does the apostle say he says tis a faithful saying worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief ah that friends what come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden yes bow down the sense of the guilt of our sin ah but here friends is that which surely does meet and address that very a situation as I said our Lord

Jesus that speaks here is faithful and true what he declares he verily means and are all that are thus brought through his grace to come why he says that or that the father giveth me shall come and him that cometh I will not by no wise cast out oh what a fullness of grace and true is in our Lord Jesus Christ but again we notice this particularly oh is there not a word here that speaks to the living family of God that the people of God in all their situations and needs we journey on through life there are not many things that we meet with months at troubles things at distress we may be much friends but affected and cast down for something particularly our path this evening do not these words of our

Lord not only I trust are sounded in our ears tonight but oh we know the grace that is bound up in the same here in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ he who is the same yesterday today and forever here friends as he is full of grace and true still yes let us know what it is with all that concerns us to be found still coming unto him Peter puts it in this way in his epistle he says and I believe in a very real sense it is that which truly is ever characteristic of all that are taught of the Holy Spirit he says to whom coming as unto a living stone disallowed indeed of man but chosen of God and precious as the

[30 : 19] Lord Jesus is just going back to words I've already mentioned this evening the Lord says all that the Father giveth me shall come and they do come and I say again it is this which is ever characteristic those of the subjects the teaching of the Holy Spirit that they're coming that true friends with us are coming daily to the Lord conscious of our need of him our dependence upon him and are finding that which alone can and does meet the needs of our soul that in all that the Lord Jesus is and all that he hath done he says come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest oh precious truth wondrous saviour as he hath set before us he that truly as his word declares is mighty to save and surely friends no sinner shall ever perish that is brought through grace thus to come to him who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him but I'll leave the words there where the

Lord add his blessing Amen