

# "All You who Labor and are Weary"

Thomas Robinson, *Rest & Delight in God's Presence 3*, August 30, 2015

## **Matthew 11:25-30**

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus declared, "I agree with you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have **hidden** these things from **the wise and understanding** and **revealed** them to **little children**; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> **All things** have been handed over to me by **my Father**, and no one knows **the Son** except **the Father**, and no one knows the Father except the Son and **anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him**.

<sup>28</sup> **Come to me**, all who **labor** and are **burdened**,  
and I will give you **rest**.

<sup>29</sup> Take **my yoke** upon you, and **learn from me**,  
for I **am gentle** and **lowly in heart**,  
and **you will find rest for your souls/lives**.

<sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

---

## **Genesis 2:1-3**

2:<sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

## **Deuteronomy 5:12, 14b-15**

<sup>12</sup> "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD (*Yahweh*) your God commanded you. ... that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. <sup>15</sup> You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD (*Yahweh*) your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD (*Yahweh*) your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day."

## **Exodus 33:14**

<sup>14</sup> And God said (to Moses), "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

## **Jeremiah 6:16**

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls." But they said, "We will not walk in it."

## **Matthew 23:4**

<sup>4</sup> They (the Pharisees) 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.

## **Mark 2:27**

<sup>27</sup> And Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath." <sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

## **John 5:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> And this was why the Judeans were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

## **Sirach 51:23-27 A teacher of wisdom urges followers to learn wisdom. (200 b.c.)**

<sup>23</sup> Come near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction. ... <sup>25</sup> Acquire wisdom for yourselves without money. <sup>26</sup> Put your neck under her (wisdom's) yoke, and let your souls receive instruction ... <sup>27</sup> See I have ... found for myself much rest.

## God and the Holy Requirement of Rest

Our congregational retreat, “In God’s Presence – Seeking Rest and Delight in Everyday Life.”

Meditation on the meaning of Sabbath. Why does God make Sabbath one of the Ten Commandments? We need it. Stress, workaholism, 24/7, a city that never sleeps, Wall St., technology, fear of losing ground/work, competition, desire > need for more, perfectionism, parents’ expectation, inner voice we’re faking, competitive leisure, getting advantage. But in the ancient world, 12-hr work day, no society support, struggle for subsistence.

Life has always been hard. Today, we make it hard. Sabbath rested everyone in Israel, even slaves and sojourners. But Sabbath is not just stopping work. Rest can be just a technological adjustment to make people more efficient units of production. Mammon co-opts everything.

Sabbath rest is physically renewing, it expresses justice across socio-economic lines, but it is also holy. God makes a time of rest holy. It took Israel into the character of God who creates and also values rest and delight. God’s presence gave a rhythm and goal of rest.

## Jesus and the Gift and Discovery of Rest

Jesus was challenged by Pharisees for his practice of Sabbath. Not rigorous enough. But Jesus believed the Sabbath was a sign of God’s rule. Where God worked in healing, Jesus worked. He rejected the Pharisees call to a pure (elite) community, with strict prohibitions of work.

Mt 11 takes us into a challenging time in Jesus’ ministry. Many in the Galilean cities where he taught rejected John the Baptist and berated Jesus, glutton, drunkard, friend of sinners. Then comes this amazing passage. It begins from Jesus’ recognition of the difficulty people had in following him and his role in revealing the character and will of God as Messiah/Son. Then Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath, invites people into real rest, renewal, rest for life/soul.

## Babies and Burdened Laborers

If Jesus is true, God has done things in a way that’s not realistic to those who understand the way the world works – “*the wise and understanding*.” In contrast Jesus says God chose *babies/little children*. Babies are many things but they are always learning, grasping the world around them. Those who already know can’t understand Jesus. Only those ready to re-learn life on a deep level. Our understanding of both God and being human must be reshaped by who Jesus is, how he acted, what he taught, all that we can see in him.

Those *babies* are also the ordinary people Jesus saw all around him, laboring to survive, burdened with poverty, oppression, religious demands and prohibitions. Jesus echoes words of God’s promises of rest and the traditional call to Wisdom. Jesus calls them to real Sabbath.

The call is very personal. Jesus knows how hard it is to become a child again, to really change our way of thinking, our self-understanding. It can’t be by abstract doctrine. Only personal relationship, discipleship, time with him can set people free. Do you want to know God? Look at Jesus, the Messiah/Son, who knows the Father, who calls the laboring and burdened.

## “Practice, Practice, Practice”

Jesus wants to give rest on all levels. The rest we need physically for renewal, health, a sense of delight and celebration. Rest from the demands for ever more production, achievement, perfection. Rest for the soul that takes us into the heart of God seen in Jesus.

Jesus calls us to take his yoke (rather than the one we’re carrying now). His yoke (discipleship) is defined by his character, gentle, humble. It frees us to live boldly, freely, creatively, even dangerously. It frees us from the burdens of ego, religious performance, perfection. It’s a yoke that’s light. It lifts us up and carries us into rest, the heart of God’s love and delight.