

## “Promises of Jesus: I Will...Give You Rest”

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30

Graphics: cot, air mattress, I Will, resting

Big Truth: Being a follower of Jesus is a response to the promises of Jesus, as offered and proven by the actions of Jesus. It's not something we initiate, but something Jesus has already done for us. Jesus promised to love us. Jesus promised to make us fishers of men. Jesus promised to give us rest. Jesus promised to come back for us. Our response is to find what Jesus is doing and join him as we live out our salvation in Him.

Focus Phrase: Jesus promises to give me rest, so that I can focus on His mission.

### 1. Introduction

#### A. PRAY!

- B. (get cot) Well, THAT was exhausting. It's been a tiring morning leading worship, singing and playing my guitar, praying!...I think I'll just take a nap for a few minutes. So, I'd really appreciate it if you'd keep your voices down...I'm a bit of a light sleeper. Thanks. (lie down on cot). (open eyes and look at congregation) What? Why are you all staring at me? Do you know how hard it is to nap with people staring at you? So...I don't know...close your eyes or something. (lie back down) (open eyes and look at congregation) OK, look. Do I have to bring Jesus in here to talk to y'all about this? He clearly said in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you that are weary (check) and are carrying heavy burdens (check), and I WILL GIVE YOU REST!" I'm weary, and ministry can be a burden some days...so...I'm resting! Isn't that what Jesus was talking about?
- C. (stand) Well...yes and no. Jesus' promises to us are rarely what we might read on the surface. Jesus' promises to us are always more meaningful and eternal than simply getting a nap, or being loved, or making us fisher-people.
- D. When Jesus said, "I WILL..." he was promising to his followers something profound...something that JESUS knows can and will change your life.
- E. This sermon series is called **I Will...the Promises of Jesus**.
- i. In week one, that promise from Jesus was, "I WILL LOVE YOU." When you KNOW you are loved then you are freed to love others like Jesus did.
  - ii. The second promise was, "I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF PEOPLE." When you allow Jesus to change your hearts and your focus to be on HIM, He gives you passion to share your faith in Him with others.
  - iii. Our third promise, for today, is "I WILL GIVE YOU REST." When Jesus promises that, he's doesn't have a cot in mind, but a cross, which will free you for true spiritual rest amidst a world of incredible UNrest.

- F. So, instead of getting a nap or a vacation, here's where we're heading today:  
**Jesus promises to give me rest, so that I can focus on His mission.**
- G. Let's open our bibles to Matthew 11, starting in verse 28...

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ Matthew 11:28-30

- B. As Matthew recorded this, Jesus was talking to 'the crowds' starting all the way back in verse 7. It's not clear whether the 12 disciples were listening in, here, but I suspect they were near.
- C. Because Jesus was talking to the crowds, this **promise** from Jesus was what I would call "**invitational.**" Whenever Jesus was preaching to the crowds, he was very aware that some were followers, some curious, and some skeptical... some were even hostile to him, like the Jewish Pharisees or religious leaders.
- D. So let's take a closer look at this important quote from Jesus.
  - i. First, we know Jesus was in invitation mode because he started with "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens. But was Jesus talking about physical burdens or something else."
    - a. "Come to me, all that are weary..." I'm sure the people that were hearing Jesus were nodding their heads in agreement. Ya...I'm weary. Do you know what I had to do this week? I had to plow that field to plant the grain. My new baby was up all night crying. **What do YOU think of when you hear Jesus say, "Come to me, all that are weary..."?** I bet you have a list. So did people in first century...we're not different from them, really. But was Jesus talking about physical weariness?
    - b. He went on to say, "...and are carrying heavy burdens..." Maybe they were looking around them at the bags or bundles they carried. But, as Jesus was talking, the POWER of Jesus' words began giving them spiritual insight. They began to think that it wasn't physical heavy burdens he was talking about, but spiritual heavy burdens that they were attempting to carry ON THEIR OWN. And most specifically, Jesus was talking about the BURDEN of the Jewish Law, the 613 laws that they desperately tried to keep so they could be holy and forgiven and good Jews. Those burdens were actually barriers to communion with God.
    - c. Add to that the fact that the Jewish people were an occupied people, and the burdens got even greater. They were politically oppressed and militarily occupied by the Romans. So not only were they burdened by the Law, but the 'world' was in their face every day.
    - d. Jesus cared about their physical well-being, but he cared WAY more about their spiritual well-being. He had a laser beam pointed at the heart of the matter. Every person in that crowd had a set of things that was

causing weariness and burdens that they were attempting to carry on their own and in their own strength in order to please God.

- e. To them, Jesus simply said (listen with your heart now), “Come to me, ALL who are weary of trying to keep every part of the Law...ALL who are carrying the weight of the legalism of the Law and the rest of the world’s burdens, and **I WILL GIVE YOU REST.**”
- ii. Jesus WAS offering REST. Rest that HE himself, and He alone, came to give. Not a cot. Not a nap. Not a vacation. **Real rest** in the form of freedom for hearts and souls and missional kingdom focus. No longer was the Law going to bind and exhaust them...Jesus gives them rest in Him.
  - a. Physical rest was important in that culture...as it is in our time and place. Jesus understood that. But Jesus also knew that all the physical rest in the world wasn’t going to give them peace or reprieve from the exhausting demands of the Law. 8 hours per night is healthy, but the burdens they were carrying (the Law, the sin nature within them, the temptations, the ways of the world, Satan’s games and wiles) were exhausting them...and they do us.
  - b. Jesus’ rest would come ONLY when each person in that crowd received the salvation that Jesus offered from the sin of the world and a tireless striving of the Law they so desperately tried to keep. It’s not about a cot...it’s about what Jesus would do on the cross.
- iii. In order to DO that, Jesus said, in verse 29, “Take my yoke upon you...”
  - a. Now, this yoke was something that would be placed on the shoulders in order to spread the weight of a burden out for easier carrying. When a yoke was put on an oxen, for instance, it doesn’t dig in and it spread out the weight of the plow.
  - b. In the Jewish culture, a yoke was a common metaphor for the Jewish Law. The Jewish Law, as we’ve said, was a heavy weight...very specific weight...that caused pain for those trying to keep it.
  - c. Jesus’ yoke was different. Jesus’ yoke was powerful but clear. Jesus’ yoke was not 613 Laws, but two - *Love God and Love your neighbor*. Those two commands took the full weight of the Law and made it clear what God expected from them as faithful followers.
  - d. As Jesus talked to the crowd, He invited them to come to him, so that they could be forgiven and free through faith in Him and not weary and burdened by trying to keep the Law.
- iv. And Jesus said, “...learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.”

- a. The Law was harsh. The Law was all truth and no grace. Jesus is gentle and humble in heart. Jesus' way is the way of grace, even as it is also the way of truth. Jesus' way is 100% grace and 100% truth.
  - b. As much as the Law was designed to teach people to have faith in God, it was something that people simply tried to keep the letter of...it became anything but a heart issue.
  - c. Jesus is all heart and wanted this crowd to learn to love God and love people by following Jesus...and he wants that for you too.
- v. Jesus finished with, "You will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light."
- a. The crowd was being invited to take the yoke of Jesus - the grace and heart of Jesus - to find that rest they desperately sought.
  - b. The heart's desire of the people was to find a new way...a lighter way. And Jesus gave us that. Yet when Jesus said his way was lighter, it was only lighter for US. In fact, Jesus took the full weight on himself on the cross - heavy - so that he could help us carry the temptation and consequences of our sin.
  - c. Jesus' yoke is easy for us...extremely costly and difficult for him. Jesus' burden - his demands and the burden of our sin - is light because He has taken that burden for us on the cross.
- vi. Jesus' invitation here, to this crowd, was an invitation to respond to this new yoke that Jesus was giving to them...out from under the failed mission of keeping the Law, and now, **making Jesus himself the mission.**
- vii. Jesus promises to give me rest, so that I can focus on His mission.

### 3. Application

- A. Rest in YOUR life doesn't ultimately come by getting outside to enjoy the long summer days, as great as that is. Rest is not about vacations or me-time. No where in the gospels do we read of Jesus taking his beach chair to the seashore to get away from it all. It's not bad to go on vacation or to sleep well. In fact, those things are important, but it's not what Jesus is offering here.
- B. Rest - real rest - was bought on the cross and comes into your life through your relationship with the crucified and risen Savior, Jesus.
- C. Our world is so filled with bad news, brokenness, failures, fight, and foibles. We try to keep up with this agenda or that effort, this political movement or that community effort.
- D. We also think that if we behave, when we can, that we're good people who will make it into heaven. Yet, we sin and fall short of God's glory and that causes

guilt and shame, breaks relationships, and pulls us away from God's heart of worship, prayer, and mission.

- E. Our burdens fill us with sadness, frustration, lack of answers, and work to get done. You and I take those things onto our shoulders and think if we can just muscle it out on our own, we can fix this or that problem.
- F. Frankly, none of it works. When you and I do that, we're simply repeating the focus on the Law. We're losing sight of Jesus' words here about rest.
- G. In order to focus on the mission of Jesus, Jesus gives you rest in the form of salvation from the UNREST of the world. He gives you rest from the legalism we tend to prefer, at times, to the grace that Jesus offers. I don't know why we do that, but I sense that we tend to think that it's easier to just DO a set of things FOR Jesus, than it is to accept the grace and rest FROM Jesus.
- H. The reason he offers you rest through salvation is because he wants to use you - spiritual rested and ready - to show others what His yoke is all about. It's not about legalistic behavior...but about holiness that comes into your life because Jesus is setting you apart for God's purpose and mission.
- I. Jesus is offering you spiritual Rest, with a capital R. I have four Rs that Jesus is giving you in order to fully experience HIS rest, which your soul craves:
  - i. First, Rest comes because he **Rescues you**.
    - a. Without mincing words, this is rescue from hell. John Wesley calls that, "...the wrath to come..." when God will judge the living and the dead (as we proclaimed in the Apostles' Creed this morning.)
    - b. This rescue is the powerful and complete work of Jesus on the cross, to forgive your sin through repentance and faith in Jesus' promise.
    - c. Rest comes to your soul when Jesus pulls you into His everlasting arms for salvation.
  - ii. Jesus also gives you rest when he **Redeems you**.
    - a. When you are rescued by grace through faith, you are redeemed.
    - b. When you redeem a pop can, you get 5 cents. Your redemption through the work of Jesus on the cross restores your full life-value. Jesus paid the price and has redeemed you FOR a purpose.
    - c. Redemption is the pathway to being used by God for His holy purposes - to glorify God and build up the church. Redeemed people KNOW that God can and will use you for His mission.
    - d. Rest comes to your soul when you know you've been redeemed by Him.
  - iii. Third, Jesus brings rest to your life when he **Renews you**.

- a. We all need regular renewal. Even when you know you're rescued and redeemed, the burdens and sin in your life make you weary.
  - b. **Jesus wants to renew you today. (repeat)** Jesus wants you to know that what was in your past is in your past. Learn from that, and be renewed by the very presence of Jesus right here in worship, in the pages of the Bible you read, and in the connection you have with other believers.
  - c. On the first Saturday of every month, our men gather together for prayer, a meal, and a devotion. I have to say, that is one of the most renewing mornings of my month. I invite every guy to come...be renewed in Jesus through fellowship and food.
  - d. Maybe it's a time of retreat or a ministry. Renewal comes in many forms. Don't ignore the signals that are coming from your heart and soul, craving renewal. Let Jesus give you rest through renewal.
- iv. Finally, Jesus gives you rest as **you Respond**.
- a. Everything Jesus said to that crowd was forward-looking. Jesus was looking for a response to his invitation.
  - b. The response He's looking for from you is missional. ***Our mission here are PUMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our vision for HOW to do that is by lovingly giving every person in our community the opportunity to believe and follow Jesus.***
  - c. When Jesus gives you His rest, and you take on his yoke, you are free! Your response is gratitude and praise. It's asking, "Where do you need me to serve?" It's loving those around you and encouraging your leaders. It's being ready to sacrifice and get your hands in the mix.
  - d. Every one of us has gifts to use. If you're not using them for God's glory and to build up the church, then your soul will not be at rest. But when you use those spiritual gifts, you'll be energized and freed in Jesus' name!
- v. Jesus promises to give me rest, so that I can focus on His mission.

#### 4. Conclusion

- A. Now, I AM ready for a nap. Our physical bodies need rest, for sure. But the rest that Jesus offers our souls has little to do with resting our bodies. Jesus' soul rest removes the burden of the Law and offers us the grace only He can give. He did that on the cross. He does that today IN YOU.
- B. Church, I pray that this summer, you're finding physical rest. I really do! Go away to find a quiet place. Have fun in the sun and rest your body and mind.
- C. This week, though, receive the rest Jesus gives your SOUL. Be forgiven and free - you are rescued, redeemed, renewed to respond to Him with your life.

- D. He gives you rest so that you are free to let Jesus live and love through you.  
Let him give you that ultimate rest every day!
- E. Let's Pray!