

Rest for the Weary

Matthew

By Ty Blackburn

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Providence Church
2146 Buford Hwy
Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

Turn with me in your Bibles, if you will, to the 11th chapter of Matthew. 2021. I heard, my daughter found something on the internet that other day that I thought was pretty humorous, it said does it bother anybody that when you say the name of this year, you're saying 2020 won? Think about that a little bit. The year beat us. We lost. 2021.

I know it's just so common as you talk to people, everyone is happy to leave 2020 behind but as we embark on a new year for the Christian, in reality things are always getting better. Even in 2020 things were getting better if you were loving Jesus and walking with him because you were getting closer to heaven, you were becoming more like him, and everything that matters was getting better. Now we understand that there were some incredible challenges and so I wanted to come to a passage this morning that has been on my heart lately and very familiar passage, a passage that is unique in the way that it presents the beauty of Jesus Christ. I mean, all of Scripture does but this passage just has a depth and a richness about it that I am looking forward to but with God's help us unpacking this morning. It's Matthew 11:28-30, the words familiar to so many, "Come unto Me, you who are weary and heavy-laden," and so that's our passage this morning. Matthew 11:28-30 and the title of the message is, "Rest for the Weary." Perhaps you've been feeling weary from all the events of this past year, weary from the emotional strain that these things have taken upon us, weary from the anxiety caused by the pandemic, weary from the increasing divisions and conflicts we see in our nation. Perhaps those things have weighed you down and these words will be especially encouraging. But he's not just talking about weariness from the circumstances in our lives, he's talking about deep spiritual weariness and the need for rest.

So rest for the weary. Matthew 11:28-30. There we read these words of Jesus.

28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, 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."

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, how grateful we are that You are a God who not only reigns and rules over all that is, that You're working out Your purposes in the affairs of men, in the movements of nations, and in the smallest details of our lives. You are sovereign, You are reigning, but not only that, You are a God who invites all people into a relationship with Yourself through Your Son, the Lord Jesus. We thank You for the amazing generosity of Your heart, lovingkindness that truly surpasses our ability to conceive. Lord, we ask that You might by the power of the Holy Spirit quicken this word in our minds, in our hearts, and that You might produce in us more love for Jesus, truer devotion to One so worthy, and that You might give us what You promise here, rest for our souls. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want us to look at this passage under three points in the outline basically this morning, and the first is the need for rest, our need for rest, you might say. Jesus offers something which we deeply need and it's emphasized by the fact that he describes those to whom he invites, all who are weary and heavy-laden. Those words are rich in meaning. To be weary, you may have if you're reading the ESV Bible, you see, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy-laden," and the idea of this word "weary," translated "weary" in the NASB and the NIV and "labor" in the ESV and the King James, so it's weary or labor, the idea, it's trying to communicate the weariness that comes from laboring. The word actually, the root word here means to strike, to beat, as if you're, you know, pounding rocks or chopping wood. You're striking and you're hitting and you're hitting and you're laboring and the idea is you do that to the point of exhaustion, so that this weariness, "Come unto me you who are weary, you who have worked to the point of utter and complete exhaustion."

Then he adds to that the word "heavy-laden." This is a word which means "to be over-filled." It's a word actually taken from the arena of shipping in the first century, that a ship that would be filled to the point that it's actually sinking in the water, in danger of sinking, is heavy-laden. And so do you feel like sometimes that the burdens upon you have the water coming in your life? Do you feel like you're weary from striving and striving and striving? Then these verses are for you.

The need for rest. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Think about the need for rest. I mean, it's quite interesting, these are the type of things that it's good to stop and think about sometimes that we take for granted. God made us to need rest. I mean, he made us to need to sleep. Some of us probably don't sleep as much as we should. I remember years ago, I was as a young pastor, I prided myself on being able to burn the candle at both ends. I didn't really think I was priding myself, I just thought, you know, "Hey, I can stay up late. I can get up early. I can do what I need to do to, you know, meet with people, whatever." So the Lord, I remember reading a book by C. J. Mahaney called "Humility," and one of the interesting things that he says in that book, "Humility," was he says that true humility acknowledges that all people must sleep and that there's only one who does not sleep, that is, God. "The Lord neither slumbers nor sleeps," but all of us are to sleep and that's part of us acknowledging we're not God. We have to rest. He made us to need the rhythm of rest in our lives so we have to sleep every day. I mean, you should sleep every day, right? Most of us don't need

to be encouraged to that, we are going to do it. Some of us like me sometimes, are sleeping when we're not supposed to be sleeping, falling asleep, you know, on the couch or whatever when my wife is talking to me, and trying to act like I heard what she said. I mean, I don't think that's intentionally being deceitful, it's just trying to show love, right? "I think I heard what you said as I was dozing off for a moment. I wasn't asleep." "Well, why were you snoring?" But we need rest. He made us to need rest and then in the creation of the world, when he created the world in six days, it's astonishing that God creates the world in six days and then sets aside a day for him to rest. Genesis 2:1-3, the seventh day. God set aside the seventh day, the Sabbath, in which he rested from his labor. Now we know the Lord doesn't need to rest because Scripture interprets Scripture, God wasn't tired. I mean, he created the world by speaking. He wasn't tired from creating but he set aside the seventh day to rest because he wanted us to set aside one day in seven to devote to rest.

We need rest. We need rest physically, but not only that, we need rest spiritually. We can be overwrought, exhausted physically, we can be overwrought exhausted emotionally, mentally. How easy it is to become weary and overcome and overburdened with the cares and concerns of our lives and our Savior is one who invites us in those moments to come to him, that he will give us rest. Rest for your souls, he says.

"I will give you rest," verse 28, but then verse 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." Not just the outer man that needs rest, not just the physical body but the inner man, the soul, the invisible part of us. We need rest. We need spiritual rest. The soul and spirit are one and the same and the Scripture is basically synonymous. The Bible pictures man as made up of two parts: body, soul; body, spirit. Soul, spirit, heart, words that basically overlap one another, all speaking of the immaterial part of man.

So Jesus promises a rest for the soul and we need to rest in our souls, we need to rest in our spirits, and essentially what God is doing in the creation is he's teaching us that the way to live is to learn the discipline of rest and we're going to focus on the discipline of spiritual rest today, that there's a place for talking about the discipline of physical rest but I think the reason he creates the world in six days and then takes the seventh to rest is so that we would learn what it means to rest.

Let me tell you this. You can look at this later, Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 are the two passages where God gives his law, the 10 Commandments. Exodus 20, the Lord gives the 10 Commandments to Moses, through Moses to the people of Israel after they leave Egypt. They've been delivered from Egypt through the plagues, they've come through the Red Sea, they have come to Mount Sinai, and God gives his 10 Commandments. And the fourth commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and what he tells them in Exodus 20, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh he rested," and the sense is God is telling us, he says, "Stop your work," to the people of Israel, "Stop your work. Work six days and don't work on the seventh day and think about the finished work of God." That's essentially the point of the Sabbath.

Reflect on the great work of God in creation. That's Exodus 20, that's what it talks about, verses 8 to 11. Think about how God has made all that is out of nothing. Think about how he did it in six days. Think about how the Lord is sustaining his creation. Marvel at his ongoing work.

Then I mentioned there's a second giving of the law. Deuteronomy, that's what the word Deuteronomy means, the fifth book of the Old Testament, the fifth book of Moses. Before Moses dies, God calls him to give the law again, and so he gives the 10 Commandments again, the same 10 Commandments in Deuteronomy 5 as were in Exodus 20. Forty years later after the wilderness wandering before they go into the land of Israel and the land of Canaan, he re-issues the law, the same 10 Commandments, but the fourth commandment, there's an interesting difference. He says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," but he doesn't talk about creation. What he says is, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Stop working and basically remember the work that God did when He delivered you from Egypt. Now reflect on the great finished work of God when He saved you from slavery in Egypt." I think in the fact that you have this parallel account, the Lord is teaching us something about the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made to stop working yourselves and stop doing your own effort and start reflecting on the finished work of God and put all of your trust in the finished work of God in creation and in salvation.

This is the image that continues to work throughout the Scriptures and the author of Hebrews, you see this in Hebrews 3 and 4, he basically uses the metaphor of rest to say, "This is salvation, to enter into God's rest is to enter into true salvation." That is, to have saving faith is to rest, so that the Sabbath was always a type of salvation. The Sabbath is where you stop working and you instead reflect on and trust in the finished work that God has done. That's salvation. You stop working. Romans 4 says this, actually, as well. Paul says, he's explaining salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, that it's always been what the Bible taught, and he says in Romans 4 around verse 6, I think it is, that you stop working and you trust and you receive salvation not as a wage but as a gift. But you stop working and you trust. The same picture in Hebrews 4, that you stop working and you rest. You stop striving and you rest in Jesus, just like the song we just sang. "Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what You are, in the joy of all that You have done. I'm resting in that."

This is exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ himself is calling us to. We need rest and the only way you're going to be saved is you must stop working for salvation, stop trying to keep the law in your own strength, stop trying to please God in your own efforts, stop trying to put off sin in your own efforts, and go and rest in Jesus and then having received life from him, now you have the power. But it's all about resting in Jesus that motivates our heart to then diligently pursue holiness, but you have to start by resting before you can start pursuing holiness.

And Jesus is telling this here in this passage and it's really, when we look at the context in a moment, it's quite striking. The soul needs rest and so that in reality all of the rest that you and I need mentally and emotionally is really going to flow out of a rest that is

spiritual in nature. When you are resting in Jesus Christ and his work, who he is, what he's done, what he is doing, when you are resting in him, your identity in him, that rest will begin to permeate from the inside out and will produce peace and joy and love, the fruit of the Spirit.

So man has a need for rest. All people need rest. All people, even unbelievers who have no interest in the things of God, are in turmoil inwardly because they're under the conviction of sin, they're slaves to sin, they need to be delivered from sin, and yet they're pursuing it every other way, but in their hearts they actually need the rest that can only be found in Jesus. And the gospel is essentially saying to people, "We have good news. God has made a way for you to find rest in Jesus Christ." We all need rest.

So that's the need for rest. Secondly, observe the invitation to rest. The invitation to rest. "Come to Me all." Now first of all, I want to break this second point down in two subpoints, so 2 is going to have A and B. The first is the point is the invitation to rest and A is the context of that invitation. The context of that invitation, then we're going to look at the content of the invitation. But the context first.

It is absolutely stunning that this invitation happens where it does in this passage. I want to walk you through the context of Matthew 11 real quickly and you can look at it in more detail this week. I encourage you to spend some time meditating on this passage. But essentially what happens in Matthew 11, Jesus as he is teaching and ministering, he's finished giving instructions, some disciples from John the Baptist arrive and John the Baptist has been imprisoned and John the Baptist as he is imprisoned has begun to doubt the reality that Jesus is the Messiah. The question is he sends people to ask Jesus this, "Are You the expected One or should we look for another?" Now that is absolutely astonishing. John the Baptist, you will recall if you're familiar with the other gospels, in Luke 1 John the Baptist when he's in his mother's womb six months gestation, John the Baptist as an embryo in his mother's womb, his mother Elizabeth, her cousin Mary with the Lord Jesus Christ newly conceived, newly conceived in her womb, Mary says, "Elizabeth, is anybody home?" Something like that, she greets Elizabeth as she has come to visit her cousin unannounced. She just says, "Elizabeth," and John the Baptist in the womb recognizes the Son of God to be the Son of God, the Savior of the world, he leaps in the womb and his mother is filled with the Spirit because the Spirit is in the baby recognizing Christ, saying, "That's Him!" Then fast forward 30 years later, John the Baptist having not seen Jesus with his own eyes until he baptizing, ministering, preparing the way, he lays his eyes upon Jesus and he says this, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." He recognized him immediately because the Spirit of God was upon him and resting upon Jesus and he says, "That's Him!"

Now fast forward just a few months. John the Baptist is in prison, Jesus is going about his ministry, healing people, teaching, preaching, but things aren't going as John the Baptist expected and now this man of great faith that Jesus was about to commend in a moment and say there's none greater than John the Baptist to those born of women up to the point of this time in history, nobody greater than John the Baptist, he's going to say, "Are You the One?" How that must have felt to Jesus. You have faltering faith, stunning faltering

faith. How can it be? Jesus is going to show incredible compassion and mercy even after that. After he sends back a pretty firm word that says to John essentially, "The dumb speak. The blind see. The lame walk. So don't be unbelieving but believing. Just look at the evidence, John." And then as his disciples have turned to walk away, before they're out of earshot, Jesus turns to the crowd and he says, "What did you go out to see when you went to see John in the wilderness?" So that his disciples can hear this commendation. He says this, he says, "Did you go out to see, you know, a reed blown in the wilderness? Did you go out and see a man in soft clothing? I'll tell you what you went out to see," basically is this, "the greatest Old Testament prophet to this point, the greatest prophet of God. That's what you went out to see." Look at the mercy and tenderness of Christ.

Now but you have faltering faith and I think in Jesus' heart what happens then is he then in verses 15 to 19, he begins to think about the unbelief of the masses, the massive unbelief of Israel, and this is what it describes in Matthew 11:15-19. He says basically, "When John came, you basically, he was coming with the power of God and you rejected him. I come in a different way and you reject Me because you reject the truth." After saying that, the massive unbelief of Israel, then he turns to the three cities which he's been ministering in much of this time in Galilee: Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. Scholars basically and you just look at the gospels say that between 75 and 85% of Jesus' ministry was spent in Galilee. That's way up north in Israel, fulfilling what Isaiah had said the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, those who walk in darkness have seen a great light. Most of the light came to the northern part of Israel and Jesus picks out these three cities and he says, "Listen, Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, you have seen such miracles, such evidence of who I am and you are not believing."

The unbelief is staggering and when you read through, I mean, let me just show this for a moment. Turn back to chapter 4, verse 23. This is the fulfillment of that, well, actually, chapter 4, verse 15. After Matthew tells us that Jesus begins his ministry and he goes to Capernaum to begin his ministry, verse 14, "This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 'The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, and those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a light has dawned.' From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" The light has come. The Son of God is present.

Skip on down to verse 23. This is what's happening in Galilee. This is what's happening in Capernaum. This is what's happening in Bethsaida. This is what's happening in that whole region. Verse 23, Matthew 4, "Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan." He's saying, "Listen, basically," I heard John MacArthur say this, "basically during Jesus' ministry, disease was banished from Israel because he was

healing everyone who came to him." He was demonstrating the power and glory of his person visibly. So that's why he says in Matthew 11, he says in verse 21, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Verse 23, "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day." You have seen unmistakable, irrefutable evidence of who I am and you have rejected it.

Now think about that. Jesus has just talked about faltering faith among the greatest Old Testament prophet. He's talked about massive unbelief of the nation and particularly the nation of Israel that has seen the fullest display of glory. Here it is, this appalling unbelief. Now what he does next is what you would expect based on your theology, if you read the Scriptures carefully you would expect what he says. He's going to explain this massive unbelief in the face of overwhelming, irrefutable evidence. You see, the gospel is hard to believe not because there's a deficiency in the gospel, the gospel is hard to believe because there's a deficiency in us. We don't want to believe. That's the problem and so he explains it in verse 25 to 27, "At that time Jesus said, 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.'" He said, "Listen, you've hidden this from some and you revealed it to some." He's talking about the divine sovereignty of God in election. This is how you understand this, this massive unbelief is explained when you understand God's purposes in his sovereign grace. He goes on in verse 27, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son." Who's going to know the Father? Anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal him.

One of the clearest statements of divine sovereignty in salvation that you have in the Scriptures. You have so many but this is one of the clearest and you see how it makes so much sense in the context, doesn't it? Falter faith, massive unbelief, irrefutable evidence rejected, and Jesus in that moment what he does is he praises God for his electing purposes. He gives us a window into how we should respond, that we should be broken-hearted for the sinner who won't repent but at the same time in our hearts worshipping God because he's sovereign.

Now think about what was just said. I think chapter 11, I would have expected it to end there. Think about what we've just laid out and then think about the next words that come out of our Savior's mouth, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden." You have side by side this statement of divine election with the open, free invitation to any who will come. Jesus in the midst of this massive rejection, in the face of this appalling unbelief that is aimed at him personally, what does he do? He turns and says, "Come to Me and be saved." That is the God of the Bible. His generosity of heart is beyond our ability to imagine. He is more wonderful. He is more filled with lovingkindness.

So I was reading Spurgeon talks about this, it's as if he was saying in this to all of us as we read the Scriptures and we come to understand election, he's saying, "Listen, you

understand election doesn't mean don't offer salvation to every creature. Absolutely, I want the gospel preached to every creature," Jesus says. And listen, it also says something to you. If you are an unbeliever, if you're struggling wrestling as someone who wants to believe and who's trying to find Christ and you feel like and you're wondering, "Am I elect?" This passage says to you that's none of your affair, just go to Jesus. Just go to Jesus. Look at his heart. Look at the liberality of his kindness, the greatness of his love.

So that's the context of this, now the content of the invitation. The invitation to rest, the context, now the content. Essentially the content is in three imperatives, three commands. The first is, "Come to Me." Actually in the Greek there's not a verb there. It says, literally it says, "Here. Here to Me. Come here." It means, "Come near." The way that you respond to Jesus is you go to him. He invites you to come to him.

One of the amazing things about God is you really look at the Scriptures, you see who he is. You know, he saves everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, Romans 10:13, I believe. All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. The name of the Lord. What is the name of the Lord? The name of the Lord is Yahweh. The name of the Lord is Jesus, Yahweh is salvation. But you read in Isaiah 55:1 in the middle of a book filled with judgment a lot like the woes that we read from Matthew 23 earlier today where God is pronouncing upon Israel in its unbelief woe upon them, woe upon the other nations. He says in Isaiah 55:1, "Come to Me if you're thirsty. Come to the waters and drink. Come and buy wine and milk without money and without cost." God says, "Come." The last words in the New Testament, Revelation 22:16, "The Spirit says come. The bride says come. Jesus says come." That is the gift of God's grace. He invites sinners to come.

So it's not our affair to worry about the mysteries of divine election, we are simply to come. But even as you come, you understand that you feel the weight of, "Is my faith genuine? Is my faith right?" There's a sense in which this is given to you to say, "If you're weary and heavy-laden from striving to believe, then stop striving and just go to Jesus and He will give you rest." It's as you go to him saying, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief." You go to him saying, "If You are willing, You can heal me," like the leper said. And what did Jesus say in response? "I am willing. Be cleansed." He will never turn away someone who comes to him with a sincere humble desire. "I can't do it even, Lord, but I'm coming. Help me."

So the key thing is going to him, "Here to Me," that's the first imperative, and then the next imperative, if you want to have rest, this one again is so surprising, "Take My yoke upon you." That's the second imperative, the content of the invitation. First, come or go. Secondly, take this yoke upon you. You don't put a yoke on when you're about to rest. The yoke is what you put on when you're about to go to work. You yoke oxen together so that they can pull the plow or pull the wagon and Jesus is saying, "Come to Me and yoke yourself to Me and work alongside Me and in that work you will find rest for your souls." Counterintuitive but perfectly true.

The sweetest place of rest is the place of laboring for Jesus, having gone to him in all that he is, resting in his person and work. Remember what it means to rest? It means to rest in the finished work of God in creation, the finished work of God in salvation, and so you rest by trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ, his perfect life, his sinless record, tempted in every way yet without sin. A perfect record of righteousness. You rest in that. You rest not only in that but in his atoning death. He satisfies the law's positive demands and its negative demands. Its positive demands, everything the law says to do and to be, Jesus is and was and will be. Everything the law then pronounced upon sinners, Jesus has taken that away as well. He received the negative, the negative commands of the law. He was punished in our place. By his stripes we are healed. He died so that his people might live.

So you rest in his finished work. "Jesus, You've done everything necessary. I'm resting in the joy of what You are." And in doing that, "Now that I'm with You, I come to You not just to be a receiver or to be someone who is delivered from sin and I'm over here living for myself." No, true salvation is going to him, believing in him, being united to him. It's union with Christ, yoking yourself to him. "I now become Your servant, Lord Jesus, and in serving You I find true rest."

He says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me." To learn. We now make it our business to learn from him and this is the language here is of discipleship. You learn as a disciple from your teacher. He is the rabbi, you are the disciple. You want to listen to him. You want to pattern your life after the way he thinks. You want to pattern your heart and love the things he loves and hate the things he hates. You want to pattern your life after the way he lives. What does he do, I want to do. And in doing that and united with him, trusting and resting in him and then looking to him continually for the strength and grace, that is rest. That's where you find the rest. That's the invitation to rest.

So we've seen the need for rest, the invitation to rest, and third point is the inducement to rest. The inducement to rest. This is, again, to note things like this is so important. Jesus doesn't need to give any reasons for you and me to obey him. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. But you find in the Scriptures continually things like this where he says, "Come to Me. Take My yoke. Learn from Me. For..." And he gives objective reasons that you can be using inductive logic to conclude, "This is good. This is what I want to do." He offers reasons. That's amazing that the God of heaven stoops down to offer reasons for you and I to obey him. How different he is than the god of Islam, the false god of Islam. The God of the Bible, this is who we have revealed in Jesus Christ fully and completely, the only true God.

The inducement. He says, "For I am gentle and humble in heart. The reason you should take My yoke upon you, the reason you should learn from Me is because I am gentle and humble in heart." These two qualities that just don't compute. Jesus is not just the greatest man who has ever lived, he is God, and the God-man says to you and to me, "Come to Me, join yourself to Me, learn from Me because this is My heart." Gentleness and lowliness. "You can come because I am gentle and lowly of heart." This is what sets Jesus apart from every other great man. This is the thing that staggers the mind.

To be gentle, the outward quality of gentleness is rooted in an inner attitude. The word could be translated "meekness." It means in its essence, it means "to be hard to offend." It means someone that is meek has relinquished their rights to be offended. Love so overwhelms their heart that they're more interested in the other person than they are in the slights that they receive, and so it makes them gentle in response to offense. Jesus is the one who did not come to be served but to serve, to do the will of his Father, and it makes him so astonishingly approachable.

But he's not just meek, he's lowly of heart. This word means literally "near the ground." There's something about the God of glory who dwells in light inaccessible, hid from our eyes, that we cannot bear to look upon him and live. We would die if we saw his holiness yet there's something about him that is able to stoop down. In a sense, this word means there's nothing beneath him. Lowly of mind. No one is so low that you are beneath, you're so far down that Jesus is not able and willing to stoop to where you are and that's why he says come, there's no reason not to come. "I'm not easily offended." He possesses all power. Speak the word and the worlds came into existence. You know, he says, "Come." We look at ourselves and we say, "We're unworthy to come. I'm too low. I can't come." He says, "No, I am gentle and lowly of heart. Come and find rest."

No one below the reach of Jesus. There are so many ways we can feel that we are too low. You may feel that, "My knowledge is too low. I'm slow of mind. I don't have the ability to think." People can't read, much of the world throughout history has not been able to read. Maybe you have trouble reading. Maybe you have trouble computing. Maybe you have mental challenges. You are not beneath the reach of Jesus. He is a teacher who doesn't just reserve himself for the highest intellects. There's some great teachers in the past who would, you know, only, the norm is the greater the teacher, the better the quality of student, but not with Jesus. I mean, it's even there, he's a rabbi but look at his disciples. He didn't go to the University of Jerusalem to find his disciples. Fishermen. Unlearned men. He loves to take those who are low and bring them up but what this means is you have trouble learning your spiritual A, B, C's, Jesus is willing to stoop down and keep teaching you. He doesn't get angry and offended and turn away from you in disgust. No, he's there willing to keep on with you. That's his character.

You say, "My position is too low economically. People look down upon me." You may feel this in your heart. It shouldn't be this way in the church certainly at all but in the society it certainly is, but you should never feel that way with Jesus. "I have nothing to give. I feel like I have nothing to offer." It doesn't matter. Jesus was one who said, "Don't hinder the babies from coming to Me." A baby, an infant has nothing that they can give. They can provide nothing other than just being cute. He said, "Bring them to Me. Stop hindering them." The disciples are thinking, "He's got too much to do. I mean, we have the Messiah here. He has places to go, people to see, you know, obligations to meet. Keep the babies away." Jesus says, "Stop hindering them for such is the kingdom of heaven." He's meek.

You may think that your sin is so great that your purity is so low that you have become so decadent, so ungodly that the shame that encompasses your heart is so great that you cannot imagine that Jesus would stoop down to where you are. I'm telling you, he will stoop, below where you are to save you. I mean, he was a friend of sinners. This is what the Pharisees couldn't believe. They kept looking at him and the people that he was hanging around with and they kept saying, "What's wrong with Him?" Remember, think about Mary Magdalene, a woman possessed by demons, a prostitute. There was something about Jesus that made him approachable. She was able in the midst of men who gathered around to talk to Jesus, there Simon, the Pharisees invited Jesus into his heart, they're going to have a theological discussion of some kind, this incredible moment, and she is there. She's not afraid to come in there and to kneel at his feet and to weep in love for her Savior so that her tears wash his feet and she wipes them with her hair. Such and great is her affection for Jesus but so amazing is his willingness to receive her. And Simon in his heart is thinking, "Does He not know what manner of woman this is? Does He not know?" And Jesus asks him a question, he says, "Simon, someone is owed a certain amount of money, another one is owed a greater amount of money, and the man forgives both, who's going to love him more?" He says, "The one who's forgiven more." Jesus said, "Yes, that's right. When I came you didn't give Me water for My feet but this woman has not ceased to wash My feet with her tears. You did not give Me a kiss of greeting but she's not ceased kissing My feet." Jesus receives sinners. No one is too low for him. That means you and I are not too low for him. It means that the people around us in the world who are wrapped up in darkness are not too low for Jesus.

He says, "Come." Now the good thing is he doesn't leave you the way you are, though, does he? You meet Jesus truly, you don't stay the way you are but it's a process. He changes us and he keeps leading and he keeps teaching, and he's gentle, and he's lowly all the way walking with his people. He's willing. There's no heart too hard for Jesus. You say, "I'm too hardened in unbelief. I've been around things of God, I've turned away. My heart is too hard." Your heart cannot be too hard. You cannot be spiritually rebellious to such a great level that Jesus will not stoop to save you. Look at Saul of Tarsus, a man who had studied the Scriptures and knew the Bible so well that he had learned to keep God away from him like the Pharisees did. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees, zealous for the outward religion that Jesus condemned in the Pharisees that we heard earlier in Matthew 23. And yet look at the road to Damascus and there see Jesus, the meek and lowly, stopped Saul on his way and say, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And this man that was so wicked and rebellious that he was killing believers, followers of Jesus, Jesus turns him around, stoops down and changes his heart.

His gentleness, his lowliness mean that you can go to him. Spurgeon in one of his sermons on this passage makes the point, he reminds us of the prodigal son, the story of the prodigal son, the man who goes away and squanders his father's wealth, he takes his portion of the inheritance and goes and squanders it away, then he comes back home and his father receives him. Look at the heart of the father, the generosity of the father. And so often we think about Jesus and the generosity of the father but Spurgeon does an interesting twist on this. He says now imagine that Jesus, because the Bible talks about this, Jesus is our elder brother. So you as a prodigal who have taken all of the wealth of

the father and you've squandered it, you come home to the father, the father receives you and Jesus, your elder brother, is not like the elder brother in Luke 15. He says, "Father, my brother is home. Though he squandered My wealth, I will share all of My inheritance with him." He rejoices to kill the fattened calf. He rejoices to put the ring of honor and the robe of honor upon that wayward brother. The Lord Jesus Christ, meek and lowly, delights in the recovery of every lost sinner.

You think about this invitation being given after that chapter. I mean, if he were not meek, he would have been offended with John the Baptist. I mean, "John, really? You recognized Me in the womb and you're now doubting? And look at all the evidence." He gives a stern word to John. He basically says, "Look, keep believing." But then the tenderness of his heart reminds John of how great a place he has in his heart. Then he talks about the unbelief of the masses, the unbelief of Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, and then in light, in the face of all of that wicked and evil opposition, he then looks out and says, "Come to Me and be saved."

What would keep you from going to Jesus? There's no obstacle. He has made the way for every sinner to find forgiveness. He is a great Savior. Why would you not yoke yourself to one who is meek and lowly? Hard to offend. How different that is than people in this world. May we be more like him. May we go to him and love him, and in loving him and being loved by him become more and more like him, more and more meek, more and more lowly, more and more attractive to sinners. That's what God wants for us.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, how we marvel at who You are, and when we see Jesus, we see You. "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a God like this, Lord, and we are so filthy and wicked and vile, so proud and arrogant, so unkind and unloving, so unworthy of Your attention, Your concern, worthy only of Your wrath, and yet we marvel at the wideness of Your mercy, the generosity of Your heart. Lord, grant that many might enter into the love that You have for us, that those who belong to You today would enter more deeply in and rest more fully in Christ, and those who have not known You until today would repent and rest and surrender themselves to so worthy a Savior, so glorious a God. We pray this in Jesus' name and for His glory. Amen.