

Sunday, July 3rd sermon: "Comfort from Jesus -- He is Meek and Lowly of Heart!"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS, by John Pittman Hey

Matthew 11:25-30; Ephesians 1:3-12

God has chosen His people unto salvation and everlasting life!

This truth should provide great encouragement to us when we are in trouble, distressed, and suffering tribulation in this world.

The Lord Jesus provides us with words of comfort Himself. In Matthew 11, Jesus excoriates the wicked unbelievers, and the cities that would not believe on Him, even though He had worked great miracles in their midst.

In His teaching, Jesus makes it clear: God's grace is not distributed evenly. If the same miracles had been done in Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom, they would have repented and survived, Jesus notes.

But astoundingly, Jesus then gives thanksgiving to His Father, that He has hid the Gospel truth from those cities and the unbelievers, and revealed it unto babes!

The unbelievers, from which the Gospel truth was hidden, are described as the wise and the prudent, yet they could not receive or understand Jesus' miracles and Gospel preaching.

But the simple, unsophisticated, helpless, and unpretentious babes, God did choose to reveal it to them!

When we read what Jesus said, we must be careful not to miss the import of it. The wise and prudent ones were indeed confronted with the miracles and Gospel preaching. Physically, they could hear and understand these things.

And yet, God hid the truth from them, and Jesus gave thanks for that!

The wise and prudent were spiritually deaf and blind, and God didn't open their ears or their eyes so they could see and hear what Jesus did plainly before them.

They were unable to receive what Jesus said and did, but God revealed it to the babes.

The world, and sadly, many believers, think this is unfair of God.

So it is not by our ability, or intelligence, or wisdom, or good judgment that we come to trust in Jesus, but rather, according to whether the Father savingly REVEALS Gospel truth to us.

Faith to believe God is not naturally in us. That faith is given to us only as the Father determines. No amount of education or wisdom or prudence can make the difference.

To be sure, men can believe almost anything of themselves - the most foolish notions circulate freely on social media, and many abound in believing falsehood.

But faith in God's promises and Gospel is limited only to those to whom it is given by God, when He alone decides to whom to reveal these things.

But why did God proceed along these lines, when they are so totally contrary to the way we think things work?

Jesus tells us the answer: God did what He wanted, what pleased Him to do!

This is an astounding revelation: it pleased God to hide Gospel truth from the wise and prudent, and to reveal it to babes.

No wonder Paul exclaimed, that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."

Contrary to man's false view of fairness and justice, this displays God's declaration, that He decides to whom He will show mercy! He decides whom He will harden.

God picks and chooses who will believe the Gospel based upon His pleasure, not in conformity with our silly ideas about fairness and equality.

It ought to be a great comfort to God's people, that all our salvation is not of us at all, but rather of God's decision and pleasure.

It it were of us, we could fail. We **WOULD SURELY** fail!

But God cannot fail. What He pleases, He surely accomplishes.

God does what delights Him to do. This is in keeping with Paul's teaching in Ephesians 1 - God chooses us according to the good pleasure of His will.

Next, Jesus reminds His disciples that His Father has revealed to Him all these truths, and that only the Son knows the Father, and only the Son discloses the Father to His people.

The significance of this comment by Christ is this: that Christ knows from the Father how the Father hid the Gospel from the lost, and revealed it unto babes, and more significantly, that the Father did this because it seemed good to Him!

In other words, Jesus is underscoring this truth: that we can know that God operates according to His Good Pleasure to choose His people for salvation, because Jesus has proclaimed it to us.

Thus, the stage is set for the final teaching in this passage: that we must not place our trust in ourselves for our redemption, but rather only in Jesus, and only in the good pleasure of the Father toward us!

Our salvation does not rest in our obedience or the strength of our faith or knowledge. Rather, it rests in God's divine choice of His people, whom He will save.

Then comes that blessed, comforting truth: "Come unto Me, all you that labor, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest!"

Men naturally believe that their fates are upon their own shoulders, and we labor to save ourselves, to improve ourselves, to please God by our own good works.

All false religions are based upon this scheme of works righteousness. It seems so reasonable, wise, and prudent to us, that there must be some path of obedience that can set us right with Almighty God.

But the truth is, we can never achieve what we must have - perfect obedience to God's commandments.

Rather, we are always burdened by our failures, by our sins that we carry along with us.

John Bunyan used this imagery, of a poor sinner, carrying a huge burden strapped on his back, which weighed him down as he labored to travel along life's road.

But when he came to the foot of the cross where Jesus died for sinners, and trusted in His sacrifice, suddenly, the giant burden was taken away from him, and it rolled into a hole in the ground, and he never saw it again!

When we come to Christ, and trust in Him to relieve us, and to save us, He takes away those burdens - He bears them away in His Own Body on the tree! He is judged in our place, as our substitute, in the offering He made to God to satisfy the divine justice we have broken.

It is not that Jesus merely excuses our sins, but rather, He takes them up from off our backs, and discharges them by being judged in our place by God for them.

Jesus replaces our labor with His Own heavy labor, and suffering, and death in our place.

As for all our other cares and labors, when we trust in Jesus, we come to understand that our happiness and rest and peace in the end won't be what we accomplish ourselves.

Rather, our joy and rest and reward come from the promises of Jesus to us.

Our labor and heaviness are replaced by the joy of Christ, working for us and in us. We no longer labor for our own righteousness and salvation, because Christ has finished all that labor in our place.

"Done is the work that saves, once and forever done!  
Finished the righteousness, that clothes the unrighteous ones!"

Further, while we once were slaves to sin and unrighteousness, now we submit ourselves to the easy yoke of Jesus, our Redeemer Who is meek and lowly of heart!

It is only in Christ that we find rest for our souls.

Jesus is no slave driver of His people whom He loves! He is not an unreasonable master to us, because He is meek and lowly of heart!

And this is both strange and yet joyous to us! Strange because we all have experienced rulers, bosses, and politicians who are unreasonable slave drivers, who have no meekness or lowliness of heart at all. In fact, from the people in control in this world, this is the norm we have come to expect.

But it is joyous because the very One Who is meek and lowly of heart to us is the Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth! Our Lord Jesus rarely discussed this truth - it was left up to the Apostles to exult in it.

To us, Jesus is, and always will be, our Lamb of God. To all our foes, Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah!

No wonder the hymn writer said:

"No one like Him is so high and holy,  
No not one, No not one!  
And yet no Friend is so meek and lowly,  
No not one, no not one!"

There is comfort indeed for believers in tribulation, because God has chosen to reveal the Gospel to babes.

There is comfort in Christ's salvation and in submitting ourselves to His protection and rule.

As Christ's sheep, we find rest and peace when we obey the gentle commands of our Good Shepherd, and trust only in Him for our deliverance from all troubles that we face.