

Matthew 11:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Analysis

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. This tender invitation from Jesus offers relief to the weary and burdened. Jesus extends universal invitation to those exhausted by religious legalism or life burdens.

"Come" is imperative plural—urgent summons, not casual suggestion. "Unto me" specifies the destination: not to religion or ritual, but to Jesus personally. "All ye that labour" addresses those toiling to exhaustion under religious legalism or life circumstances. "Heavy laden" describes those bearing crushing loads imposed by others—religious leaders loading oppressive demands, or life overwhelming individuals.

"I will give you rest" promises divine provision. This rest isn't self-achieved but Christ-given—soul rest, spiritual refreshment, peace with God replacing anxious striving. Verses 29-30 continue: taking Christ yoke and learning from Him brings soul rest, for His yoke is easy and burden light. The paradox: finding rest requires taking a yoke, but Christ yoke liberates rather than oppresses.

Historical Context

Jesus spoke these words during His Galilean ministry amid mounting opposition. First-century Judaism labored under extensive religious requirements. Pharisaic tradition added hundreds of interpretive laws to Torah commands. Ordinary Jews

could never fulfill all demands, creating perpetual sense of failure and distance from God.

Jesus repeatedly confronted this legalistic burden: They bind heavy burdens and lay them on men shoulders (Matthew 23:4). Additionally, first-century Palestine groaned under Roman occupation, heavy taxation, economic hardship, and social oppression.

Jesus invitation would shock hearers. Religious teachers typically demanded more sacrifice, more observance, more effort. Jesus offers rest. He does not abolish God law but fulfills it (Matthew 5:17), then invites the weary to rest in His finished work rather than their futile efforts.

For the early church, this verse provided gospel clarity: salvation is gift, not achievement. We come to Christ exhausted by sin burden and religion demands, and He gives rest. Throughout church history, whenever religion became burdensome works-righteousness, this verse called people back to grace.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What are modern ways we exhaust ourselves trying to earn God favor or manage life burdens?
2. How is the rest Jesus offers different from mere physical relaxation?
3. What does it mean practically to come to Jesus rather than coming to religion or church activities?

4. How does Jesus offer of rest relate to justification by faith versus works-righteousness?
5. In what ways do we resist coming to Jesus for rest, preferring to handle burdens ourselves?

Interlinear Text

Δεῦτε	πρός	με	πάντες	οἱ	κοπιῶντες	καὶ	πεφορτισμένοι
Come	unto	me	all	G3588	ye that labour	and	are heavy laden
G1205	G4314	G3165	G3956		G2872	G2532	G5412

ἐγὼ	ἀναπαύσω	ὑμᾶς
I	rest	you
G2504	G373	G5209

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 11:29 (Parallel theme): 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.

John 7:37 (Parallel theme): In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

John 6:37 (Parallel theme): All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Galatians 5:1 (Parallel theme): Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Revelation 22:17 (Parallel theme): And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Jeremiah 6:16 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Psalms 116:7 (Parallel theme): Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

Isaiah 28:12 (Parallel theme): To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

Isaiah 66:2 (Parallel theme): For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Matthew 23:4 (Parallel theme): For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

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