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## **Come, Rest, Take, Learn and Find**

Raj Nathaniel; 26 November 2017

**Luke 10:1-9** After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. <sup>2</sup>And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. <sup>3</sup>Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup>Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. <sup>5</sup>Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' <sup>6</sup>And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. <sup>8</sup>Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. <sup>9</sup>Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

**Matthew 11:21-30** <sup>21</sup>"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup>But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>23</sup>And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup>But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus declared, "I thank 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 heavy laden, 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. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Jesus has sent out 70 of his disciples two by two into cities that he was planning on entering. So this was the advance team, or the movie trailer or the warm up act. These disciples visited several cities and performed miracles such as casting out demons and healing the sick.

Did the sick get healed? Yes. The disciples were thrilled that this project or mission was a success. We will come back to Jesus' response later.

But despite these great works the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum had REJECTED Jesus.

What was message the 70 disciples were delivering to these various cities? Found in Luke 10:9 .....“The Kingdom of God has come near to you”

Let us define the Kingdom. If I mention Queen Elizabeth II, you might think of her as the queen of the United Kingdom. In other words her domain or rule covers only the United Kingdom. She has no domain or rule here in the USA or any other country.

So when somebody told the Jews that the Kingdom of God is near, it meant that they were outside the Kingdom and secondly that God the King had no domain or rule over them. That is deeply offensive for devout Jews because they thought of themselves as being God’s chosen people. Hence they rejected the message.

So what was Jesus trying to do? Jesus’ overarching goal for humanity is found in Matthew 11:27 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.

It is Jesus the Son’s job to reveal to us who the Father is. And Jesus is laying out the route to enter God’s Kingdom. And this “route” to God’s presence goes through Him alone.

## **1. Jesus’ goal in our lives is for us to have a relationship with our heavenly Father.**

And what is the first step in this process? Matthew 11:28 <sup>28</sup>Come to me, all who labor or are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

We have to come to Jesus, accept His invitation. This is something we have to do, it is our responsibility.

There are 3 people typically involved in this situation. First is Jesus the person who issues the invitation.

Second are those who hear the invitation and they can respond or not. Third are those who are bystanders to this operation. They can either facilitate the call of Jesus or they can hinder it.

The question is what kind of person am I? Did I come to Jesus yet? Or am I putting off till tomorrow what should be done today?

Or perhaps I am helping others come to Jesus. I sure hope I am not an obstruction to those wanting to come.

In fact Jesus talks about His invitation...He is willing that none should perish. He wants everyone to hear His message.

Matthew 12:20 a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench. In other words, Jesus' sets the bar really really low...if we have a pulse, we are eligible to come. If we don't have a pulse, it's too late!

What kind of person are you? That leads us to the "Who" should come to Jesus?

## **2. Anyone can come to Jesus. Especially those who think they are weary/burdened and heavy laden.**

A have a friend from about 25 years. A few years ago, he called and said that he was having trouble in his marriage. He was desperate and needed someone to talk with and pray with. So Leena and I started praying for them. After several weeks of praying and counselling, he had this testimony....his wife one day decided to end their marriage. Now remember, these are both believers, born again Christians. She had stopped praying and communing with God. One particular day, his wife was aimlessly channel switching on the TV remote and every TV program she would stop at God would somehow speak to her. So much so that she put down the remote and got right with God and eventually her husband. The God of the universe can use stones to sing His praise.

Plenty of people are wearied and have heavy burdens to bear today and have no idea where to turn to.

Being weary or burdened can come to us in several ways.

My own foolishness can lead my life to become burdensome. The foolish choices I make can lead to costly consequences for the rest of my life.

For example, if I text and drive and cause an accident, I might never be able to regain what I lost. However, God can still use what is left of me.

The devil can also burden us. Remember Job? He was so weary with the boils and sores on his body that he wished he were dead. Thank God he was not an American in Oregon, California or Washington State...they would have granted him his euthanasia wish and we would never have the book of Job. (Job wished he were dead, the State granted it to him and charged his wife the copay).

God can also cause us to have burdens, but when He does that it is for only one purpose that is for us to return to Him in fellowship. Remember the children of Israel, every time they sinned in idolatry, God gave them over to the Philistines or some other nation, till they returned to Him. Sadly, they never learned and God had to almost destroy them using the Assyrians, Persians and Babylonians. It is said that once they came back from captivity, they never once had idols. But other things went wrong again!

Regardless of how we got our weariness and burdens, Jesus is readily available for me and you to give us rest.

**3. Jesus promises us rest.** He said it Himself "I will give you rest".. This is a conditional promise. Unless we come to Him there will be no rest.

Rest in Greek used here is different from "God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day"  
God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day has a finality to the meaning.

Whereas here in Matthew, the Greek word used for "Rest" indicates a temporary time, like a time out break, or a snack break, or a brief interruption from ongoing work. In other words, the work must go on after the rest is over.

The question is what is this rest? What does a Christian have in his/her present circumstances through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in their lives?

**Romans 14:17** For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Peace and Joy in the MIDST of our troubles.

Job's burden was from Satan. The bible records that in all of Job's misery he did not sin against God. He was a bruised reed, completely broken, yet in spite of all this he was able to praise God.

**Job 19:25-27** <sup>25</sup>For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth,<sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, <sup>27</sup>whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

What a rest with Job. Even though I am dead and gone after my body is decayed and destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. Job understood what the resurrection really means. Job understood that this body is temporary. There is coming a different body which will allow him to see God.

Paul talks about the same concept in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18<sup>17</sup>For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup>as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Our afflictions and burdens are temporary. God is eternal. His promises are eternal. He promises to give us peace and joy in the midst of our burdens here and now. Jesus gives us rest.

Let's come back to Jesus and the disciples. Remember what we are reading is Jesus' response to the sending out of the disciples. What was the disciples' response?

**Luke 10:17, 20** <sup>17</sup>The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" .....Jesus responds ..<sup>20</sup>Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

The disciples thought that the mission or project was an absolute A+ success, but actually it was a total failure.

What was Jesus most interested in? The Kingdom of God and the book of the list of its Citizens. Demons come and demons go, their influence and effect is temporary. The effects of sin on the other hand is permanent. The permanent effect of sin is exclusion from the Kingdom of God. The list that Jesus wants us to get into is filled with Repentant Sinners. It is against this background that Jesus wails about the failed mission.

Luke 10 and Matthew 11 record Jesus' first response to the mission outcome. Woe to you Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. But despite the burden of failure we are told to rejoice for our heavenly promise of eternal life.

#### **4. We rejoice that our names are written in heaven.**

And if we are not sure if our name is written in heaven, Jesus is calling out your name and mine today. Will you respond to His loving call?

**Matthew 11:28-30** 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Rest in Greek used here is used twice. "I will give you rest" is different from "you will find rest for your souls". The first rest as in "I will give you rest" is the Greek word Anapauso. We saw this earlier as the fruits of the Holy Spirit specifically PEACE and JOY for this present life. Anapauso indicates a temporary time, like a time out break, or a snack break, lunch break, or a brief interruption from ongoing work. In other words, the work must go on after this rest is over.

Anapauso is different from Genesis 2:2-3 where it is written "God rested on the 7th Day", the Hebrew word used there siboth has a finality to the meaning. It is also used to describe in Joshua 5 when manna ceased from appearing.

Between Jesus' assertion "I will give you rest" and "you will find rest for your souls" there are a few things to be seen.

There are 3 things to be done by us.

Jesus says (1) take my yoke upon you, (2) learn from me and you will (3) find rest for your soul.

The key words here are TAKE, LEARN and FIND.

Take me yoke upon you. A yoke is well defined. A yoke constrains the animal, it compels an animal and it restrains an animal. In other words an animal in a yoke is easy to control. A yoked animal is a slave to the yoke. Yet, Jesus does NOT say, I will place my yoke on you...instead He says You take my Yoke Yourself....it is a choice you and I have to make AFTER

we become Christians!! And we have to do this ourselves. In fact it is something that we need to do ourselves and on a daily basis.

So how can I take up a yoke? First, I need to unyoke myself from my existing yoke or in other words, I need to unhitch myself from that which I am hitched to. And what yoke do we all have since the day we are born?

**John 8:34** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

Jesus is referring here to the universal problem of humankind...original sin and our bondage to sin.

Paul explains this concept further in Romans.

**Romans 6:16** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Notice here that we have only 2 options, we are either slaves to sin, which leads to death or slaves to God, which leads to righteousness. There is no 3rd option of NOT being a slave! In other words if someone chooses to disobey God saying I do not want to be a slave to God ...then they are automatically self condemning themselves to be slaves to sin!

And as a result of our natural yoke, we are constrained and compelled to behave in a certain manner. Doing things in a particular way, living our lifestyles to satisfy our natural yoke. You might know someone who is living purely for the sinful nature of the flesh and its desires. And as we live day by day, year after year under the yoke of sin, sooner or later, it becomes burdensome and weary.....because at the end of it all there is no reprieve, no getting out, no profit even. That is why we see the rich, the famous, those who by the world's standards have made it big and successful, yet they choose to end their lives once they realize it is all vanity (Eccl 3). That is the yoke of sin.....which only leads to death.

But some of us do hunger for righteousness and instead of doing it God's way, we believe, righteousness can be achieved by our own works. We believe in the Goodness of human nature. We believe that DEEP inside of

us we are all GOOD!! We just need to dig deep to find it, so we do all sorts of things in order to portray righteousness.

We become like Pharisees. Having a long list of dos and don'ts for our righteousness of works. Jesus went on to describe such people in Matthew 23. Pharisees are people who make burdens for themselves and make others carry the burdens.

Under the yoke of sin our lives become burdensome and wearied and ONLY Jesus can free us from the yoke of Sin.

## **5. We come to Jesus to be free from the yoke of sin.**

When we come to Jesus for the first time, we are freed from the power of sin. We get righteousness, peace and joy in this current life with its burdens. But this is the first rest, it is temporary, the Greek word Anapauso.

There has to be a next step in order to get to the eternal rest for our soul part that Jesus promised. This next step involves a lot of work on our part.

Take my yoke upon you! It is a choice given to us. Jesus never said, I will place my Yoke upon you. This is something we have to do and we must learn to take up the yoke of Jesus daily in our following Jesus.

What does this mean and how do we do it? Nobody puts a yoke on a dead animal. Once a yoked animal dies, the power of the yoke in controlling the animal is gone.

Romans 6:11- So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup>Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup>Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.<sup>14</sup>For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. <sup>15</sup>What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were

committed,<sup>18</sup>and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup>I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

How do we take up the Yoke of Jesus Christ? By DYING to ourselves and presenting ourselves to God to be used as He pleases. Everyday. First thing in the morning and the last thing at night before we end the day. So that whether we are awake or asleep we are His.

Simple prayer: Lord, I used to be like this or used to do this. I am now yours, help me to think and act differently, like you would want me to.

So that is how we take His yoke, next ....

## **6. We must Learn the ways of Jesus.**

Take, Learn, Find.

Jesus said "Take my yoke upon you, LEARN FROM me".

So what does "Learn FROM me" mean? How do we learn best?

Anybody can tell us about their experiences with God's leading, it serves to encourage us and strengthen us..This is GOOD. But I will show you a more EXCELLENT way,....When we ourselves are led by God through the ups and downs of life, we are convinced that there is a real God, that God loves us and that God will work out ALL things for Good for those who love Him and head His call. A personal experience Trumps everything else.

So how do we get personal with God? By Spending time in His Word Everyday.

When we start spending time with Jesus in His Word, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us, willingly wanting to be under the Yoke of Jesus, He will do great things in us and through us.

What is this Yoke of Jesus? Remember our definition of yoke as something than controls us, compels us and constrains us.

Paul mentions the yoke of Jesus in 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 <sup>14</sup>For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; <sup>15</sup>and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. ...<sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Something that constrains us and compels us and controls us....it is the Love of Jesus Christ for His church and for the whole world. Got Yoke?

Taking up the yoke of Christ doesn't come naturally to us. We have to die daily, spend time in His word, communicate with Him in prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to transform our lives.

Finally, you will FIND rest for your souls. Jesus gave us rest the first time we came to Him, but as we grow deeper in relationship with Him, we begin to FIND that the rest He gives our souls is eternal. We begin to long for His coming. We long for the words of the prayer to come true: "may your Kingdom come, May your will be done on earth as it is already being done in Heaven".

When Jesus comes a second time, He will come to Rule on this earth for a short 1000 years...that is Good. But I will show you a more excellent way...we will be with Him in the NEW heaven and New earth as promised in Revelation 21 for the rest of eternity.

## **7. We will FIND our eternal Rest only in Jesus Christ.**

Joshua John Paul is a high school Math teacher from India. He has a wife and 2 small children. He wanted to go visit family in India this summer and booked tickets early spending a modest amount of money. But in order for him to come back he needed travel papers and had started the application process with the Government. Those papers never came in time and he couldn't go to visit India. In the process lost the money spent on the plane tickets as well. The family was quite discouraged. But they believed God had something in mind, they just did not know what it was. It was a broken and hopeless situation. But because he was here in the Summer, he got to teach summer school (exact amount lost on the tickets) that was good, but I will tell of a more excellent ending...He was asked to apply for Louisiana's

best Teacher of the year award from his district. There are some 49,377 school teachers in LA. Over the next couple of months, this list was narrowed down to some 140 teachers, and then to the top 9 teachers in LA and then to the Top 3 LA Teachers for High school and Joshua is one of the top 3 LA High school teachers for 2017. He testified later that if he had been able to go to India for the Summer, he would not have been able to apply and be considered for this honor and more importantly we got to see how God used a broken hopeless situation and turn it around for good to those who love Him.

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

And that is why our souls rest in Him. It is well, it is well with my Soul. I hope that is your song today as well.