

UNDER DISCIPLINE**Matthew 11:29-30**

INTRO: Just two weeks ago, this COVID-19 virus was still known as something nebulous that was hitting other countries more than us. Just a few days later things had progressed to where we cancelled worship here at ABC and gathered in this way online or the first time last Sunday. Now, we are looking at mass shutdowns of everything and we're essentially sheltering in place.

As all this was taking place I posted this on Facebook. In response to my post Dale Keefer, who essentially grew up here at ABC, responded, "Saw a tweet today saying "What a year this week has been!""

Ain't that the truth! More has been jammed into the past week or two than some decades hold. But, think about it, wouldn't it be great if we could just reboot 2020 and have a new, idyllic year with Spring breaking and flowers blooming and birds singing? Wouldn't that be nice? It would. But this is real life. Real life has stuff and stuff happens and stuff has really been happening. It's almost enough to get you worried. And being worried is justified, but panic is not, not for followers of Jesus Christ anyway.

You see, Christ Followers are under discipline. Not in the sense that expression is often meant, like a lawyer who has had his license taken for abusing his credentials, or a pastor who has been relieved of his pastorate for immoral behavior, or an army officer who has been reprimanded for behavior unbecoming an officer. What I mean is that being a Christ Follower means be disciples. And disciples mirror their teacher. When you look in a mirror, do you see Jesus? Even better, when others look at you, especially now in these crazy days, do they see Jesus? Are you under discipline? You see, one of the necessary components of holiness is discipline and that's what I want to talk about today. Let me read our text for this morning and tell you how this message has evolved from what I envisioned as I planned this series back in February.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

When I planned this series back in February, I was looking at how Luke Keefer developed it in his book, *EVERYTHING NECESSARY* and applied it to the need for every Christ Follower to practice the spiritual disciplines. In the book Luke quotes Dallas Willard in his writing on the disciplines with, *"Spiritual disciplines are...the outbreathing and inbreathing of spiritual training."* That was all true then, and it's just as true today, but, even as I apply a bit of what I was going to say, I'm not going in that direction today.

First . . .

Discipline is Committing and Submitting

- Submission and obedience are the secret of the holy life. The biggest struggle humans have is submission. Remember my quote from a couple weeks ago as we talked about Romans 12 and being living sacrifices, is that the biggest danger of being a living sacrifice is that we can crawl off the altar. But submit we must.
- Take what Jesus offers. He offers a yoke – which is an instrument of service and the picture is of a beast of burden pulling a plow or a wagon. It doesn't look easy in our minds eye, but Jesus promises in verse 30 that it is. His yoke is easy and the burden light. But you need to take it to know it. So take what Jesus offers, and
- Learn from him. He offers rest, but it's not the rest of idleness, it's the rest of actually moving us in service. You see, following Jesus is actually the easy way out. Watch Jesus, learn from him. What does a disciple do? They listen and learn. They emulate their teacher. You can always tell a student's teacher by what the student says and does. You can hear the teacher coming through in the student's words and delivery. That's what Christ Followers do. They step up for service and you can see Jesus shining through. As Willard's words point out, they breathe in and breathe out what the master has spoken into them.
- That's what world needs today more than ever – they need Christ Followers. They need Christ Followers to bring the rest of Jesus Christ to calm their weary and frightened souls. So let's apply that discipline and show

. . .

We Must Never Doubt in the Dark What God Told You in the Light

- Timothy was a young man with great gifts and Paul reminded him to not allow people to push him into their mold because he was young. But Timothy must have been a bit intimidated by others who were older or surer of themselves. The problem is, if you're wrong, it doesn't matter what your age is or how confident you are. And if you have the truth, that's enough so don't be timid just because you are young or in the minority or

swimming against the current. That is why Paul tells his young colleague, *for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.* 2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV).

- That ABC, is what we need to remember for these days we are in, **GOD DID NOT GIVE US A SPIRIT OF FEAR!** We need to mirror that to a panic stricken world. And that means we must not succumb to that panic. And for that reason, I miss would miss the boat if we only concentrate on Matthew 11:28-30 this morning. Context is everything and what Jesus said before our text is crucial. The first part of Matthew 11 is an interchange between Jesus and John the Baptist where John is verifying Jesus's credentials through his disciples and Jesus affirms the Baptist's ground clearing work preparing for his ministry. And then Jesus has some harsh pronouncements for the unrepentant population of a some towns. Then in verse 25 he breaks out in a doxology for his heavenly Father and then in verse 27 he says this, "*All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*" Matthew 11:27.
- This is the truth we have seen in the light so we don't have to fear in dark of a pandemic. And this is why I cannot discuss how we can find rest for our weary and burdened souls, unless we affirm the truth that . . .

Even when we do not know what the future holds, we DO know who holds the future.

- The Father has committed all things to the Son and we are his disciples. We are the one to whom he has revealed all things. That means we can rest in him and not be afraid of an uncertain future. Yes he is gentle and lowly in heart, but he is also the Lion of Judah who is our strength in uncertain times. He's the one who can sleep in the midst of a stormy sea because he has the power to calm the sea. All things have been committed to him He's got his COVID-19 crisis people. We can rest in that.
- Listen to what G. Campbell Morgan says as he unpacks this:
"This is no mere lullaby; it was no mere expression of sentimental pity when Jesus said, "Come unto Me." Reverently changing the actual wording it is as though He had said: Come unto Me and I will reveal the Father unto you; trust Me, and find God; accept My law of life, by accepting Me, and so find rest; for My yoke, the yoke I wear, is easy; and My burden, the burden I bear is light. Come to Me, be identified with Me, let Me become the window through which the light flashes, the door through which you pass to God. The trouble with men is that they do not know the Father, and seeing that they do not know the Father, they are hot, restless, and feverish, and in agony. To all such he said, Come unto Me, I know the Father; I will bring you to Him, and when you find the Father, you will find rest."
- Does that not speak volumes to our hot, restless, and feverish age? Morgan goes on to say, "*It was His (Jesus's) call to the unreasonable and unsatisfied age, to come to Him and be satisfied, by faith, and wait for the dawning light for full explanation.*" In other words, "*Jesus is the answer for the world today, above him there's no other Jesus is the way.*"
- We the answer for our frightened world ABC. We are under discipline and that means we need to live that out day to day.

Conclusion: So let me wrap this up with a simple way to do that for a hot, restless, and feverish, and in agony age. I'm going to do it by quoting our text for this morning from the paraphrase of the Bible called the Message. "*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.*" Matthew 11:28-30.

This world needs a real rest and they will only find it by learning the unforced rhythms of God's amazing grace. Keep company with Jesus, and invite others along. We can say to them those words from G. Campbell Morgan, *I know the Father; I will bring you to Him, and when you find the Father, you will find rest.*" Come to Jesus and you will find rest. Amen.