

Sermon: “I Will Give You Rest”

There are some sentences in Scripture that feel as though they **breathe for us** when **we cannot breathe for ourselves**.

Words that meet us **not at our strongest**, but at our most threadbare. Jesus’ invitation in Matthew 11 is one of those sentences:

“Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

He does not say, “Come to me when you are sorted.”

He does not say, “Come to me once you’ve put your burdens down.”

He does not say, “Come to me if you are strong enough, faithful enough, holy enough.”

He simply says: **Come**.

And he says it to the weary.

1. The honesty of being human

We live in a world that prizes competence, resilience, and self-sufficiency. We are taught to carry on, keep going, hold it together. But Jesus speaks into the truth we often hide: that life is heavy.

Some burdens are obvious:

- grief that sits like a stone on the chest
- anxiety that wakes us in the night
- exhaustion from caring for others
- the relentless pace of work or family life

Some burdens are quieter:

- the fear of not being enough
- the guilt we carry from years ago
- the loneliness that no one sees
- the sense that we are living on the surface of our own lives

Jesus sees all of it. And he names it. **“All who are weary and heavy laden.”** He knows exactly who he is talking to.

Which means he is talking to us.

2. The invitation is not to try harder, but to come closer

When we are overwhelmed, our instinct is often to fix ourselves.

To push through.

To tidy up the mess inside before we dare approach God.

But Jesus does not ask us to carry our burdens better.

He asks us to bring them to him.

This is the radical **gentleness** of Christ:

He does not demand improvement before welcome.

He offers welcome as the beginning of healing.

“Come to me,” he says — not to a doctrine, not to a system, not to a set of rules, but to **him**.

To his presence.

To his heart.

To **his rest**.

3. What kind of rest does Jesus give?

This is not the rest of a quiet afternoon or a good night's sleep — though those are gifts too. The rest Jesus offers is deeper.

It is rest for the soul.

It is the rest of being fully known and fully loved.

The rest of not having to pretend.

The rest of laying down the burden of self-justification. The rest of discovering that God is not waiting to scold us, but to hold us.

It is the rest of **grace**.

Jesus says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." A yoke is something that joins two animals together so they can pull in the same direction. Jesus is saying: **"Let me carry the weight with you.**

Let me set the pace. Let me be the strength you do not have."

This is not rest that removes us from life. But it is rest that steadies us within it.

4. Rest as relationship

At the heart of this invitation is relationship. Jesus does not offer a technique for rest. He offers himself.

Rest, in the Christian life, is not the absence of struggle.

It is the presence of Christ. Right there with you in the thick of it.

It is knowing that the One who calls us is gentle and humble in heart. It is trusting that the One who sees our burdens also carries them. It is believing that the One who invites us to come will never turn us away.

5. A word for today

Many of us arrive in church carrying more than we admit. We carry the week we've just lived. We carry the people we worry about. We carry the things we cannot fix. We carry the weight of being human.

And Jesus meets us here — not with demands, but with **rest**.

Not with judgment, but with mercy. Not with pressure, but with peace.

His invitation still stands: **Come to me.**

Not later. Not when you feel worthy. Now.

6. The promise

And the promise is simple, beautiful, and utterly reliable:

"I will give you rest."

Not "might." Not "if you earn it." Not "if you get everything right."

I will.

This is the promise of the One who holds all things in his hands. The One who knows the weight you carry. The One who carries you & me.

So today, hear this not as a verse from long ago, but as Christ's living word to us:

Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Come with your burdens. Come with your questions. Come with your grief. Come with your hopes. Come with your whole, **unedited** self.

And find, in him, the rest your soul has been longing for. **Amen.**