

Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

11:25-30

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

There are few passages in the four Gospels more important than this. There are few which contain in so short a compass so many precious truths. May God give us an eye to see, and a heart to feel their value! Let us learn in the first place, the excellence of a childlike and teachable frame of mind. Our Lord says to his Father, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." It is not for us to attempt to explain why some receive and believe the Gospel, while others do not. The sovereignty of God in this matter is a deep mystery: we cannot fathom it. But one thing, at all events, stands out in Scripture as a great practical truth to be had in everlasting remembrance: those from whom the Gospel is hidden are generally the wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight; those to whom the Gospel is revealed are generally humble, simple-minded, and willing to learn. The words of the Virgin Mary are continually being fulfilled: "He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away." (i) Luke 1:53). Let us watch against pride in every shape, pride of intellect, pride of wealth, pride in our own goodness, pride in our own deserts. Nothing is so likely to keep a man out of heaven, and prevent him seeing Christ, as pride. So long as we think we are something we shall never be saved. Let us pray for and cultivate humility; let us seek to know ourselves aright, and to find out our place in the sight of a holy God. The beginning of the way to heaven is to feel that we are in the way to hell, and to be willing to be taught of the Spirit. One of the first steps in saving Christianity is to be able to say with Saul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (see Acts 9:6). There is hardly a sentence of our Lord's so frequently repeated as this: "He that humbleth himself will be exalted." (i) Luke 18:14). Let us learn in the second place, from these verses, the greatness and majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ. The language of our Lord on this subject is deep and wonderful. He says, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son save the Father, neither any man the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." We may truly say, as we read these words, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high I cannot attain to it." (i) Psalm 139:6). We see something of the perfect union which exists between the first and second Persons of the Trinity; we see something of the immeasurable superiority of the Lord Jesus to all who are nothing more than men. But still when we have said all this, we must confess that there are heights and depths in this verse which are beyond our feeble comprehension. We can only admire them in the spirit of little children, but the half of them, we must feel, remains untold. Let us, however, draw from these words the great practical truth that all power over everything that concerns our soul's interests is placed in our Lord Jesus Christ's hands. "All things are delivered unto" him. He bears the keys: to him we must go for admission into heaven. He is the door: through him we

must enter. He is the Shepherd: we must hear his voice and follow him if we would not perish in the wilderness. He is the Physician: we must apply to him if we would be healed of the plague of sin. He is the bread of life: we must feed on him if we would have our souls satisfied. He is the light: we must walk after him if we would wander in darkness. He is the fountain: we must wash in his blood if we would be cleansed and made ready for the great day of account. Blessed and glorious are these truths! If we have Christ, we have all things (i» 1 Corinthians 3:22). Let us learn in the last place, from this passage the breadth and fullness of the invitations of Christ's Gospel. The three last verses of the chapter, which contain this lesson, are indeed precious. They meet the trembling sinner who asks, "Will Christ reveal his Father's love to such an one as me?" with the most gracious encouragement. They are verses which deserve to be read with special attention. For 1800 years they have been a blessing to the world, and have done good to myriads of souls. There is not a sentence in them which does not contain a mine of thought. We should mark who they that Jesus invites. He does not address those who feel themselves righteous and worthy. He addresses all that labour and are heavy laden. It is a wide description; it comprises multitudes in this weary world. All who feel a load on their heart of which they would fain get free, a load of sin or a load of sorrow, a load of anxiety or a load of remorse, all, whosoever they may be and whatsoever their past lives, all such are invited to come to Christ. We should mark what a gracious offer Jesus makes: "I will give you rest. Ye shall find rest to your souls." How cheering and comforting are these words! Unrest is one great characteristic of the world: hurry, vexation, failure, disappointment stare us in the face on every side. But here is hope: there is an ark of refuge for the weary, as truly as there was for Noah's dove. There is rest in Christ, rest of conscience, and rest of heart, rest built on pardon of all sin, rest flowing from peace with God. We should mark what a simple request Jesus makes to the labouring and heavy laden ones. "Come unto me. Take my yoke upon you learn of me." He interposes no hard conditions; he speaks nothing of work to be done first, and deservingness of his gifts to be established: he only asks us to come to him just as we are, with all our sins, and to submit ourselves like little children to his teaching. "Go not," he seems to say to man for relief. Wait not for help to arise from any other quarter. Just as you are, this very day, come to me. We should mark what an encouraging account Jesus gives of himself. He says, "I am meek and lowly of heart." How true that is. The experience of all the saints of God has often proved. Mary and Martha at Bethany, Peter after his fall, the disciples after the resurrection, Thomas after his cold unbelief, all tasted the meekness and gentleness of Christ. It is the only place in Scripture where the heart of Christ is actually named. It is a saying never to be forgotten. We should mark lastly, the encouraging account that Jesus gives of his service. He says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." No doubt there is a cross to be carried, if we follow Christ; no doubt there are trials to be endured, and battles to be fought; but the comforts of the Gospel far outweigh the cross. Compared to the service of the world and sin, compared to the yoke of Jewish ceremonies and the bondage of human superstition, Christ's service is in the highest sense easy and light. His yoke is no more a burden than the feathers are to a bird; his commandments are not grievous; his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace (1 John 5:3 i» Proverbs 3:17). And now comes the solemn inquiry, "Have we accepted this invitation for ourselves? Have we no sins to be forgiven, no griefs to be removed, no wounds of conscience to be healed?" Let us hear Christ's voice: he speaks to us as well as to the Jews. He says, "Come unto me." Here is the key to true happiness; here is the secret of having a light heart. All turns and hinges on an acceptance of this offer of Christ. May we never be satisfied till we know and feel that we have come to Christ by faith for rest, and do still come to him for fresh supplies of grace every day! If we have come to him already, let us learn to cleave to him more closely. If we have never come to him yet, let us begin to come today. His word shall

never be broken: «œï» ¿ him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.ï» ¿ «■ (ï» ¿ John 6:37).

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