

# The Way to Find Rest in Your Soul

by Zac Poonen

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*Jesus invites us to come to Him and find rest, a permanent state that is a gift from God, and is available to those who acknowledge their iniquity and come to Him with honesty and sincerity.*

**Duration:** 56:35

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:17

**Topics:** "Finding Rest", "New Covenant"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding rest for our souls by coming to Jesus, learning humility before God, and practicing gentleness towards others. It highlights the need to acknowledge our weariness and burdens, seek rest in God's will, and avoid being anxious about the future. The speaker encourages a shift from legalism to grace, illustrating the difference between the Old Covenant's burden of law-keeping and the New Covenant's invitation to find rest in Christ's yoke, which is easy and burden light.

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## Transcript

I want to turn to a very familiar passage of scripture this evening and that is in Matthew chapter 11. I don't know if all of us have plumbed the depths of these verses. These are the words of Jesus in Matthew 11 verse 28 to 30.

Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden 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.

Now there's a very simple test that we can use to find out something about ourselves. Each of us should ask ourselves, is my inner being, my soul, my heart, at rest all the time? At rest means free from tension, anxiety, fear, any sort of turbulence, agitation. And if the answer is no, we got to be honest with ourselves.

The next thing we need to ask ourselves is, do you believe it is God's will that you should be at rest? Or is that impossible in the world in which we live? There could be, you know, our mind could be preoccupied, rather occupied with many, many things. You know, work and sometimes we come away from work and we have to still think about certain things. We have to think about, if you got a family, we got to think about our children and their future, their education, so many things.

That's okay, our mind being occupied and planning for the future. The Bible doesn't forbid any of that. Jesus never said, don't plan for the future or don't plan for tomorrow.

What he said was, don't be anxious about tomorrow. There's a lot of difference between the two. If Jesus had said, don't plan for tomorrow, he would have been very unrealistic.

Jesus is not unrealistic. There's nothing in the Bible which is unrealistic. You'll never find a single statement that Jesus made that cannot be practiced.

We must start with that faith. We must believe that he never told us to do what was impossible. And I would say, seeing the condition of the world as it is right now, and having seen the way things have developed on earth, especially in the last few years, I believe that we need to know the reality of these verses, perhaps more than any other generation.

And not only in terms of what's happening in the world, but also those who are striving to please God, striving to keep God's commandments, and who are pursuing it in the wrong way, so that they end up heavy laden, discouraged, condemning themselves, saying it's hopeless, I can't make it. They need to know the reality in these verses too. For many years, I used to think these verses applied to unbelievers.

My younger days, I remember I preached on this verse to unbelievers out in the streets. Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, I'll give you rest. Jesus invites you to come.

But as I've gone through the years and watched the way things are among believers, I see this verse is more needed by believers. Because I see lots and lots of Christians, weary, heavy laden, joy, like there's a verse in the Old Testament which says, joy has withered away. That's the condition of many a believer.

It's not God's will. So there's something here that we have missed, and it's not something we have to attain to. Notice what the Lord says, I will give you rest.

It's a gift. And it's something He alone can give us. I can't struggle and come there.

You can listen to a sermon and get all stirred up and excited and have faith for something and be at rest for about a week. And that's not the rest that Jesus is talking about. He's talking about something more permanent.

Many sermons are like pep talks that preachers give to discouraged people, which sort of last for a short while. You know, like a coach will give a pep talk to someone going to play a soccer game or cricket or something like that to sort of stir them up. And then it lasts the period of the game, and then it's over.

So, many, many Christians, their experience of the Christian life is like that. They come to a meeting, and they get all stirred up, and after some time the effect of it wears off. The word never sinks into their spirit.

It goes through the body, ears or eyes, into the soul, and they understand it. Maybe they're excited about it, but it never sinks to the level of the spirit, and therefore it evaporates after some time. See, that was the difference between the wise man and the foolish man.

The foolish man, Jesus said, heard my word and didn't go deep enough to the rock that is the spirit. Just came to the level of his soul, that is his mind and his intelligence and his understanding, and left it there and built on that. It was sad.

But the wise man went deeper. He understood it, but he said, that's not enough. I wanted to go deeper into my spirit.

I want to let the word of God sink into my innermost being. He built on the rock, and then the wind, the storms, the flood couldn't shake that house. That's the picture of rest.

Here is a house with the floods and the wind and the storm. It's unmoved. That's rest.

The foolish man's house began to shake. Circumstances, situations, people. That's unrest.

Because the word of God didn't sink deep enough. He who hears my word, Jesus said, and does them, really seeks to obey what the word says. He has to be like a house built on the rock, which cannot be shaken, means it's at rest.

So if we are being shaken, it would indicate, however much we may think we are obeying God's word, we are not actually. Because if we were obeying God's word, like Jesus said, house wouldn't shake. And I believe that we have to be thankful for the people and the circumstances that make us shake.

Because that's like a revelation to us that, hey, you haven't let the word go deep enough. Isn't that good to discover that? Sure. I want to discover everything about myself on this earth before I meet my Lord.

I don't want to discover something there when it's too late and I can't do anything about it. I want to discover everything about myself here on earth. And if somebody comes my way and shakes me.

Oh, thank you. Maybe my enemy. But he shook me.

I say, boy, how thankful I have got to be for that fellow for showing me my true condition. I thought I was like a solid rock and I discovered I was not. And who showed it to me? Not my friends, not the preacher, but some enemy.

So the circumstances and situations and people that come our way that shake us and show us that these verses are not true in our life. We have to be very thankful for circumstances. If financial difficulties shake you, sickness shakes you or anything shakes you, be thankful for those circumstances.

Because we're not supposed to be shaken. You know that lovely verse in Job 23 verse 10 in the Living Bible. Some of you got it in your homes.

We made some little plaques of it some years ago. He knows every detail of what is happening to me. It's the Living Bible translation of that verse.

Job 23 10. He knows every detail of what is happening to me. I've got that verse in my front room.

I need it. It encourages me to be at rest. I have a couple of other verses too that help me to be at rest, which I have in my front room.

If you fear God, you need fear nothing else. I think I've had that verse in my front room for 30 years. I need it.

I don't know about you. I want to be at rest. And it's a great encouragement to me.

Scripture is a tremendous encouragement to me. He knows every detail of what's happening to me right now. He knows the pressures I'm facing.

He knows the pressures I'll face next week. Which I still don't know, thankfully. But He knows and He's made some provision for it.

And how can I come and be at rest? I've got to come to Him. Jesus says, come to Me. Not come to a meeting.

What you get in a meeting will only be for a short while, like a pep talk. But if you come to Jesus Himself, He says, come to Me. And like you've often heard me say, the greatest requirement to come to Jesus is honesty.

I was reading this morning, Jeremiah 3 verse 13 again. Only acknowledge your iniquity. Come.

Is that difficult? He doesn't even say, give up your iniquity. I may not have the strength to give up yet. But only acknowledge your iniquity.

What's difficult about that? For example, if you're angry, you may not be able to get victory over it for 10 years. Never mind. Acknowledge it.

Don't excuse it. Don't put the blame on somebody else. Certainly not on your wife or your husband.

Acknowledge it. Like David said in Psalm 51, Lord, I'm the only one to blame. I'm the only one.

I commit adultery and I'm the only one to blame. I can't blame that woman for tempting me. No, no, no.

It's me. It's 100% me. That's confession.

Psalm 51 is a great psalm. In the same way here. Who can come to Him? You know, there are many people who think anybody can come to Jesus.

No, it's not true. All who are weary and heavy laden. Those who acknowledge, Lord, I'm weary.

I'm burdened. I'm burdened. And I always feel I'm not good enough.

I always feel condemned. I always feel heavy in my spirit. And the circumstances add to it.

I'm heavy laden, Lord. And yet you said, Lord, my yoke, verse 30, your yoke is easy. And your burden is light.

It's light. Like a shirt. It's not a burden to wear a shirt.

It's light. It's not like a big, heavy metal box on my head weighing a ton. It's a light burden.

Do you find the Christian life like that? Do you find the commandments of God a light burden? Light, like a shirt. Glad to wear a shirt. You know the Apostle John after 65 years of walking with God he said, he said, I would like to give a testimony, he said.

In 1 John chapter 5. Now remember, this is not some young upstart standing up here. Some 20 year old who was converted last week getting up and giving a testimony. It's good to hear people give a testimony when they've been converted for one week.

But we don't give much weight to that. We say, this guy hasn't had experience of life. Though we appreciate his zeal, give him time.

But here's a man who's 95 years old who's walked with God for 65 years saying something in 1 John 5. And do you know what he says in verse 3? This is the love, this is how we prove that we love God. We keep His commandments and His commandments are not a burden. Now remember, this is a 95 year old man with white hair and white beard saying, hey fellas, I want to tell you after 65 years of walking with God, His commandments are not a burden.

What Jesus said to me 65 years ago is absolutely bang on. His yoke is easy. His burden is light.

If you haven't found it like that, brother, sister, you have missed something. I missed it for many years after I was born again. I'll tell you honestly.

I found the yoke heavy. And you know what happens when a preacher finds the yoke heavy? It's a dangerous thing. Because he puts it on others as well.

And I did that too. I'm sorry to say. I apologize to all the people that I did that to in my younger days.

Put heavy burdens on people. Because I found the yoke heavy myself. It was legalism.

It's not only the devil who puts burdens on our hearts. It's the spirit of legalism. The spirit that is nitpicking, you know, little, little things.

The Pharisees were nitpickers. They picked on little, little things. They're always finding fault with Jesus and disciples for little, little things.

We got some brothers and sisters in our midst like that. How do I know? Because I hear sometimes from some newcomers who come. That somebody came to them and asked them some little thing.

Silly little thing. Or somebody goes to someone and asks. I mean, they're not asking people, do you love God, brother? Do you love God with all your heart? Do you love your neighbor as yourself? Those are good questions to ask.

No, no, no, no, no. Some small, trivial, little, usually something that Jesus never spoke about. Ask yourself whether you're like that.

The reason I say that is you may not be a preacher. But when you look at people and you find yourself finding fault with them for some little thing they haven't done or they are doing, which is different from the way you understand it should be done. That's a pretty good proof of the fact that you yourself are heavy laden and weary.

That's why it's good to find out. Because I know in my own life when the burden lifted from my life, I found I stopped being nitpicking about other people. No.

I began to be more interested in this serious things of Christian life. The most important things. The central things.

So these are ways by which we can find out whether we find, for example, Jesus said his yoke is easy and his burden is light. And here's John testifying that he found after 65 years is absolutely right. We should be

finding that.

We should be testifying that at the end of our life I found his yoke easy. His burden is light. I can say that.

I certainly can. Maybe tiring and inconvenient to serve the Lord, but the yoke is easy. The burden is light.

There's no doubt about it. It's exciting. Proverbs 14 verse 14 in the Living Bible says the godly man's life is exciting.

It's really true. The yoke is easy. The burden is light.

Now Jesus was speaking to a group of people who had spent years trying to keep the laws. They never knew how to keep them. And he was inviting them to come to him to come into a life of rest.

Where they would be able to keep those commandments. See that's the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. There are many ways we can describe the difference.

One way is this. That in the Old Covenant they tried to keep the commandments and they couldn't. In the New Covenant God says come to me and I'll help you keep those commandments.

That's the difference. Essentially, in a nutshell, that's the difference between what Moses taught and what Jesus taught. Moses said you got to do this, you got to do this, you got to do this, if you don't do it you die.

They died. Because they couldn't do it. Jesus said hey you fellas I know you're weary and heavy laden.

You can't do it. Come to me. I'll give you rest.

I'll bring you into a life of rest. And the way to get that rest he says is take my yoke upon you and learn from me. Because I'm gentle and humble in heart and then you will find that rest for your soul.

Verse 29. So there's something I have to do when I come to him. I have to first of all as I said acknowledge that I'm weary and heavy laden.

That I'm sick and tired of myself. I like to read this verse like this. Paraphrase it like this.

Jesus is saying come to me those of you who are sick and tired of your defeated life. Come to me those of you who are sick and tired of struggling to live the Christian life and failing and failing and failing. Do you qualify? Jesus says come.

I've told this story before many years ago when I was in Kerala at a conference. There was a man from a Pentecostal church who came to me and said brother Zach I've been in Pentecostal churches for some years. I'm also sick and tired of these Pentecostal churches and I'd like to join your church.

I said please don't. Because if you are sick and tired of them. After spending a few months with us you'll get sick and tired of us.

Because we're not perfect. We're imperfect ourselves. We're struggling towards perfection.

Like it says here in the front of this pulpit. Let's press on to perfection. We haven't got there.

We're struggling and we've got some hypocrites in our midst also by the way. So you'll be surprised and disappointed. Expecting all perfection and coming here and discovering it's not like that.

I said actually we are a bunch of people who are fed up with ourselves. Not fed up with the Pentecostal church or fed up with some other church. No.

Or anybody else. We're not a bunch of people fed up of our wives or fed up of our husbands. We are fed up with ourselves.

And I said if you're like that, welcome to the club. But if you're sick and tired of somebody else, brother, you better find some other church. We're not the ones for you.

Because Jesus invites such people. Come to me those of you who are sick and tired of yourselves. You know when we are burdened because we want to get victory.

I remember the days and weeks and months when I was struggling, struggling for victory and I would cry out to God at night and repent and repent and repent and repent. I was just sick and tired of my defeated life. What could I do? I could come to Jesus and say Lord, help me.

I just don't seem to be able to get this victory. I don't understand it. I want it desperately at any cost.

Are you like that? He invites you to come to Him. Everyone can come to Him who feels like that. Who wants it desperately, not half-heartedly.

You know why the Lord kept Israel under the law for 1500 years. That's a long time, isn't it? I mean, one would have thought people would have learned that lesson in 10 years. That you can't keep the law.

1500 years. Try to keep the law. Try to keep the law.

Next generation. Try and keep it. Next generation.

Try and keep it. 40 generations. You learned it? No.

Still haven't learned it. The Pharisees of Jesus' time still haven't learned it. Even though 40 generations before them tried and couldn't keep it.

You see, I will make it. And they couldn't make it. You know how the Apostle Peter described the law.

I'd like to show you that. He had tried to keep it for 30 years. And he says in Acts of the Apostles in chapter 15.

You know, they had a big discussion there about some of the Jewish people who had become Christians. They got half converted. Half converted means they got half the law and half grace.

Now, there's no such thing as a half conversion. You're either fully converted or you're not converted at all. You know, like Jesus says, either be hot or cold.

But these lukewarm people, they are the biggest problem in the church. They are neither here nor there. And there were a lot of people like that in those early days.

It says in Acts 15 that some of them said in the last part of verse 7, verse 5. You must keep the law of Moses. Very important. You've got to circumcise people and all these non- Gentile converts.

So the apostles and leaders called a special meeting, verse 6, to consider the matter. The arguments went on back and forth. And then Peter took the floor, verse 7. And he said, friends, you know very well how God made it quite plain that he wanted all these Gentiles to hear the message of the good news and so on.

It came through me. And verse 9, last part, he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now, look how he describes the law.

Now therefore, why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of these disciples a yoke, that's the law, which neither our fathers for 40 generations nor we have been able to bear. That's how he described the law. We've just not been able to bear it.

Didn't you try it, brothers, for 30 years, most of you? Our fathers tried it, their fathers tried it, none of us could make it. Why do you want to go and put all this on other people now? Forget it. We are saved through grace, verse 11.

Through the grace of the Lord Jesus. So Peter, who had plenty of more experience in the law than you and I, says it was a tremendous burden that he just couldn't bear. So what did he do? He came to Jesus.

Because he was weary and heavy laden. And he found rest. He learned from Jesus, instead of that yoke of the law, you know what a yoke is, a yoke is kept upon two bullocks so that they plow a straight furrow.

And being yoked to the law means it's so demanding. The law is very demanding. It's like a husband who never asks you to do anything wrong, but doesn't lift one finger to help you in all the things you're supposed to do in your home as a wife.

Would you like to be married to a husband like that? Never ask you to do anything wrong. He'll never ill-treat you, but his demands are perfect. Breakfast must be 8 o'clock.

Not 8-0-1, 8 o'clock. Shoes must be kept in their proper place. Clothes must be folded up.

Beds must be made. House must be cleaned. No, nothing wrong.

He doesn't ask you to watch pornography or do any such thing. No, no, no. Everything is righteous.

And you're running around the whole day trying to keep the house straight and do this and that and the other. And you say, boy, this husband looks healthy. The law is healthy.

No blood pressure, no diabetes. Doesn't look as if he'll die. What a terrible thing.

I'm doomed to live with this husband all my life. He doesn't ask a single thing wrong. So I can't criticize him also because he never asked me to do anything wrong.

And then you find this other young, this wonderful young man there who is so perfect and so helpful and say, I wish I had not married this guy. I wish I had married that guy over there. I can't do anything about it.

And this husband of mine won't even die. That was our condition under the law. Married.

Yoked. The yoke is a picture of marriage. Yoked together.

And the Bible says that God did a wonderful thing. And we need to understand this. I'll tell you what he did and then I'll show you the verse.

This woman who was married to this husband called the law who would never die. The Bible says husband and wife are yoked as long as they are alive. In marriage they say, until death do us part.

So God did a wonderful thing. He killed the wife. Wasn't that a good way to escape from that marriage? That's the meaning of being crucified with Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ. But then if you're dead, what's the use? I wanted to marry this other fellow. Jesus Christ.

God did another thing. He raised us up from the dead. The old marriage is broken.

The law can't come and say, hey, hey, I was married to you. Yeah, yeah, yeah, but I died. Don't forget.

I died to you, Mr. Law. I was your wife once upon a time, but no longer. God delivered me through crucifying me with Christ and raised me up.

I said, now you can marry Jesus Christ. And think of the stupid Christians who go and marry the law again. After all this.

There are thousands like that. Thousands like that. Christ died 2,000 years ago.

He crucified us with Him. And He tells us, you're free. You're raised up with Me.

You're married to Me. But people still go and marry the law. Burdened.

Self-condemnation. Discouragement. Putting burdens on others.

I was like that. I'm not throwing stones at anybody. I'm just giving a testimony.

But I got free. I took my position with Christ one day. I finished.

I'm not under the law anymore. I was married to Him, but no longer. And He can't try and pull me back anymore.

I hope all of you will come to that place where you're totally free. I tell you, my brothers, you know, one mark of people who are under the law is they are so demanding. That's how the law is.

Demanding. Demanding. Do you husbands make demands on your wives? You're under the law.

Do you wives make demands on your husbands? You're under the law. You went and married that person all over again. Proof? You make demands.

Do you make demands on the brothers and sisters? That's the law. You must be like this, and you must be like that. They're not like that.

They're not like me. Who said they should be like you? They are to be themselves. I praise God for the liberty this has brought into my life.

I wish all of you could enjoy it. It makes the Christian life so exciting. You can really say his yoke is easy.

He burdens his life. It gives us strength to overcome sin. Because when you're free from the law, you overcome sin.

Sin shall not have dominion over you when you're not under law. Romans 6, 14. Sin will have dominion over you when you're under the law.

Have you noticed, brother, sister, you who are so demanding on others, have you noticed that you don't get victory over sin in your life also? The two go together. Sin shall have dominion over you because you're under the law. And you put other people under the law.

You put your wife under the law. You put your husband under the law. You put the brothers and sisters under various laws and rules that you have made.

Sin will have dominion over you. How long? As long as you remain under the law. As long as you make demands on others.

As long as you make demands on your husband, your wife and the brothers and sisters. Sin will have dominion over you because you're under law. But Paul says in the context of the law, he says in Galatians 2, 20.

Take time to read Galatians 2. The context in which he says I'm crucified with Christ is the law. I die. I'm under grace now.

So Jesus says, take my yoke and learn from me. For I am humble and gentle and humble in heart. And I think humility has got to do with our relationship with God.

Not with man. Please remember. That's one of the mistakes worldly people make because they think humility has got to do with man.

You know, so and so was a very humble brother because he hangs his head down and talks so softly. Some of these people speak softly. They're pretty hard nuts inside, I'll tell you that.

I've discovered it through the years. No, humility is not before men. The Bible says, it doesn't say humble yourself before men anywhere in the scriptures.

It says humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. In 1 Peter chapter 5. Humility is before God. The other thing Jesus said, yeah, gentleness.

That is with man. We don't have to be gentle with God. We have to be gentle with our wives and our husbands and our children and with everybody else we relate to.

So when Jesus said, learn these two things from me. It's in relation to God and man. Learn from me how to humble yourself before God.

And learn from me how to be gentle. Especially with sinners. Jesus certainly wasn't gentle with those who put others under the law.

No. He called them a generation of vipers. Why? Because they were making demands on everybody else.

And if you're one of those people making demands on your husband, demands on your wife, demands on the other brothers and sisters in the church, expecting them to be like this and expecting them to be like

that. My brother, sister, permit me to say this, but Jesus calls you a generation of vipers. That's what you are.

I mean, I didn't say that. Jesus said it. Don't look at me in that funny way.

I didn't say that. Jesus said it. Why? Because he said, you fellas make you put burdens on other people.

He said in Matthew 23, but think of the sinners who came to him. Did you ever find him anything but gentle? You ever find him hard towards someone who was a failure in life? Never. He wasn't like that then.

He's not like that today. He's hard towards the proud and the arrogant and those who make demands on others and make life miserable for others and criticize and judge others and who think that they are so righteous and despise others and the racists who think that their race is superior to other races or their cost is higher than some other cost. Oh, Jesus is hard on them and they deserve for Jesus to be hard on them.

I want to be hard on them too because I want to be like Jesus. But I want to be gentle towards those who are failures. I want to be gentle towards murderers and criminals and prostitutes and drug addicts and people who are got into the grip of the devil who don't have time to criticize anybody else because they have so many problems themselves.

Oh, Jesus is very gentle with them. If you are in that category, I tell you, Jesus will be very gentle with you. He says, learn from me for I'm gentle.

He's very gentle. He says he will not blow out that smoking flax. You know, something the fire is almost died out, just a little bit of thing left.

He blows it up to a flame that bruised reed. He won't break it. He'll try and fix it.

That's how he is. And he says, learn from me. That's something we have to learn.

It doesn't come automatically. You know what learning is. Those of you who got a even 10th standard, who finished, let's say, high school.

How many years you spent learning physics and chemistry and geography and history? Oh, how many years you struggled and struggled and struggled and struggled and struggled to learn? Didn't come overnight. You didn't just go one evening to class like a lecture like this and say, I learned it. No.

It took time. And Jesus says, learn from me. I tell you, it's the most wonderful education you can ever get.

Learn to be gentle. That means I don't learn by meditating on gentleness. It says, learn from me.

Jesus is the word made flesh. That's what he's called in John 1.14. The word became flesh. In the Old Testament, they only had the word there.

On the blackboard, on the tablets of stone, there it is. Read it. Do it.

But here is the word in the New Covenant made flesh. He says, don't learn from the book. Learn from me.

In the Old Testament, they have to learn from the book. Always, the test in the Old Testament is, is it according to the book? Then it's right. If it's not according to the book, wrong.

In the New Testament, it's not like that. There are people like that even today in Christendom. Is it according to the book? This verse, that verse, this little half this verse, you saw this, seen this half verse, this verse, brother? You haven't seen it? What have you been reading the Bible so long? You haven't seen half this verse here? But, in the New Testament, it's not like that.

It's not, is it according, is it according to Jesus? The letter kills. The Spirit gives life. A lot of Christians are prisoners of the letter.

They never come into the freedom of the Spirit. Freedom of the Spirit doesn't mean we disobey Scripture. Do you think Jesus disobeyed Scripture? No.

But He kept the Spirit of it. According to the letter, He did disobey. Oh, so many examples.

You know the Pharisees when they questioned Him about breaking the Sabbath here and breaking the Sabbath there and making people work. Carrying a bed on the Sabbath day. Have you read in the book of Numbers? I think it's chapter 16 or somewhere where it says a man went to pick up sticks from the forest on the Sabbath day and he was killed.

Stoned to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath day. Moses said, I don't know what to do. People caught this fellow picking up sticks.

He wasn't lighting a fire. I know there's a law which says you can't light a fire on a Sabbath day. He was just picking it up for the next day.

He was not going to light a fire. He just picked it up. And they said, hey, this guy is picking up sticks on the Sabbath day.

What should we do? Moses said, I don't know what to do. Let me go and ask God. God said, stone him to death.

The law was pretty hard. But Jesus told the father to carry his bed on the Sabbath day. Which is more? Picking up sticks or carrying a bed? According to the letter, you could say Jesus didn't keep it.

And I quoted that other example where in the book of Deuteronomy, I think it's 23 or somewhere it says that you cannot bring the money earned by a prostitute into God's house. And here was this prostitute who spent all her money to buy a perfume and poured it out of the feet of Jesus. Completely violating that law in Deuteronomy.

And Jesus accepted it. What about the woman who was caught in adultery? The law was very clear. You cannot spare that person.

I mean, if you don't spare a fellow who picked up sticks on the Sabbath day, how do you spare a woman caught in adultery? You've got to stone her to death. Jesus said, I don't condemn you woman. Just make sure you don't do it again.

We could say that according to the letter, Jesus violated so many laws. But he kept the spirit of them. He came to reveal the heart of God.

I don't have time to explain why he kept those laws like that in the Old Testament. Maybe some other time. But there was a reason for it.

God hasn't changed. God is exactly the same, compassionate God in the Old Testament as in the New. But he needed to teach people the strictness of his standards.

Now, so today we don't ask, is it according to the book? But we say, is it according to the spirit of Christ? Then we will understand the book. Otherwise we'll be nitpicking and finding fault with people and making demands on others. Y'all, I want to encourage you to learn from Jesus gentleness.

Gentleness. I remember once when I was in some context, this was many years ago, I don't know whether it was in some church, thinking of giving some responsibility to someone. And then I thought of how that chap had behaved a few years earlier.

And I was a bit hesitant to give him responsibility. And the Lord said to me something I've never forgotten in all these years. He said, would you like people to know you as you were many years ago or as you are now? Don't you think you've changed? I said, certainly Lord, I don't want people to think of me the way they knew me some years ago.

I was a pretty hard character. I don't want people to think of me like that. I want them to think of me like I am now.

I've changed. I know I have. I think some of you have seen me through the years and probably would agree with me.

Not sure, but I think you'll agree with me. What do you say, Ian? No doubt. He's known me longer than all of you.

So, do I want others to think of me as I was many years ago or as I am now? And the Lord said, why don't you make the same allowance for that person also? That he may have been like that five years ago. He may not be like that now. Why do you think that he's still like that? That was such a revelation to my soul.

It really blessed me. I said, Lord, I want to keep that in mind. I never got light on these things when I was under law.

No. You don't get light on these things. You just keep making demands on others the whole time.

That's why husbands and wives, are you listening, all of you? Please don't remind your wife of the stupid things she did ten years ago. She has changed. Five years ago.

One year ago. Last week. Don't remind her.

And vice versa. Don't remind your husband of the stupid things he did twenty years ago, ten years ago, five years ago, last week. Yeah.

Haven't you changed? Allow for the possibility that he has changed too, and she has changed too. It's a wonderful life, the Christian life. Learn gentleness from me.

The other thing we have to learn is to come to rest, you know. If you learn gentleness and humility from me, you will find rest for your souls. That's the goal we're getting at.

And the other is humility before God. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. You know in 1 Peter 5 it says there, under the mighty hand of God.

For many years I read that verse and I never knew what the mighty hand of God was. You know, many of us say, God, let your mighty hand come upon me. Now, before you pray that prayer again, let me explain what the mighty hand of God is.

The mighty hand of God is those difficult circumstances he places you in. Are you praying for that? God, bring your mighty hand upon me. Those difficult circumstances you're in, that is the mighty hand of God humbling you, bringing you down so that in due time he can exalt you.

Don't resist that mighty hand of God. Humble yourself under it. And it says he will exalt you in due time.

So that's the mighty hand of God, the circumstances. The situation where God says, just accept them, humble yourself. Like for example, Jesus.

He had to sit with Joseph and Mary, imperfect foster parents whom God had given him. Submit to them. Submit to the stupid things they say.

How many of you believe that Joseph and Mary never said any stupid thing in their whole life? I know a certain segment of Christians believe that. Because they almost worship them. I don't believe that.

I believe Joseph and Mary were old covenant married couple. Did they fight? Do you think Joseph and Mary ever fought with each other? Are you scared to say that? It's amazing the power of Roman Catholicism. I'm scared.

Okay, let me ask you a question. Do new covenant husbands and wives fight? Then we can go to the other. Do you think an old covenant husband and wife fought? They fought.

Jesus saw it. He humbled himself, submitted to them. Imperfect Joseph and Mary.

He had four brothers and two sisters who irritated him day and night for 30 years. Or at least more than 20 years. He accepted it.

Never, never once sinning. Those were the circumstances. He didn't sit there and say, God, my father, why didn't you give me a better home or easier circumstances? Let me live out in the wilderness by myself like John the Baptist with this difficult home.

I mean, John the Baptist had it pretty good, you know. The animals didn't irritate him. He was out there all by himself.

Nobody to provoke him and nobody to irritate him. But Jesus didn't have it like that because he was to be a forerunner. How could John the Baptist be my forerunner when you have a difficult husband or wife or difficult relatives? How in the world can he be a forerunner? He never had any of those.

He went out to the jungle and lived there. That's easy. But Jesus, God didn't allow that for Jesus.

God allowed him to be in a home like you. The mighty hand of God. The difficult circumstances, struggle to earn your living.

A poor home. A poor carpenter's home in Nazareth. A city with a bad reputation.

Such a bad reputation. People said, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? People walking down the street would say that. That's the boy, Mary's son.

We don't know who the father is. And he heard that from childhood. The reproach of being considered as an illegitimate son of Mary who got pregnant before she married Joseph.

Yup. He faced that. And he humbled himself.

Never judged anybody. Never found fault with those who talked about all that. He just accepted it.

The circumstances, the situations God placed him in. Learn from me. How much we complain.

Ask God for this and that and the other thing. And that's why we don't come to rest. I've seen this that if I'm willing to learn from Jesus humility before God and gentleness towards people I believe that increasingly I will find a rest in my soul.

It's true. God's word is true. So I want to conclude with this.

I want to say to you my dear brothers and sisters. If you have not found rest in your soul is the word of God not true? Is Jesus' word not true? It is. But perhaps you have not sought to learn gentleness and humility like you sought to learn mathematics and science in school.

You haven't even put 10% of the effort you put to study mathematics and science in school to learn humility and gentleness. How did you get your degree? Was it by the casual attitude you have towards the Christian life? Oh, you wouldn't even have got past 10 standard if it were like that. How hard you worked to get your degree.

You wanted. I wanted to be an expert in maths and science and you got your degree and a post graduate degree. Jesus said, you learn from me now how to humble yourself before God, to be gentle towards other people.

Learn it. You won't learn it in one day. It may take you took you 20 years to get a degree.

It may take you that long to learn this too. But start and let's do it. Can you imagine what this church will become like if we all start learning that? Can you imagine what your home will be like if you all start learning this? Let's pray.

Let's bow our heads for a moment before God and ask him to reveal to us what we need to learn. Lord, help us to concentrate on the important things in the Christian life and not the minor things. Give us grace.

In Jesus name. Amen.

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