

The promise of Jesus is not that we shall find a good vacation with him. He will refresh our souls when we come into his presence. When we venture forth with him into the world again, he will replace the burdens and a yoke that will be life affirming and easier to carry.

Jesus promises that when we come unto him, he will give us strength, hope, joy and peace. When we learn from him, he will give us patience and love. And when we offer ourselves to him, he will give us new life here and now and in the world to come.

In today's text, Jesus is continually calling us to come to him. I would like to encourage you to focus on Jesus Christ in your life. Jesus is calling us into Christian fellowship. Let us watch David Flood's video: [<https://www.facebook.com/imjoshshipp/videos/10155936140784246/>] Let not someone be alone. Reach out to those who are alone. As David said, just sit there, be with them, and invite them to be "One of," "Part of," "Included in" the circle of our love and faith.

As we want Jesus and others, others also really want Jesus and us. As Jesus said, "come to me," let us call one another, saying "come to me." With compassion, we may say, "come to me." With hospitality, we may say, "come to me." With accountability, we may say, "come to me."

Through our calling to one another, we will be connected in love. We will be more intimate in care and we will be more spiritual in prayer. This is what Christian fellowship means.

Jesus says, "Come to me. Come to my way. Come to my practice. And I will give you rest." This rest is better than sleep; it's rest for the soul. He's echoing Psalm 23: *"The Lord is my shepherd..... God leads me beside still waters. God restores my soul."* Come to Jesus and find life-giving rest in Him.

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NEW BEGINNING (2): **Come to Me**
Matthew 11:16-30
Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon

"I'm exhausted." "I am stressed to the limit." "I am bone tired." "I feel drained." "I am on the edge of burnout." Have you ever heard yourself or someone else say those words? At one time or another, most of us have been there.

Doctors say that millions of people are not getting the necessary seven or eight hours of sleep a night. Many of us can't remember the last time we had eight hours of uninterrupted sleep. The result is a multitude of health problems that range from high blood pressure to depression. Some of us are experiencing the results of our sleep deprivation. Others are walking through life in somewhat of a daze.

It is almost considered sinful to sleep. Reducing or sacrificing our sleep time is a sign of pride in self-achievement and hard work. We force ourselves to work hard and to play hard. We've got to be on the move. The result is that we are tired, bone tired.

Most of us have been in that position at one time or another in our lives. We are overwhelmed by life and by our circumstances. We are drowning and there is no one to throw us a life preserver. We carry so many burdens. Many of us are burdened by the lack of a job, or the threat of losing our job. Many of us struggle with the demands and expectations of a job, family or school. Burdens literally weigh us down. Burdens rob us of the joy of life. Burdens prevent us from experiencing the abundant life that is ours through the cross of Jesus Christ.

In her book, *Present Over Perfect* (Zondervan, 2016), Shauna Niequist describes that we are in a constant pressure to perform faster, push harder, and produce more, all while maintaining an exhausting image

of perfection. She challenges us to leave behind busyness and frantic living and to rediscover the person we were made to be.

In today's text of the Bible, Jesus offers an invitation. *"Come to me all who are weary and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, because my burden is easy and my yoke is light."*

In these situations, Jesus comes to us and invites us to lay our burdens down.

Jesus calls us, *"come unto me."* He calls those who are tired, those who are feeling drained, those who are feeling empty, those who are burdened by a sense of disappointment and let down, those who are exhausted by the struggles of life.

Are you tired? Feeling drained? Feeling empty? Burned out in your life? Don't linger on your problems. If we focus on our problem, we cannot solve it. We should look upon Jesus who takes care of our problems. Don't worry too much about your burden. The greatest burden we have is our constant engagement with the trivial and the unimportant. We engage with the temporary and the passing. We worry about the ultimately uncontrollable and unpredictable.

Let us dare to come to Jesus, bringing our problems and burdens to him. Then, Jesus will give us rest. Jesus will cleanse us. Jesus will fill us with new joy. Jesus will establish us in a relationship with God that will give us new life.

After Jesus calls us, he says *"take my yoke upon you and learn from me."* These words from Jesus seem a contradiction. What we really need is vacation, a rest, not more labor. After all, a burden is still a burden, a yoke is still a yoke. However, what Jesus was driving at is that there is no such thing as a burden-free life. Life always has burdens. But more important is what kind of burden we carry, rather than how many/how much burden we carry.

A yoke involves two – Jesus and you or Jesus and me or Jesus and us.

Being yoked to Jesus also means that we are doing what Jesus wants us to do. We go where he leads us. We have a challenge before us. It is important for us to look at our calendar and to determine what we are involved in that God is not a part of. We are then invited to get rid of those obligations in our lives. After all, we do not live to impress the boss, meet the expectations of others or even attain our goals. We live to be obedient and faithful servants of God. Jesus promises rest from the burdens that we carry. Jesus promises rest from the weight of anxiety and worry. Jesus promises rest from the yoke of unrewarding labor and endless labor for that which cannot satisfy.

When I wear my robe, I put my stole on. Do you know what the stole means? During the ordination service, the bishop put stoles on the neck of each ordination candidate. Then he said, "This stole is a yoke for God's ministry. Pastors should follow what Jesus would do (WWJD) rather than what the pastor wants. As a pastor wears a stole, he or she shall be yoked and ministered with Jesus."

Jesus' concern is not unburdening us so that we can be free or liberated or self-esteemed. Jesus is interested in lifting the burdens that drain us off our backs. Then, he places another yoke on us that is better suited. Jesus is interested in removing the harness that we forge for ourselves. The world forges on us its constant demands and pressures. Therefore, Jesus wants to place around our necks his own yoke and his own harness. The yoke, the harness, and the burden which Jesus requests us to carry, bring to us new life, new energy, and new joy.

Jesus' invitation is to learn of him. It is interesting that Jesus does not call us to do things for him, but rather to love him and to learn from him. When we are with Jesus, we learn of his overwhelming love for us and of the Spirit's power in our lives.

When we are with Jesus we learn about our total dependence on God and of God's promise to never to leave us or forsake us.