

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2021: *Rest in Christ*

Lesson 5 “Come to Me . . .”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 11:20–30; Matthew 5:5; Deuteronomy 18:15; Galatians 5:1; Exodus 18:13–22; Galatians 6:2.

Memory Text

“ ‘Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ ” (Matthew 11:28, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. “ ‘I Will Give You Rest’ ”
- III. “ ‘Take My Yoke Upon You’ ”
- IV. “ ‘I Am Gentle and Lowly in Heart’ ”
- V. “ ‘For My Yoke Is Easy’ ”
- VI. “ ‘My Burden Is Light’ ”
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Matthew 11:28. What are some of the causes for feeling “heavy-laden” in life? Do the causes of stress tend to be more internal or external? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. When Jesus says, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” what is the context of that statement? Read Matthew 11:20-27. Read Matthew 11:28 again. It sounds a little bit like surrender in the best sense of that term. In a time when we can conveniently control many things in our lives via our smartphones, coming to Jesus is not the natural direction. What are some of the things that block the way to coming to Jesus, and why is surrender so hard sometimes? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Matthew 11:29-30. Why does Jesus command us to take His yoke right after He has invited us to give Him our burdens and find true rest? In addition to “come” Jesus adds two further imperatives—“take” and “learn.” What does learning have to do with surrender to the rest that Jesus offers? What is the difference between being heavy-laden and taking up Jesus’ yoke? What does the word “yoke” mean in ancient everyday life, and what is its spiritual application to our lives today? What does “rest for your souls” mean? (Monday’s Lesson)
4. Social media has taught us to pay attention to the loud, the noisy, the weird, the wild, and the flamboyant. That mean gentleness is an underrated quality today. Humility is laughed at and disrespected. What is natural and normal in today’s world is often the opposite of what God deems important and valuable. Read Matthew 5:5, 1 Peter 3:4, and Isaiah 57:15. How would you define meekness and humility based on these texts? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
5. Read Matthew 11:30 again. What does the word “easy” mean to you in this context? In the original the same word can be translated “good, kind, pleasant, useful, and benevolent.” How do these alternatives affect the way you understand this passage? As applied to Jesus’ laws and commands, how do these definitions make them look different? Read Galatians 5:1. What is the difference between the yoke of Christ and the yoke of bondage Paul talks about? How can it be that obeying God’s law is more restful than disobedience? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Read Exodus 18:13-22. What does bearing another person’s burden look like in this story? Read Galatians 6:2. How does bearing one another’s burdens help us fulfill the law of Christ? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. Can you think of a moment in your walk with Jesus when you totally surrendered to God? How did you feel at that moment? Share that moment with the class and focus particularly on the reason why you surrendered. (Friday’s Lesson)
8. Isn’t being meek and lowly in heart bad for a person’s self-esteem? Why would Jesus ask for that? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

“If on the eve of the Sabbath, darkness overtook a man while he was on the way, he must give his purse to a Gentile. And if there was no Gentile with him he must put it on the ass. When he has reached the outermost courtyard of the town, he may take off from the ass such baggage as can be taken off on the Sabbath. And for what cannot be taken off on the Sabbath, he may loosen the cords so that the sacks fall down of themselves. And you might lose your donkey that way unless a Gentile should come by and take pity on the animal, and remove the load. But you may not ask him to do it, but if he should choose to do it, that’s not your business.”

Of course, if in any way, you were wringing your hands in front of your donkey, and that might win the sympathy of the Gentile, then you have, in a way, asked him to do it. So here you are with your donkey, and the load has not fallen off. What are you going to do? For here comes a Gentile. He could take off the load, but you may not ask him. And so the Gentile comes over and removes it, and you think to yourself all the rest of the way, "I wonder if in any way at all I led the Gentile to do it, in which case I have sinned." Wouldn't you be worrying all the time if you'd sinned? And Jesus said, "You lay burdens on people that are heavy to bear." They never knew if they were keeping the law or not. He said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." But he got into trouble for talking like that, as is evidenced right away in Matthew. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Intertestament Period & Matthew, recorded March 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/51MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/52MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

You see, if you're dogmatic about freedom, it means you always will respect other people's freedom. So if I'm absolutely dogmatic about freedom, you're absolutely safe. I would never intrude on your freedom. And if you have a society where everybody is absolutely, nonnegotiable committed to freedom, then we're all free, you see. And that's why you can understand Paul saying this.

Now, are we that committed to freedom? Look at Galatians 5: 1, beginning: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." He's been talking about law all the way through, and he's been explaining the function of law. What brings freedom? Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." Truth about what? Well, ultimately, the truth about God, and about his government, about what he wants of us, and in Galatians, particularly, the truth about God's use of law. It is no threat to our freedom at all. Besides, if you look at the law, what's the truth about what the law requires, anyway? Is this a threat to our freedom? Look at 5:13:

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another.

One could be reading Romans here. Remember Romans 13:8, 10, he says love is the fulfilling of the law. The man who loves his neighbor has fulfilled all law. He says the same thing here in Galatians. Well, supposing then we all obeyed the law, and we all loved each other, which would mean we'd never be rude, never arrogant, never insist on having our own way, and so

on. Would that be a threat to our freedom? We'd be really free, you see. So if we really understand what the law requires, it's a guarantee of freedom. If God says, "I'll only save people who are committed to the spirit of my law, it means I'll only save people who love one another, and therefore can be trusted, and there will be peace and freedom." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians*, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>*

"If only you knew the truth about God and his laws," Jesus went on, as he glanced at all the books of rules and regulations they had accumulated, "you would find that his yoke is easy, and his burden is light." Look at those famous words in Matthew 11:28:

Come to me, all of you who toil and are burdened and I will let you rest. Let my yoke be put upon you and learn from Me, for [though I am God] I am gentle and humble-minded [have you ever thought of the Infinite One being humble-minded?], and your hearts will find rest, for the yoke I offer you is a kindly one, and the load I ask you to bear is light.
(Goodspeed)

You would think the people would be relieved to hear this right from headquarters. But instead, they accused the Son of God of blasphemously misrepresenting his Father. They even said he had a devil to be talking about God and his laws like this! And they condemned him as lawless and crucified him as a heretic.

Then the apostle Paul took up the cause of those who denounced Jesus as a heretic and who denounced his picture of God as false and even satanic. At first, as you know from the record, Saul also obeyed for the wrong reason. He worshiped a tyrannical God who would be pleased to see people persecuted, imprisoned, even stoned to death—to force them to obey. That was the kind of God he worshiped. He had many texts (he thought) to support it. And he conducted his evangelism in the name of that God. That is why he felt free to use so much force.

Then on the Damascus road he saw the light, and the truth set him free. What a difference! He didn't change his Bible or even the name of his God. He didn't change the day he worshiped for Sabbath, or his diet, or his dress. What did he change that day? All Saul changed was his picture of God. And from then on, who has spoken more eloquently about freedom and faith and grace? And further, about Christ as the end of legalism as the way of being saved, and that we're not under law, but we're under grace because we worship a gracious God! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God, #12, "God's Law Is No Threat to Our Freedom"* recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

In describing His earthly mission, Jesus said, The Lord “hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” Luke 4:18. This was His work. He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man’s nature, that He might reach man’s wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love. {SC 11.2}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. No man has seen God at any time except as He is revealed through Christ. . . . {8T 265.2}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

I saw that the angels of God are never to control the will. God sets before man life and death. He can have his choice. {EW 221.1}

God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve. {PK 510.4}

He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. He says to us, I am the Lord thy God; walk with me, and I will fill thy path with light. Jesus, the Majesty of Heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. . . . {OHC 97.4}

Circumstances may separate friends; the restless waters of the wide sea may roll between us and them. But no circumstances, no distance, can separate us from the Saviour. Wherever we may be, He is at our right hand, to support, maintain, uphold, and cheer. Greater than the love of a mother for her child is Christ's love for His redeemed. It is our privilege to rest in His love, to say, "I will trust Him; for He gave His life for me." Human love may change, but Christ's love knows no change. When we cry to Him for help, His hand is stretched out to save (*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 71, 72). {LHU 97.8}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success

of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure. {COL 363.1}

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us. {DA 668.3}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. {PP 33.2}

The heart of Infinite Love yearns after those who feel powerless to free themselves from the snares of Satan; and He graciously offers to strengthen them to live for Him. "Fear thou not," He bids them; "for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." . . . {CC 235.4}

God's abounding love and presence will give you the power of self-control. He will mold and fashion your mind and character. He will direct your aims and purposes and capabilities in a channel that will give you moral and spiritual power which you will not have to leave here in this world but can carry with you and retain through eternal ages. {TMK 53.6}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." {DA 626.1}

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God gave to human beings an unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. The gift of Christ reveals the Father’s heart. It testifies that, having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. {9T 254.1}

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. Christ’s self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that He had and then gave Himself. {9T 254.2}

The meekness and humility that characterized the life of Christ will be made manifest in the life and character of those who “walk even as he walked.” {SD 81.5}

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, “It is finished,” had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ’s victory. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758.3}

The heavenly universe had witnessed the weapons that were chosen by the Prince of life—the words of Scripture, “It is written”; and the weapons used by the prince of the world—falsehood and deception. They had seen the Prince of life deal in straightforward lines of truth, honesty, and integrity, while the prince of the world exercised his power of cunning, artful secrecy, intrigue, enmity, and revenge. They had seen the One who bore the banner of truth sacrifice everything, even His life, to maintain truth, while the one who bore the banner of rebellion continued to strengthen his accusations against the God of truth. {RC 60.5}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {6BC 1110.5}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” Mark 12:30. To love Him, the Infinite, the Omniscient One, with the whole strength and mind and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means

that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {CT 32.1}

Like the first is the second commandment, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Mark 12:31. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty. {CT 32.2}

A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God. {MB 128.3}

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, like the streams of water bursting from a living spring, blessings flow out from Him to all His creatures. And wherever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing. {SC 77.1}