

JESUS'S GENTLE INVITATION

One of my favourite pieces of scripture – something that has really fed me in the past – is what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, 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.”

This is a wonderful invitation.

- What does it mean to you?
- What does Jesus mean by weary and burdened?

Jesus extends this invitation to all of us who are burdened by sin and its side effects of anxiety, depression, fear and doubt. He is offering relief. He is offering peace and “rest for your souls.”

The rest Jesus offers includes a removal of the guilt of sin. For by God’s own love and grace, forgiveness is now possible through Jesus. He died to take on the sins of the world. When we accept what He has done for us we are forgiven. Jesus promised us the following in John 3:16-17

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

By “rest” Jesus means peace to calm us. John 15:27 describes this peace wonderfully:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

And in John 16:35 he says:

“I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

- Have you experienced this kind of peace?
- Does having the kind of peace Jesus gives mean you don’t need your medication anymore?

WHAT DOES JESUS EXPECT FROM US?

He wants us to take his “yoke” upon us. A yoke is a wooden contraption that is placed over the shoulder of an ox so that it can pull a weight. In Jewish teaching a yoke represents the obligations a person must take upon himself. But Jesus says that these obligations are easy. He helps us carry them.

Jesus’ call is a call to discipleship – to follow Him and learn from Him. To accept the obligations He places on us. Yes, Jesus places a burden on us, but He helps us carry it and it is lighter than the burden sin lays upon us.

To accept Jesus’ invitation means that we live in the way He taught us to live and we observe all that He commanded.

- What does it mean to follow Jesus?
- Is it hard?

John, who was a disciple for over fifty years, said:

“This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John 5:3-5)

- What are some of Jesus’ commandments?
- What is the greatest commandment?

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

As we learn the wisdom Jesus teaches and as we observe all that He commanded, our burden will become lighter.

- Have you accepted the yoke of Jesus?
- Are you living under that yoke?