

## Sunday 20-March-22

## Jesus' Invitation

### Jeremiah 6:16-17

<sup>16</sup> This is what the LORD says:

“Stand at the crossroads and look;

ask for the ancient paths,

ask where the good way is, and walk in it,

and you will find rest for your souls.

But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’

<sup>17</sup> I appointed watchmen over you and said,

‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’

But you said, ‘We will not listen.’

### Matthew 11:25-30

#### The Father Revealed in the Son

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. <sup>26</sup> Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

<sup>27</sup> “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

## Sermon: Jesus' Invitation

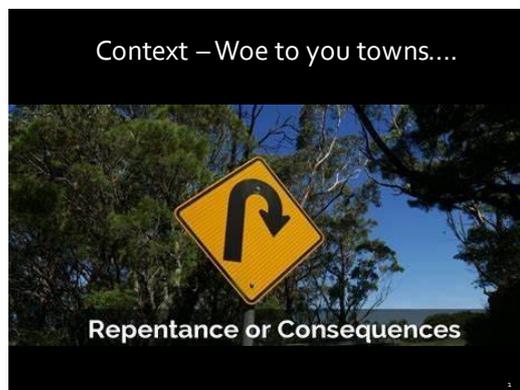
We're **continuing** our **look** at **Matthew's Gospel** – and we'll be **continuing from Matthew 11** – starting at **verse 25**. We'll briefly look at our **OT reading from Jeremiah 6** – first though.

Let me ask God's for His guidance and understanding

Let's pray...

## Context

[PowerPoint 1-Woe]



**Last week** we heard how **Jesus gave a woe** (*a woe is a warning that certain behaviour will cause great distress or sorrow*) – Jesus gave a **woe to some towns** [**Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!**] towns that He had **preached** in and performed great **miracles** in – Jesus gave a woe to these towns - because these towns had not accepted Him – and had not repented [no U-turn] of their sins – and so Jesus said because they had rejected Him - **there would be consequences** – they would even be **judged more harshly that the cities in the OT of Sodom and Gomorrah** that were destroyed because they were evil cities.

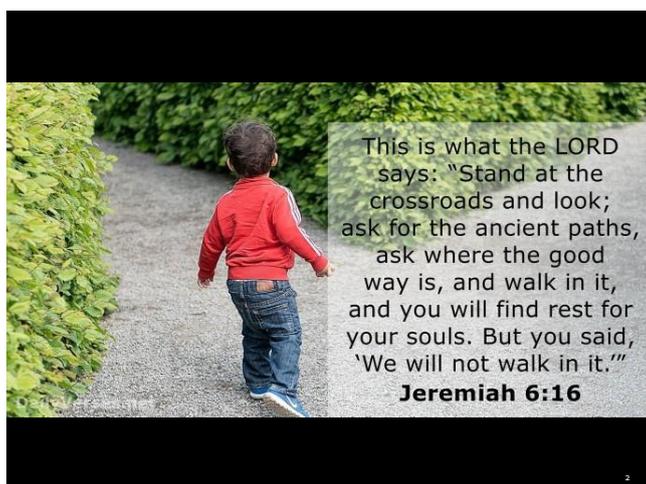
I suppose the **question** we should ask is – *why did these towns reject Jesus?*

Well - our **OT Bible passage** from **Jeremiah 6:16-17** – **helps us understand why people reject God and reject His Son, Jesus**

### **The Good Way (Jeremiah 6:16-17)**

[Please turn there now]

[PowerPoint 2-Crossroads]



V16 says that all people **stand** at a **Crossroads** – and they need to ask **which path to take** – and God says the **wise thing to do** is to **ask for the ancient paths**

The **ancient paths** are the way God wants people to walk – God wants people to walk in **His way** – and to **obey Him** – and to **follow His commandments** – and God says through Jeremiah that this is the **good way to walk**

The ancient paths - the **good way** – is **the way of repenting of sin and rebellion against God, reconciling with God** and having a **reverent fear of God** – and wanting to live a **life that pleases God**

Many people – even today - don't want to walk this good way

Perhaps it **seems** to them **old fashioned** or terribly **un-cool** – and besides it **means they have to follow what God says** – and no one is **going to tell them what to do**

In our society today we have a thing called **cancel culture**.

In summary – **cancel culture challenges** some of the **traditions and beliefs we might have grown up with** – so for us as **Christians** – we may **get called out or ostracised**

because of our views on - **marriage, gender, sexuality** – or called out because of our **faith in Jesus** – or because of our **belief that the Bible is God's Word** and **that God's rules and His requirement for obedience** actually matter to us and we may even get called out because of our **belief in the existence of Heaven and Hell**.

So basically – everything we grew up with as Christians is **under threat** by this cancel culture – and we're told we can't say certain things – or believe certain things – and if we stand up for our beliefs - **then we are told we are the ones who are intolerant!**

(pause)

Just because God's way – is an **ancient way** – doesn't **make it wrong**.

Jeremiah says if people walk the **Ancient Paths of God** – it's the **good way** – it's God's way – and they will **find rest for their souls**

To use an **illustration** – let's say a **man** is **travelling** to a particular **city** and **comes to a point where the road divides in different directions**. He could try every single direction and get **exhausted** each time he has to **turn back and try the next path**. But the man is **wise** – so He **finds another traveller** – **asks them the right way** – and **follows their directions**. Then **arrives** at his **destination** – without being **exhausted** from trying several different ways – and **he is able to rest**.

God is saying following He's way is the **most restful way to go!**

Unfortunately, as God says to Jeremiah – the **people of Israel** – just like many people today – **refused** to **walk the good way** – they'd **rather go their own way** and ignore God's way

V17 –Jeremiah says - **God even sent** the people **watchmen** [like the OT prophets) – to warn them and to blow trumpets to get the people's attention – to follow the good way – but the **people did not listen**

Jesus was saying to the towns in Israel – last week – you're not following God's way – you won't repent – you won't listen to me – you won't acknowledge my teaching or my miracles – I'm going to another town...

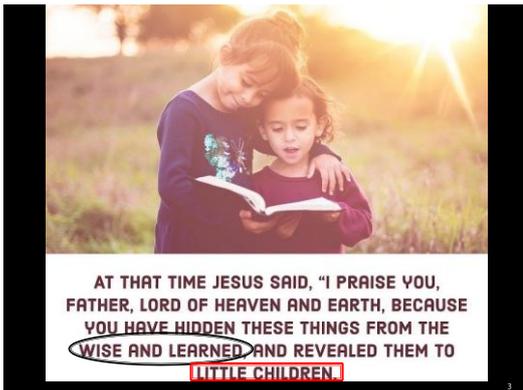
So, as we **continue** with **Matthew 11** - from last week – we **begin** at **verse 25**

[Please turn there now]

### Two Types of People (Matthew 11:25-27)

In **verses 25 to 27** - there is a **sense of joy or happiness** (thankfulness) as Jesus, the Son and God the Father, commune as part of the Trinity.

[PowerPoint 3-children]



Jesus says there are **two types of people** – *“the wise & learned”* and the *“little children”*

**Jesus is thankful** that the **Gospel message** - that **He is the promised Messiah sent by God** - has been hidden from the **wise and learned** (that is - *the know-it-all religious leaders and people of the towns, who rejected John and Jesus because they were spiritually proud and saw no need for Jesus*) and **Jesus is thankful** that instead **God** has revealed this **Gospel message** to the **little children** (*those who were humble and honest about their sinfulness and their need for a Saviour*).

You see - knowledge of God and Jesus - is not gained in the first place through investigation or intellect but through revelation. Revelation does not depend on intellectual capacity but on the disposition of the heart. God the Father revealed “these things” to “little children” – not the “wise and learned” - because the “little children” had hearts that were open and accepting as opposed to the “wise and learned” who had closed and rejecting hearts.

(pause)

Then Jesus makes a remarkable statement in v27 about His unique relationship with God the Father

Jesus says that: God the Father has committed ALL THINGS to His Son, Jesus.

And Jesus says: No one truly knows the Son the way the Father does - and no-one truly knows the Father the way the Son does.

Basically, Jesus is saying: He and the Father are equal!

Jesus goes on to say – that people can only know who God the Father is – if Jesus Himself reveals who the Father is to them - and Jesus also says He chooses who to reveal the Father to.

But before we think Jesus is going to choose some and not others – or that Jesus chooses randomly - we need to realize that Jesus chooses all people who fall into the “little children” category – that is the ones who have an open heart to listen to Jesus and accept Him by faith.

And so, Jesus issues an invitation in verses 28 to 30.

### [The Invitation \(Matthew 11:28-30\)](#)

In this invitation Jesus issues **3 commands**:

[PowerPoint 4-Yoke]

1<sup>st</sup> - Jesus commands us to - “Come to Him” - Only He can give proper rest from our burdensome lives and only Jesus can take the burden of sin from us - and give

salvation of our souls for Heaven – by His death on the cross – for the forgiveness of sins. No-one else – not ourselves – **only Him!**

2<sup>nd</sup> - Jesus commands us to - “Take His yoke”

3<sup>rd</sup> - Jesus commands us to - “Learn from Him”

The people who are invited are: **ALL** [[Both Jews and Gentiles as per Matthew 10:5-6](#)]  
**ALL - who are weary** (exhausted) **and burdened**. If we look later on in Matthew 23:4 – that’s how the people felt in Jesus’ day; **They were tied up with heavy, cumbersome rules that the religious leaders had put on - rules that were too hard to keep.**

According to Don Carson: those who are weary are those who have taken burdens upon themselves and those who are burdened are those who have had burdens put upon them by someone else.

Jesus is saying – COME - to - ALL those who are weary of carrying their own burdens, ALL those who are overwhelmed by the circumstances of life that are weighing them down - ALL those who come in humility with a humble broken heart - and place their burdens on His shoulders and learn to rest on Jesus and learn from Him.

If you think about it - Throughout the Bible, when God deals with people – He looks at their heart and disposition towards Him - not how wise and learned they are! [[People like Abraham; Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness; King Saul and King David; Jesus’ disciples](#)]

**Perhaps you’re here today – and you’re weighed down by heavy burdens – maybe some unrepented sin in your life – or some serious health concerns – or a trial of unbearable proportions that you don’t even want anyone to know about – it feels too**

**bad to share.** Perhaps you've just got **weighed down** with the **last two years of covid** – and as if that isn't bad enough – on top of that – you have **housing problems - family relationship problems – financial problems – work problems** – and **you're spent!** And it feels like **no-one cares** – and **no one can help!**

**Jesus invites us to be joined to him with a yoke** – We are yoked together with Jesus – just like two oxen are yoked together.

Jesus uses the picture of a yoke to show that we are **meant to be joined to Him** – in an **up close and personal relationship** – and **not going it alone** – but **allowing Jesus to help us, unburden us, carry us and teach us.**

As we are yoked to Jesus though – we're **not yoked to a harsh task master.**

**No!** In v29 - Jesus describes Himself as “*gentle and humble of heart*”

According to Charles Spurgeon – in the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) – **89 chapters of the Bible** – v29 is the only place in the Bible where Jesus describes His own heart.

This verse reveals that Jesus has a Servant's heart – meaning **He is both qualified and willing to bear our burdens.**

The KJV says Jesus is “*gentle and lowly*”; by lowly it means that despite Jesus being God's Son and despite Him belonging in Heavenly glory; Jesus is accessible.

The **outcome** for people who accept Jesus' invitation is – ***rest for our souls.***

What does “***rest for our souls***” mean?

First “**rest for our souls**” means - **peace with God** – as Romans 5:1 says: *Therefore, since we have been justified [that is - found not guilty of our sins] through [our] faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*

Second “rest for our souls” means – *having the peace of God which surpasses all understanding – which guards our hearts and minds* – it’s an **inexplicable peace** we have because we’re yoked to Jesus and we’ve handed our burdens to Him and swapped it for peace. (Philippians 4:6-8)

Third “rest for our souls” means – we have a **deeper peace inside us** - as we learn from Jesus, we begin to trust Him more and more and hand over our lives more fully to Him, and so we become less burdened.

And ultimately – because our souls are the non-physical part of us designed for eternity - we have eternal rest for our souls – because we receive eternal life – when we accept Jesus’ invitation.

The assurance we get by being yoked to Jesus – **is that Jesus’ yoke is not a heavy yoke that weighs us down** – No! Jesus says in v30 His yoke – is ***a light and easy yoke!*** Easy in Greek literally means “**kind**”.

Consider what Jesus is saying here. A yoke is a heavy crossbar laid on oxen to force them to drag farming equipment through a field. But Jesus is saying His yoke is kind – it’s like a non-yoke. Who’s going to resist that?

It’s a bit like throwing a life buoy to a drowning man and saying you must put this on to be saved – and the man says “no way! - I’m not putting that on it’s too heavy!”

But isn’t that sometimes what we’re like with Jesus – **we say we have faith in Him with our lips but we don’t let Him help us – we try and save ourselves from drowning – or we think we’re in too bad a shape for Him to help - because we don’t properly understand His heart** – remember His heart is gentle and humble – **He’s not going to be harsh with us when we’ve messed up – He’s going to show us grace upon grace!**

Jesus' yoke is kind and His burden is light. What helium does to a balloon – Jesus' yoke does for us. We are lifted up and buoyed along in life by His endless gentleness, His endless humility and His supreme accessibility.

He doesn't simply meet us at our place of need – He **lives** our place of need [like the Footprints poem]. **Jesus never tires of sweeping us up into His tender embrace.** That's His heart!

### Application

So - **three things** to **take home** with us today

#### [PowerPoint 5a-Application]

1. Have you noticed when you send out an invitation with a RSVP – **hardly anyone bothers to reply?** We shouldn't make that mistake with Jesus' invitation – **we have to accept it.** In Revelation 3:20 - Jesus says: *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

When Jesus knocks on the door - it's **like there is no handle on His side** – so we have to open the door and allow Him into our lives. **This will require us to have open hearts towards Him** – and **become like little children** (Matt 18:3; Luke 18:17) **and have faith in Jesus no matter what.** When I was a little boy – I didn't worry about how mum and dad would pay the mortgage or put food on the table or clothe me – I just accepted that mum and dad had that all covered – **that's what Jesus want us to do as we come to Him** – like a child without questioning - without doubting!

#### [PowerPoint 5b-Application]

2. When we are yoked to Jesus – **remember Jesus is described as God's Word made flesh** (John 1:1, 14) – **so we are actually yoked/joined to God's Word** – so to be

joined to God's Word – means we should be reading it and meditating on it and learning from it. As we do that – it's like we are the apprentice learning from the master. This will impact our behaviour, our attitude – our thoughts – and will increase our faith.

### [PowerPoint 5c-Application]

3. When we are yoked to Jesus – the burdens we have from our sins; the burdens we carry from life's struggles and the burdens we carry that others have placed on us – are **all carried by Jesus** – which gives us relief – and ultimately rest for our souls – as we are saved for eternity.

As MSG puts it - *“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”*

### Conclusion

#### [PowerPoint 6-Conclusion]

To finish up then – Jesus' invitation is an **outrageous and exclusive claim** – that there is **only one way** – **to have rest for our souls** – and only one way - **to Heaven**

As Jesus says in John 14:6: *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”*

Let's pray...

*Father God, thank you for Jesus' invitation.*

*Help us to accept His invitation to be yoked to Him.*

*Help us to learn from Him.*

*Help us to feel unburdened and to have rest for our souls.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*