

The Road to Rest

Matthew 11:20-30

Intro

Before we move into our passage this morning, let's begin by defining *three words* that will give focus to our study...

*The first word is **rebuke**...*

rebuke — *to find justifiable fault with someone, reproach, reprimand...*

*The second word is **revelation**...*

revelation — *a truth that is unveiled, uncovered, revealed...*

*The third word is **rest**...*

rest — *refreshment, relief from toil...*

Now, what we will find in our passage this morning is ***The Road to Rest***...

- And I believe that this road starts with **rebuke**, moves into **revelation** and continues on to **rest**...

I see this **road** as a picture of *how we come to faith in the first place* — at least that was *my story*...

Looking back on how the Lord Jesus brought me into relationship with Himself, it started with **rebuke**...

- He rightly reprimanded me — He made it clear to me that I was going down the wrong road...

This led to **revelation** — the Lord Jesus began to *reveal Himself to me* — He began to share truth with me in a way that I could understand...

- Next came **rest** — I rested in the fact that the Lord Jesus had paid the penalty for my sins because He loved me — and that I could add nothing to His finished work on my behalf...

Now, I believe that this **road to rest** does not only describe our experience of *coming to faith in Christ*...

- I believe it also applies to the ongoing process of us being *conformed into the image of Christ*...

Because as we pursue a long obedience in the same direction, we *need refining* — much needs to be changed in our lives...

- We will need to be **rebuked** — we will need the conviction of the Holy Spirit — because God disciplines those He loves...

As we rightly respond to God's righteous rebuke, we will receive greater **revelation**...

- We will better understand God and His Word and we will better understand ourselves and others...

This will lead to **rest** in those areas that are unsettled — we will experience peace where there was no peace...

So, with these ideas in mind, let's read the the passage that we will be studying this morning...

Matthew 11:20-30 (NKJV)

20 Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:

21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Let's move into our first section...

1) Rebuke (vs 20-24)

rebuke — to find justifiable fault with someone, reproach, reprimand...

This is what we see as we move into vs...

20 Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:

Here we have the rationale for Jesus rebuking the cities...

Jesus did **most of His mighty works** — healings and casting out demons — in those cities — and yet the cities failed to repent...

repentance — change of mind that leads to a change of direction...

- [ex. illustration about traveling on I-20...]

Now, there was no excuse for these cities to fail to repent but they stubbornly continued in their sin...

The Lord Jesus had clearly revealed that He was sent by God — Jesus' miracles, teachings and character had shown this...

But still the people refused Him — and Jesus makes it abundantly clear that they are without excuse as we move into vs...

21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!

Here the Lord Jesus pronounces woe on two Galilean cities that were well-acquainted with His ministry...

woe — *announcement of doom or pity — likely both in this context...*

- A pitiful future awaited these cities if they failed to repent — their doom would be assured...

Jesus continues on in vs 21...

For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Now, you can read about **Tyre and Sidon** in the OT — they were cities known for their wickedness and idolatry and eventually they were destroyed as a judgment from God...

- And yet, as bad as they were, the Lord Jesus said they would have repented if Jesus had done His mighty works there!...

22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

The great truth here is that the sin of **Chorazin** and **Bethsaida** is worse than the sin of **Tyre and Sidon** because **Chorazin** and **Bethsaida** had received a *much greater revelation...*

PRINCIPLE — To whom much is given, much will be required...

The greater the knowledge the greater the responsibility...

- [ex. If an injured person is lying on a sidewalk, a trained medical professional has more responsibility to help than a businessman does...]

It is important to understand that the Lord Jesus *holds us responsible for the knowledge that we have — and what we do with that knowledge...*

The Lord Jesus continues His rebuke in vs...

23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades;

Capernaum was the Lord Jesus' primary base of operations during His earthly ministry...

And we see strong imagery that Jesus uses to rebuke this city...

- He says that **Capernaum** was **exalted to heaven...**

And I believe that this is a reference to heaven coming near in the person of Jesus — the city was exalted above measure by *the Son of God making His home there...*

- They were **exalted to heaven** because of His presence — but their rejection of the Lord Jesus would cause them to be **brought down to Hades...**

And as we study the use of **Hades** in the NT — we understand it to be the place where the dead await the final judgment of Hell...

- This is a horrifying picture for the people of Capernaum — to be so close to heaven but to end up in Hell...[expand]

As we think about the realities of Heaven and Hell, believers should rejoice that this life is as close as they will ever get to Hell...
[expand]

- Tragically, for the unrepentant unbeliever, this life is the closest that they will ever get to Heaven...[expand]

But the good news is that any unbeliever who repents — who turns to Jesus in faith — will escape the judgment to come...[expand]

- So, if you have not yet trusted in Christ, please submit to Him today — please come to Him and be forgiven — because today is the day of salvation, now is the appointed time...

Now, continuing on in vs 23-24 the Lord Jesus says...

for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”

- [expand — Sodom was both a literal place and also a figurative picture of horrible ungodliness...]

And the Lord Jesus is saying that Capernaum's sin — their face-to-face rejection of Him — is worse than the sin of Sodom & Gomorrah...[expand]

- Terribly, the persistent rejection of the Lord Jesus by the people of Capernaum would result in an eternal judgment that is worse than that received by the people of Sodom...[expand]

*Let's move now from **Rebuke** to our second section...*

2) Revelation (vs 25-27)

revelation — a truth that is unveiled, uncovered, revealed...

*Jesus now shifts His focus from the **cities that rejected Him** to the **His revelation of the Father**...*

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father,

This is a wonderful way to start prayer — *with thanksgiving*...

- If we find that we are joyless people, then it is likely that our **joylessness** is rooted in **unthankfulness**...

To aid us in becoming more thankful people, we would do well to memorize...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV)

16 Rejoice always,

17 pray without ceasing,

18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

As we continue on in vs 25 we see that Jesus refers to His Father as the...

Lord of heaven and earth,

Here Jesus is recognizing that God the Father is the boss — He is the ultimate authority of heaven and earth...

- And I believe that this knowledge allowed the Lord Jesus to fully obey the Father — every moment of every day...

Because Jesus fully believed that the Father was Lord of heaven and earth — and Jesus was secure in His hands...

Let's look now at how Matthew 11:25-26 fit together...

25 "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

It seems clear to me that the Lord Jesus is *thanking the Father for how the Father chooses to reveal truth...*

- The Father doesn't reveal His truth to those who are wise and prudent in their own eyes — to those who are proud...

Instead, He reveals it to babes — to those who don't think they have it all figured out...

Or to put it another way, God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble...

God reveals the truth to those who are not wise in their own eyes — to those who are *willing to believe what God has to say...*

- And it seems certain that Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum thought they were too smart for the Lord Jesus — and as a result they missed what God was saying...

With that said, anyone who comes to God with a humble heart and is willing to listen — ***will receive revelation from the Lord...***

QUESTION — Are you willing to humble yourself before the Lord? Are you willing to lay down your pride so that God may reveal truth to you?...[expand]

Moving on to vs 27, the Lord Jesus continues...

27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father,

delivered — *spoken of things delivered over to the charge, care, or kindness of someone, in the general sense of giving up, committing, entrusting...*

In other words, the Lord Jesus proclaims that the Father has entrusted all things to Him...

This points to what the Lord Jesus said just before He gave the the Great Commission...

Matthew 28:18 (NKJV)

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

The reality is that the Lord Jesus is the ultimate authority — and we are enabled to live rightly in this life if we receive that revelation and submit to the authority of the Lord Jesus...

- However, if we reject this revelation and refuse the authority of the Lord Jesus we are going to be moving in the wrong direction...

Because if all things have been **delivered** to the Lord Jesus by the Father — there is nothing that you or I or anyone else in human history can do about it...

- Resistance is foolish — the wisest thing for us to do is submit to the Lord Jesus' loving authority knowing that He always wants the very best for us...

Continuing on in vs 27 we read...

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Now, what is the Lord Jesus communicating here?...

I believe that the Lord Jesus is making it clear that ***a person cannot have relationship with the Father without having relationship with the Son...***

- [expand — context of people claiming to know God but rejecting Jesus — that is not possible...]

To be clear — if anyone wants to know God the Father, they must receive the Lord Jesus Christ — there is no way around this...

John 14:6 (NKJV)

...“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Now, as we continue on in Matthew 11:27, some see the last part of the verse in a negative light...

Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

They see the Lord Jesus as only choosing to reveal the Father to preselected ones...

If the Lord Jesus didn't choose you for revelation then it's too bad for you...

But that violates the context of this passage and of the scriptures as a whole...

The consistent testimony of the Bible is that the Creator of the Universe incessantly reaches out to human beings and He continually invites them into relationship...

- But the majority of human beings reject that invitation into relationship — they dismiss the revelation that they have been given...

I think this truth is summed up well in two places in the scripture — one from the OT and one from the NT...

2 Chronicles 36:15-16 (NKJV)

15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

Matthew 23:37 (NKJV)

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”

With this in mind, we move into our final section and we see just who the Lord Jesus invites into fellowship...

3) Rest (vs 28-30)

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Who does the Son invite into fellowship? — Who does the Son **will** to reveal the Father to?...

- ***All who labor and are heavy laden — everyone who is living in this fallen world...***

Now, let's look at this verse a little more closely...

Come to Me — *present active imperative — it's an ongoing command — “Keep coming to Me” — the invitation is open-ended...[expand]*

Again, who is the Lord Jesus commanding to keep coming to Him?...

all you who labor and are heavy laden,

all — *each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone...*

who labor — *to grow weary, tired, exhausted (with toil or burdens or grief)...[applies to every human being]*

and are heavy laden — *overburdened; weighed down...*

and I will give you rest — *refreshment, relief from toil...*

- Please notice that ***each person*** must come to Jesus and ***He will personally give them rest...***[expand]

Continuing on to vs...

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me,

take — *aorist active imperative — used to give commands that imply a single, completed action...*

I believe this means that we are called to make the choice to take Jesus' yoke upon us ***once and for all*** — to be ***permanently yoked to Him...***

- [explain — double-yoke that is placed on two animals that become a team...]

Now it could be argued that this yoke is shaped like a cross — the cross of self-denial...

Matthew 16:24-25 (NKJV)

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

- [expand — the crucified life is true life — it is where we find life...]

Please notice again in vs 29 that as we are yoked to Jesus we **learn** from Him — *we go where He leads — we learn to do life the way He does life...*[expand]

The Lord Jesus continues in vs 29...

for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

The phrase **gentle and lowly** could also be translated ***meek and humble...***

- The Lord Jesus invites you into relationship with Him — to be your closest friend, your co-laborer in life — and He is meek and humble...[expand]

Now to our final verse...

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

My yoke is easy — *easy-fitting, form-fitting, tailor-made...*

A yoke is for working animals — but a good master will make sure the yoke fits properly and that his animals are fit for the work he calls them to...[expand]

Two verses that speak to this form-fitting yoke are...

John 4:34 (NKJV)

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”

And we also have...

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Continuing on in Matthew 11:30 the Lord Jesus proclaims...

My burden is light — *of little weight, lightweight...*

- [ex. wings to a bird — they are a slight burden — but they are a burden that lifts...]

Conclusion

Now, as we begin to bring this study to a close, I want to leave you with an exhortation related to yokes...

Do not allow other people to place yokes upon you — of whatever variety they may be — only receive the yoke that Jesus has tailor-made for you...

The Lord Jesus warned of the sort of individuals who do this in...

Matthew 23:4 (NKJV)

For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Don't allow *me* to put a yoke on you — don't allow *others* to put a yoke on you — and don't make your own yoke...

- Go to the Lord Jesus and be yoked to Him — His yoke is form-fitting — and it is a burden that carries you...

You can trust Him because He is for you — and He is gentle and lowly — He is humble and meek — and He is the one who will lead you Home...

Let's pray...