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D.M.
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"The Crowning Call"

Scripture Lesson: - Matt 11:20-30.

Text: - "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." - Matt 11:28

Introduction: - Rest in the midst of the world's restlessness-that is what Christ proposes and promise to those who will confess him as God and trust him as Savior. Yes, there may be restlessness all around us, but we may be calm. (Relate the experience of a plane flying into the center of a hurricane.)

Rest in the midst of restlessness!"I have got it for you," says Jesus. "Come unto me". Here, certainly, is the invitation supreme, the crowning call to the overburdened sons of men.

Let us try to remember that the Gospel is not con-
-scription, compulsion, or coercion; it is offer,
-claim, invitation. Before ever the commanding Christ
says to any of us, "Go", the compassionate Christ ~~xx~~
says to all of us, "Come".

Consider the charm in such an invitation as this. It
is winsome in speech and gracious in theme. For one
thing, it carries the charm of the impartial. "Come
unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden".
Christ's appeal is race-wide and soul-deep, without
distinctions and without exclusions. The pauper with
his empty hand and the rich man with his empty heart
are alike, included.

An earnest young minister drove his point home to
a frivolous young woman on her way to a ball, and
caught her for Christ. As a result Charlotte Elliot,
for that was her name, wrote:

"Just as I am without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou didst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.
Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee I find,
O Lamb of God, I come."

I.

His call is essential. What he offers—this rest amid restlessness—is no luxury, it is utter necessity. Christ lays his finger on this deep central sin of our time—of all time—and he calls us to experience rest that comes to those who are living, not in conflict with God, but in harmony. In this sense, then, we may speak of his invitation as holding for us, the charm of the essential. What he offers is not some frothy meringue at life's table; it is the very bread of God without which we will starve.

It is also a challenge. It is a challenge to those who are so very busy. "Come unto me, all ye that labor." Leave out the forgiving, purifying love of God offered to us in Christ Jesus, and where are you? Leave out the superhuman power made available to us through the Holy Spirit, and where are you? Modern man is spiritually ill, yet concerning this modern man, someone has said, "If he is in a tight spot, he borrows money on the furniture; if he is low, he lights a cigarette; if he is lonely, he goes to a movie; if he is maladjusted, he goes to a psychiatrist; if he had a headache, he takes an aspirin." All, you see, from the outside in, whereas Christ's cure is from the inside out.

II.

Secondly, the Master's winsome invitation challenges those who are intensely, and desperately burdened. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden." Think of all the burdens beneath which men and women, without Christ, are today staggering to the point of collapse. There is the burden of fear. Fear and its twin brother, worry, are killers. They crush the life out of us. Education helps to meet fear, but by itself it is not enough. It takes the grace of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit to overcome fear.

Or there is the burden of boredom. A woman at a Christian conference said, "I took to smoking be-

cause I was frustrated." I find smoking is an outward expression of an inward frustration! Even, "deep breathing cannot reach the restless center of the human spirit that is fed-up and world-weary.

Then there is the burden of guilt. There is the sleeplessness that mars our nights. There is the irritableness that robs our families of peace. There is the inability to look decent people full in the face. To the busy and burdened lives comes our Lord's call, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden!"

III.

This invitation has also in it choice. Let us look at the verbs, "Come" and "Take". "Come", I will give you rest. "Take my yoke, ye shall find rest." Take the first choice, "Come". This response is not so much an expression of emotion as it is an act of will. Will you face Jesus Christ openly, honestly: Will you take your wrongly set will and hand it over to him for him to shape it to the pattern of his will: Will you take him at his word and "close the deal" with him now: Here is a young man, for example who called himself a Christian. Actually he was scorning the way of Christ. He was living pretty much as modern pagans do. Nevertheless, he admitted to a spiritual advisor that he had a longing for something finer and more secure than his manner of living afforded him. The conversation was followed by a deep extended season of prayer. He made his choice. He got up, surrendered. Since then, a new faith, of freedom have been his. He chose to come.

And then there is, for those who have chosen to come, the choice of the yoke. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls." For my yoke is easy, and my burden light." By now it should be clear to all of us that in this matter of Christian living the choice is not between Christ's yoke and no yoke at all. If you and I will not have Christ's yoke, that is, if we will not commit ourselves to his Lordship and authority and to the service of his kingdom, then we must

continue to be bound by the yoke of our self-centeredness, the yoke of our fears, the yoke of our frustration, that bind and fetter our lives. Christ's summons to Christians is a deeper, finer thing ~~in~~ than a summons to be happy. It is a call to be holy and to be helpful. That is vastly greater.

Conclusion:- Let us call a missionary to the witness stand. She wrote to a minister who had been used by the Holy Spirit to help her. "I had lost my mother in 1929, and I did not have the means to meet the loss, for mother was all the world to me. I struggled and grieved until I felt it was impossible to stay in India without her. I did not have enough of the real essence of Christianity to keep me on top. You spoke of the Holy Spirit; there was a period of silent prayer. Something inside of me snapped into place. Connection was made with the powerhouse, and the Holy Spirit was mine. I walked down the hill on air. Mother was nearer than she had ever been!"

Full commitment! Deeper rest! That is the crowning glory of our response to Christ's crowning ~~and~~ call!

Have you heard His call? Have you heard Him say come? with all His tenderness, love & compassion. He means you, not someone else when He says I will give you rest. If you come then you don't have to walk alone. He is by our side all the way to comfort, support & cheer us unless we fall behind & follow Him from afar off. How is it with you tonight. Are you enjoying His fellowship. If not, hear His call tonight. He is still calling you. Do you hear Him?