

The Invitation

Series: Invitation (Matt. 11:28-30)

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“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.” (Matt. 11:28-30)

How many invitations have you received in your lifetime? For me, too many to count. Dinner invitations, jam session invitations, trips, webinars, speaking appointments, and recreational opportunities. My least liked invitation was one where I knew they were going to try to sell me something. But, if someone said “pickin’” or “preachin’” I was ready to go. The invitation to travel out west with some good friends was pretty cool. The invitation to visit the Holy Lands was very cool. The invitation to travel to Haiti changed my life. Of course the invitation I gave Brenda to go out on a date was the most wonderful invitation I ever gave.

There is one invitation that tops them all. It is the invitation given by the Son of God. God is an inviting God. Which is most true: “I invited Jesus to come into my heart” or “Jesus invited me to come into His heart?” Let’s not quibble.

Luke 19:1-10 is the story of Zacchaeus, the tax-collector. Jesus invited Himself to his house.

The invitation of Matt. 11:28-30 has four features to it:

The Invitation (March 7)

The Inviter (March 14)

The Invitee (March 21)

The Outcome (March 28)

Come to Me:

- In Matt. 4:19 to Simon Peter and Andrew Jesus said, “Come, follow me (or in the NASB simply Follow me), and I will make you fishers men.” The term is literally “Follow after me.”
- It is stronger than merely “Come here.” It carries with it ongoing movement-following closely behind Jesus.

- In Matt.22:4 the slaves issued the invitation to “come to the wedding feast.” This was more than a simple invitation to attend an event. This was to share in the master’s most important moment. (For most weddings only the most important people get invited to the event.)
- In Matt.25:34 at the end of time the King will say to those on his right: “Come, you who are blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” WHAT AN INVITATION!
- Jesus’ invitation is not to attend an event, or come to church, but to come to HIM.
- Our invitation to others on behalf of Jesus is to come meet Jesus.

Take My Yoke:

- “Take” means to raise something up and carry (bear) it. Used 20x in Matthew.
 - Of angels taking up Jesus if he struck his foot against a stone, 4:6
 - Of a man taking up his mat and walking, 9:6
 - Of John’s disciples taking up John’s body for burial, 14:12
 - Of the disciples taking up baskets of food, 4:20
 - Most notable is 16:24, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” This is what literally what Simon did for Jesus, Matt.27:32-he bore Jesus’ cross
- The Yoke-Zugos
 - Of cattle, slaves, obligation to keep laws, even a pair of scales.
 - Oppressive yokes:
 - Circumcision. Acts 15:10, “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” Gal.5:1, “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”
 - Slavery: 1 Tim.6:1, “All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against.”
 - MY Yoke-It is Jesus’ yoke-He stands ready with his head in the yoke waiting for us to join Him.
 - Easy =Chrestos meaning “fit for use, manageable, mild as opposed to hard or harsh, sharp or bitter (compare to different slave masters.) It is a trait of God:
 - Luke 6:35 God is kind or easy on ungrateful and evil men
 - Rom.2:4, the kindness of God leads us to repentance
 - 1 Pet.2:3, we are to taste the kindness of the Lord.
 - Burden is Light
 - Burden=Phortion meaning freight or laden (Bill of laden), and obligation. Matt.23:4 of Jewish leaders: “They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they

themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger." We all have burdens (Gal.6:1ff).

- Light=Elaphros used here and in 2 Cor.4:17, "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The lightness of affliction is compared to the weight of glory-this is what Jesus is inviting us to.

Learn From Me

- Learn =Manthano, to understand
 - We have much to learn from Jesus. Jesus' invitation is an invitation to discipleship.
 - Matt.9:13 when Jesus was criticized for eating with tax-collectors and sinners Jesus told them: "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire compassion (mercy), and not sacrifice.'"
 - John 6:44-45, "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me."

The invitation of Jesus involves so much more than simply "getting saved." It is not merely an insurance policy in order to avoid hell. One has to be willing to FOLLOW, TAKE THE YOKE, AND LEARN. Anything less is not Christianity.