

“ ‘Come to Me . . . ’ ”

**SABBATH—JULY 24**

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON: Matthew 11:20–30; 1 Peter 3:4; Isaiah 57:15; Galatians 5:1; Exodus 18:13–22.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘All you who work hard! All you who carry heavy loads! Come to me! I will give you rest’ ” (Matthew 11:28, WE).

MATTHEW 11:28 is a wonderful promise from Jesus. We all feel tired sometimes, right? We all carry heavy loads. Work itself can be a heavy load. Life can be heavy, too. Jesus tells us that He knows how tired we are feeling. He can help us find rest if we let Him.

Jesus asks us to carry His load. Then He says, “ ‘Serving me is easy, and my load is light’ ” (Matthew 11:30, NIV). What does Jesus mean? He invites us to stop carrying our loads alone. Jesus asks us to give our loads to Him. Jesus tells us to accept His loads and carry them. His loads are easier to carry.

Jesus makes this promise to us right now. But we live on an earth that is filled with sin. So, how is this promise of rest even possible? After Adam and Eve sinned, God said to them, “ ‘You will work hard for your food, until your face is covered with sweat’ ” (Genesis 3:19, ERV). God meant our work to be hard for our own good. So, we all know how it feels to work hard and carry heavy loads. Sometimes these loads feel too heavy for us to carry alone. How, then, can we learn to have the rest that Jesus talks about?



Jesus invites us to stop carrying our loads by ourselves.

“ ‘I WILL GIVE YOU REST’ ” (Matthew 11:20–28)

Read Matthew 11:20–28. In these verses, Jesus says: “ ‘All you who work hard! All you who carry heavy loads! Come to me! I will give you rest’ ” (Matthew 11:28, WE). Why does Jesus say this? How does Jesus give us this rest?

Jesus never said anything without a good reason. If we want to understand the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28, we must look at the verses written just before this verse. This will help us not to misunderstand Jesus.

Matthew shows us a change in chapter 11 in his story about Jesus. Jesus says some very tough words about the cities in Galilee. Jesus does not accept the behavior of the people living there. Do you see that Jesus does not say only nice things to people so they will like Him? Jesus tells people what they need to hear most. That is why many people do not like Jesus. Also, people think Jesus is friends with the “wrong” people (Matthew 9:9–13). Worse, Jesus says that He can forgive sins. The religious leaders feel this is a bad thing to say (Matthew 9:1–8). Just who does this Jesus think He is?

Jesus says some strong words to the people. He compares the people to Sodom. This is not praise. Sodom was a very evil city. Jesus warns, “ ‘But I tell you, on the day when people are judged you will be punished harder than the people from Sodom’ ” (Matthew 11:24, WE).

People get upset and angry with Jesus. But then all of a sudden, Jesus changes topics. He offers real rest to the people. Jesus can offer this rest because He knows that “ ‘My Father has given me everything. No one knows the Son—only the Father knows the Son. And no one knows the Father—only the Son knows the Father. And the only people who will know about the Father are those the Son chooses to tell’ ” (Matthew 11:27, ERV). Jesus can give rest to His followers because He is God. The Father and Jesus are One.

What is the first thing we must do before we can give Jesus our heavy loads? We must first understand that we cannot carry our loads alone.

In Matthew 11:28, Jesus starts His invitation with the word “Come.” In the Greek language, this word is a command. We must obey this command if we want to find rest. “Come” also shows that we need to let Jesus take full control of our lives. So, we must give our lives fully to Him.



Jesus tells people what they need to hear most. But this does not make Jesus very popular.

**“ ‘ACCEPT MY TEACHING. LEARN FROM ME’ ”
(Matthew 11:29, ERV)**

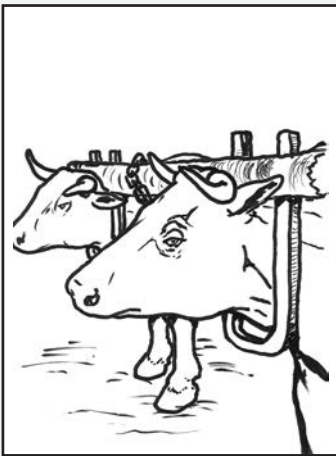
As we saw, Jesus invites us to give Him our heavy loads in Matthew 11:28. Then we will find real rest. In Matthew 11:29, 30, Jesus commands us to accept His teaching and to learn from Him. Why does Jesus give us this command right after He finishes giving us an invitation to rest?

In Matthew 11:28, Jesus tells us to “ ‘Come’ ” to Him. As we saw yesterday, this verb “come” is a command. Then Jesus gives us two more commands in Matthew 11:29: (1) “ ‘accept’ ” and (2) “ ‘learn’ ” (Matthew 11:29, ERV). These two verbs help us to pay attention to what Jesus wants us to do. Jesus commands us to accept His teaching and to learn from Him.

The first command, “accept,” shows us something important about Jesus the Son and God the Father. We already learned that the Father and Jesus are One in heart and mind. Matthew 11:25–27 shows us that the Father and Jesus are closely connected. Both the Father and the Son work closely together to save humans. Our job is to give our lives to God. God also gives us another job. He wants us to bring a blessing to the people near us. When we accept the work that God gives us to do, we show that we give our lives fully to God. God does not ask us to control this work. Jesus must be the leader. That is why His teaching is so easy to accept. And the work, or load, He asks us to do or carry is not hard (Matthew 11:30).

The second command, “ ‘learn from me,’ ” shows us more about the work Jesus expects His followers to do. In the Greek language, the verb “learn” is connected to the word “follower.” When we learn from Jesus, we are His followers. We obey Jesus and are loyal to His teachings.

In some Bibles, the words “ ‘accept my teaching’ ” are written as “ ‘pick up my yoke’ ” (Matthew 11:29, NTE). A yoke is a long piece of wood. The wood is connected to the necks of two animals so they can pull heavy loads together. Jesus uses the word “yoke” as a word picture. In the time of Jesus, the yoke also was a word picture for the law of God. So, when we accept the teachings of Jesus, we are the same as oxen who wear a yoke. Jesus asks us, “ ‘Pick up my yoke and put it on.’ ” What Jesus is really asking us to do is to obey His teachings (Matthew 11:29, NTE).



When we accept the teaching of Jesus, we are the same as oxen who wear a yoke.

How can we have the rest Jesus offers us?

**“ ‘I AM GENTLE AND DO NOT HAVE PRIDE’ ”
(Matthew 11:29, NLV)**

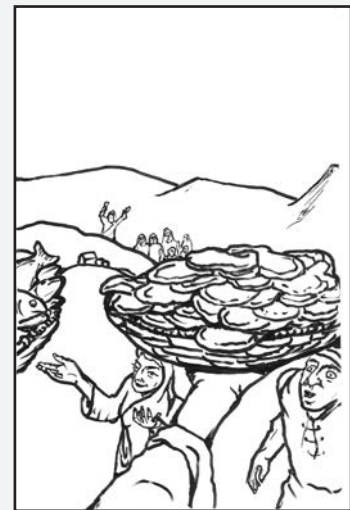
What does it mean to be gentle and have a heart empty of pride? Read Matthew 5:5; 1 Peter 3:4; and Isaiah 57:15 for the answer.

In 2 Corinthians 10:1, NLV, Paul talks about Jesus “Christ Who is so gentle and kind.” Does being gentle and kind show that Jesus was weak? No! Jesus did not try to start fights or argue with anyone. He did not want anything to stop His work for God (John 4:1–3). Sometimes people wanted to argue and fight with Jesus anyway. Then Jesus was brave. He answered people with courage. At the same time, Jesus also was kind. Remember when Jesus cried about Jerusalem just before He went to the cross to die (Luke 19:41–44)? Jesus did not shout curses at anyone at that time. Jesus told the people about awful things they will suffer in the future. But Jesus said these words with tears in His voice.

New Testament writers often show Jesus as the second Moses. Jesus talks from a mountain the same as Moses did (Matthew 5:1). And just as Moses did, Jesus tells the people the important rules of His kingdom (Matthew 5:2–Matthew 7:27). Jesus does a miracle the same as happened with Moses in the desert. Jesus feeds large crowds of people with food (Matthew 14:13–21). Numbers 12:3 says, “Now Moses was a man with no pride” (NLV). Jesus says the same thing about Himself in Matthew 11:29. When Jesus feeds 5,000 people, people are surprised and excited by His miracle. They say, “ ‘This is the One Who speaks for God Who is to come into the world [for all people]’ ” (John 6:14, NLV). The words of the people help us remember what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 18:15 and his own work as a special messenger from God.

Who is more gentle? Jesus or Moses? Whose heart has less pride? The heart of Jesus or of Moses? Jesus, of course. Jesus is our Savior who came down from heaven. Yes, Moses offered to give himself to save his people (Exodus 32:32). But the death of Moses will not save his people. Moses himself is a weak sinner. Moses also needs a Savior. Moses needs someone to pay for his sins. We can learn from Moses and the story about his life. But Moses cannot save us.

We need a Savior who can stand in our place. We need Someone who will accept our punishment for us. Only God can save us. He is the only One who can hang on the cross for us and pay for our sin.



When Jesus feeds 5,000 men plus women and children, people are surprised and excited by His miracle.

“ ‘SERVING ME IS EASY’ ” (Matthew 11:30, Nlrv)

Jesus asks us to “ ‘accept my teachings.’ ” As we saw from our study on Tuesday, some Bibles write “ ‘accept my teaching’ ” as “ ‘pick up my yoke and put it on’ ” (Matthew 11:29, NTE). You will remember that a yoke is a long piece of wood. The wood is connected to the necks of two animals so they can pull heavy loads together. We learned that Jesus uses the word “yoke” as a word picture. In the time of Jesus, the yoke was a word picture for the law. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus uses the word “yoke” as a word picture to show the Jews around Him that they have a wrong understanding about the law. The Jews and their religious leaders think that the law can save them. So, they try very hard to be perfect. This is why the law is a heavy yoke or hard load for them to carry.

The Greek word written as “ ‘easy’ ” in Matthew 11:30, ERV, also can be written as “good; pleasant; useful; and helpful.” Many people around us think that the law of God is too hard to follow. So, they think the law does not mean anything for our lives today. How can we help them discover that the law is really beautiful? How can we help them to love the Lawgiver?



We may trip and fall at times. But Jesus can help us get back up again.

Our walk with Jesus may not always be easy. But walking with Jesus always is good. Walking with Jesus always is the right thing to do. We may trip and fall at times. But Jesus can help us get back up again. We can continue to walk with Jesus at our side.

In Galatians 5:1, ICB, Paul writes: “We have freedom now because Christ [Jesus] made us free. So stand strong. Do not change and go back into the slavery of the law.” What does the part about not going back into “the slavery of the law” mean? Also, how has Jesus made us free? Jesus asks us to “ ‘pick up my yoke and put it on’ ” (Matthew 11:29, NTE). How is this yoke different from the yoke or “the slavery of the law” that Paul warns us about?

Whatever Paul means when he says “the slavery of the law,” he is not talking about our obedience to the Ten Commandments. Of course not! We can have real rest and freedom only when we obey the law of God. Our obedience is possible only because of our faith.

“ ‘MY LOAD IS NOT HEAVY’ ” (Matthew 11:30, NLV)

In Matthew 11:30, Jesus uses a word picture: “ ‘My load is not heavy’ ” (NLV). Jesus wants us to see that serving Him and accepting His teachings are easy. They are easy compared to trying to save ourselves by our good behavior.

Earlier in the week, we compared Jesus to Moses. Let us go back to the example of Moses. This time, we will look at Exodus 18:13–22. Jethro comes to visit Moses after Israel leaves Egypt and crosses the Red Sea. How does Jethro help Moses carry the heavy load of leadership?

Exodus 18:13 says that people come to Moses for advice. All day long, the people bring Moses problems to judge. Jethro sees that this hard work will soon wear out Moses. So, Jethro asks Moses to choose skilled helpers. These men can take care of the easy problems. Moses can solve the more difficult ones. Moses listens to his father-in-law. Jethro helps Moses make changes that save his life.

We need to learn the same lesson Moses did. We need to let people share our work and our heavy loads. That is why Jesus tells us His load is not heavy. He wants us to remember that He is the best Person to carry all our troubles. Paul helps us see the same Bible truth. In 1 Corinthians 12:12–26, Paul writes about the “body of Jesus.” This word picture shows us what it means to help each other carry our troubles and heavy loads. A body must be healthy to carry any weight. We need strong and healthy legs, arms, shoulders, and muscles to carry anything.

Read Galatians 6:2. This verse tells us to help each other carry troubles and heavy loads. How does doing this work show the real meaning of keeping the law of God?

Galatians 6:1 helps us understand Galatians 6:2 better. In Galatians 6:1, Paul tells us how to help Christians who sin. We must help carry their heavy loads and troubles. Then we will help sinners turn back to God. The Greek word for “load” means a heavy weight or stone. What does this word show us? It shows us we all carry heavy loads. We all need people to help us carry them. So, we must share our loads. God commands us to do this work. But we can do this work only if our hearts are gentle. Then when we help others carry their loads, we will become more loving.



When we help others carry their loads, we will become more loving.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Do you say your work is hard? Do you complain that life is difficult and filled with hard times? Do you feel you have no strength to stand against sin? Do you think you cannot be patient? Do you say that the Christian life is too hard? Then you can be sure that you do not serve Jesus or accept His teachings. You are serving Satan.”—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, page 267, adapted.

“We can do nothing to earn the favor of God. Nothing at all. We must not trust in ourselves or our good behavior to save us. We want to do what is wrong. That is natural because we are sinners. So, we must come to Jesus. Then we will find rest in His love. God will accept every person who comes to Him and trusts in the good works of our Savior. Then love will fill our hearts. We may not feel any wild excitement when God accepts us. But we will feel peace and trust. Then every load and trouble we have will stop feeling too heavy for us to carry. That is because serving Jesus is easy. When we serve Jesus, our work will make us happy. Anything we must give up for God will fill us with joy. The road that we walked before may have looked dark. But now Jesus shines His light before us. The dark road becomes bright. Then we will walk in the light. Jesus Himself is in the light.”—Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works*, pages 38, 39, adapted.



“When we serve Jesus, our work will make us happy.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Jesus prays in Matthew 11:25–27. Study this prayer. Talk in class about how God teaches us about mercy and forgiveness. Also, why does God hide His saving plan (“these things” [Matthew 11:25, ICB]) from people who have a lot of spiritual knowledge? Why does God show His saving plan to people who are the same as babies in their spiritual walk with God?
- ② How can we help the people around us who are trying hard to carry their troubles and heavy loads? How can we help these people come to Jesus to find rest?
- ③ Think more about the words of Jesus: “ ‘I am gentle and do not have pride’ ” (Matthew 11:29, NLV). Does this mean we should not feel good about ourselves? How does the Cross help us understand what Jesus really means in this verse? As we stand at the foot of the cross, why is a gentle spirit and a heart empty of all pride the only feeling we should have?

**“NEVER STOP PRAYING”
(1 THESSALONIANS 5:17, ERV)**

Ning Cing had two daughters named Lun and Nuam. They had escaped from their home in the country of Myanmar. Now they were living in the state of Georgia in the United States.

Eight-year-old Lun had a prayer request. She wanted God to send her and her little sister to an Adventist school. Nuam was only four years old. She was too little to start school. But that did not stop Lun from asking God to help her, too. Every morning and evening Lun prayed at family worship.

Their mother, Ning, was a single mother. Ning had no money and no job. So, her daughter Lun had to go to the public school that first year after they came to live in Georgia. Ning had other problems, too. She did not speak English or know how to drive a car.

Then Ning started to get headaches. The pain spread from her head to her left arm. Then the pain spread down the left side of her body. Soon Ning lost sight in her left eye. Ning cried. As her tears fell, Ning read the Bible and prayed. “God, please answer my prayer,” Ning said. “Give me a miracle.”

Slowly the pain went away. Then her eye healed. Ning heard about a job in a warehouse. An Adventist pastor drove Ning there to talk with the manager. Ning got the job. Kind coworkers picked Ning up every day and took her to and from work. Soon, Ning learned to drive. She was happy she had a job. But she did not make enough money to send Lun to an Adventist school.

Lun went to public school her first year in America. Nuam was old enough to start first grade in the fall. Both girls kept praying. When the school year started, both girls started public school. But they never stopped praying.

“God, please help us,” Lun prayed. “We want to learn the Bible in school. We want to know You.”

Three weeks later, an Adventist friend called Ning. The friend told her about money from a 13th Sabbath Offering. There was enough money for the girls to go to an Adventist school. The friend told Ning, “Your daughters can start school next week.”

Lun and Nuam were so happy! “Thank You, God,” they said. “You can do anything. You heard our prayers. We love You, God.”

“God is very wonderful to my family and me,” Ning said. “He loves and cares for us so much.”

Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering in 2011. This offering helped Lun and Nuam go to an Adventist school. This quarter, your 13th Sabbath Offering will again help children get an Adventist education in North America. Thank you for giving.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



“God, please help us,” Lun prayed. “We want to learn the Bible in school. We want to know You.”

