

# Vacation from Life but not Jesus: Rest

Matthew 11:28–30

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One of the best vacations in my life was the year we saw the Grand Canyon. I had been looking forward to this vacation. I planned a lot of things. We flew into Phoenix and stayed at a golf resort. It was June, and they counted this as their off season. The place was dirt cheap. One afternoon at 3 pm I played nine holes of golf. It included a cart, two sleeves of balls and two bottles of water. The attendant said be sure to drink all the water and there is drink cart traveling the course if you need more. It was ninety-five degrees with about five percent humidity. I thought it was seventy-five.

We rented a car and drove to the Grand Canyon. The glory of God's handiwork is more than I can describe. Pictures and videos don't do it justice. I did get a picture of a mule deer grazing. That's a big animal. We also drove to Mesa Verde, Colorado to the ancient Indian Dwellings. That was fascinating to see how people lived thousands of years ago. The cabin we stayed at overlooked the landscape with the mountains in the background. We could see the wild horses off the porch on the cabin. As we returned to Phoenix we stopped at Sedona. The red rock is magnificent. There were a few wild animals there too.

This was one the best vacations because from the moment we started planning the trip I was praying for Jesus to help me release my stress and rest in Him. Today's scripture Matthew 11:28-30 is a favorite for many folks. It inspired our beautiful stained glass window. I have claimed this promise for many years.

***Matthew 11:28–30 (NIV) “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”***

**The invitation to come to Jesus is open when we are on vacation.** The whole idea is to come to Jesus. Very rarely do we want people to show up at our home without an invitation. We want people to be in our homes because we invited them. My parents and my uncles used to say as they were leaving, you're invited to our house next week. It was an on going message to be together each week. But, you didn't just drop in, you needed to be invited. Well, that is except for Grandma. She would just show up. You welcomed her as if you had invited her.

Jesus offers an open invitation to come to Him. Whenever or wherever Jesus wants us to come to Him. No matter how big or small our issue Jesus is inviting you. There is no need for fear of ridicule or need to be embarrassed by your issues. Jesus says come to me.

No one needs to think that their problem is unrealistic or unworthy of His help. Jesus says come to me. Any person who comes to Jesus will be welcomed by a hand of compassion and power. Jesus says come to me. While you may be overwhelmed or beat down, Jesus says come to me.

Jesus is personally inviting anyone to come to Him. Think about this, you have been invited by the God who died for your sins. Jesus willingly took on the cross and the tomb to save you from your sins. The one who rose from the dead says, come to me.

Consider the magnitude of His invitation. Jesus isn't being forced to help you, He wants to help. Jesus doesn't need to help you, He wants to help. He doesn't point you toward an exercise program, a long walk, a ride on your bike. He invites you to come to Him. Do you see how personal this is?

Jesus doesn't invite you to more activities at church. He doesn't pour guilt on your head. Do you see how personal this is? Jesus sees your burdens, the weight you carry each day. He encourages you to bring to Him whatever it is. Do you see how personal this is?

Jesus knows that this life is weary. It takes a toll on everyone who lives and breathes. He experienced our life for Himself. He felt the burdens, He became weary. Do you see how personal this is? Jesus calls our names, saying come to me. Do you see how personal this is?

***Matthew 11:29 (NIV)***

***Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,***

**We don't want our vacations to be a time for yokes and learning.** Vacations are about releasing our stress, rest, reconnection, and renewal, right? Why else would you live behind your own bed and sleep in a tent, a camper, a cabin, a hotel, a resort, or even a cruise ship? You want to get away from the neighbors, the job, the stress, the burdens. The ideal way to do this is to go to the mountains, the ocean, the desert, the retreat center. You can hike in the woods or walk along the beach. You can look up at the stars at night or listen to the waves hit the sand. You can take in an unobstructed sunset or get up early to see the sunrise. You can be alone with a book or gathering with family.

You just want to release the stress and rest. It's not a vacation if your phone is taking voice mail or you're getting text messages and emails. That's work, that's the job, that's not time away. Vacations don't include making reports or reading reports. Vacations aren't about studying the plans for the next big project. You certainly aren't on vacation if you're taking meetings or going to meetings. All of that stuff is what you want to leave behind. All those things are what caused you to need a vacation. That's why your taking time off to get away.

When we were kids we loved summer vacation because it meant no school. It meant no assignments, no projects, no reading, no learning. Summer vacation was about fun, fun, fun. From morning to night and then sometimes beyond summer vacation was a brain break to rest and have fun.

In ancient times a yoke was attached to an ox or two to haul heavy loads. Your boss, your family, your daily life is like a yoke. It's attached to you and you're expected to carry a lot of weight. It's so much weight that you feel one more thing will crush you. Then you will never be able to get back up again. That's miserable, right? That's too much, right? That's got to come to an end, right?

Think about the yoke you carry everyday. What you and I carry is different. How you carry your burden is different than how I carry my burden. Along with all the other things happening this week, two friends from college stopped at our house. Yes, they let us know months ahead that they would be in the area. They're younger than us and they've retired. They've got a camper and a great looking blue truck to pull it. They can pick up and go whenever they please. Do I sound burdened with jealousy and envy?

We let them know about our situation, but we wanted to see them. When our friends arrived, they asked how we were doing. What's the normal answer? I'm fine, right? He said, no really how are you doing? My response was, I'm fine. I've had sometime to release the stress and rest in the midst of life.

Jesus had given me a yoke that He made easy, and a burden that He made light. It was because I came to Him, I gave it to Him, and He was with me.

***Matthew 11:29 (NIV) for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.***

**As I learn from Jesus there is daily rest and vacation rest.** When I go to Jesus I discover again and again His compassion and His openness to helping me. We've had a few stress filled days recently. There has been an uncertainty about what will happen next. Surprises, unplanned events, unexpected expenses have become more frequent. They've almost become the normal instead of the exception. That has been stressful. Our routine has changed and we've started a new learning curve. It's amazing how stupid, uninformed, unprepared I really am. You may not be amazed by this, but I certainly have been.

In the midst of these stress filled days there have been moments when we thought we were at our breaking point. That meant impatience and a short fuse. More than once, one of us was forced to stop. Other times it resulted in unpleasant attitudes and even unpleasant words. There have been sleepless nights. There have been lethargic days. There have been cries for help when we wouldn't normally do that.

I know that you have faced days and weeks that are stress filled. In the midst of it all we need to find rest. We want to get away. This is not an ad for cruise in the Caribbean.

What empowered both of us was Jesus. You'd expect that from the preacher and his wife. We're super human, right? Wrong! We're perfect, right? Wrong!

I'm not perfect but Jesus is. My reactions to stress-filled situations are much like yours. When surprises happen, the unexpected takes place, we do the human thing. We panic or we try to be super human. I found myself talking to Jesus a lot this week. I will admit more than most weeks. Too often I had the human response. Quickly I started talking to Jesus. We quoted scripture. We shared scripture. We prayed alone and silently, together and aloud. We experienced in the midst of post-vacation life rest in the midst of the stress. Just as I needed Jesus, He was there for me. Just as the one more thing happened, Jesus' gentleness and humility came alive within me.

Out of all the things that happened let me share this one. Wednesday was summer hot, right? To be in the sun was to sweat. I road the motorcycle to Huck's Tavern for the lunchtime Bible Study. I got off the bike, but failed to turn off the ignition. It's separate from turning off the engine. With my helmet and gloves off I went over to the restaurant.

When I returned to the bike only to discover the battery had died. I sent a text message to Randy, he was busy. I sent a message to Lonie. Finally she called back and I told her the tools to bring. Now, when I discovered the battery dead was I felt stupid, but I didn't swear, throw my helmet on the ground, or kick the bike.

When Lonie arrived my shirt was soaked in sweat. Then we discovered I needed another tool. No swearing, no kicking, no throwing things. We got in the car, came back to the house, got the tool and returned to Roscoe Village. The good thing about living in a small town is you're only about five minutes from anything. I attached the jumper cables, pushed the starter button, not enough power. No temper tantrum, I just waited in the hot sun with sweat in my eyes. Two more attempts and the bike started. When all this started I simply said, Jesus what do I do?

***Matthew 11:30 (NIV) For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.***

**You will only find rest when Jesus is with you everywhere you go.** Some of you will be going away for a vacation this summer. Take Jesus with you. Release the stress and find rest in Jesus. Jesus is not a burden as we think about burdens. Jesus doesn't wear us out or wear us down. Jesus gives us power. Jesus doesn't make life miserable.

Jesus gives us hope. Jesus doesn't add confusion or distress to our lives. Jesus gives us peace. The burden Jesus gives is trusting in Him through every situation. His burden is having faith in Him when doubt and anger, disappointment and rage seek to take over. His burden is trusting Him when you are alone. His burden is believing Him when everything is falling apart.

The very yoke of Jesus is His presence with you. He is upon you; in front and behind you; beside, above and below you; He is within you. Keep Him with you as the work piles up upon you. Keep Him with you as you get in the car, board the plane, walk through the cabin door of your vacation.

Take the invitation from Jesus and trust Him always. There is no greater companion than Jesus. Find your rest in Him. When you are burdened, do whatever it takes to give Him your burden.

Jesus knows your yoke and your burden. Jesus knows your hardship and your pain. Jesus knows the moments you fail to trust Him and your lack of faith.

Jesus loves you. Jesus will never stop loving you. Jesus' love reaches to the furthest places in the universe. Jesus' love touches the tiniest of things on this earth. His love stretches to the east with no end. His love goes to the west overlaps, His love continues forever. This love of Jesus has called you to put the burdens of your weary life on Him.

Now, is the time to trust in His love, His gentleness, His humility to be with you. Choose His invitation. Give Him all of your life.