

Afternoon Lesson. John 1. vv. 29-51.

12-10-1980

TEXT MATTHEW 11 V28-30

Unfathomed words of divine grace, love, compassion, sweet mercy and divine faithfulness have flowed from the loving human heart of our blessed Redeemer to His unworthy sons and daughters; to those in vital, sacred, saving relationship with Him in the Covenant of Grace; that section of the Church who know the travail of this brief mortal life, the days of their pilgrim journey, the period of time they must know in their pathway through a waste howling wilderness. Two things in the holy

concept I shall deliver to you. The first was emphasised in the sacred ordinance of yesterday; the uniting of a man and woman in holy matrimony in the Name of the Trinity. The principle of it is, and it was read in the first Lesson: the Lord looked on the wonderful man He had created in His own image, and according to the wisdom of God which none dare question He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." So from one of the ribs of Adam as he slept the Lord made a woman, and brought her unto the man. "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." That is the concept. It is the will of God that there should be a realisation of one to lean on, look to, depend on: that we should not be alone. Let us therefore pause to bless God for so many blissful years in the realisation of the Lord's holy ordinance and the beauty, glory, wonder of it. (Some are in the acute or more chronic pain of the loss of the holy ordinance of God.) The Lord will not have us to be alone: He will not leave us alone. That is why He says, "Come unto me. It is not My pleasure or purpose that you should be alone. Do you realise you have a heavenly Friend, and He is always your Friend."? I will not leave you comfortless," This is His own word. "I will come to you." "I will visit you. You are near Me; My own flesh and bones. I am near you."

So when we come to try to evaluate it, can you fathom the glory, wonder, beauty, blessedness of having an eternal Friend? Friends on the earth level die: union formed in Christ will never die. There are those we love but see no more on the earth level: the Lord Jesus is an eternal Friend. He is always there. He has always made provision. He will never let us die, sink, fall: He is our eternal Friend. Whether you are in Sussex, East Anglia, the Metropolis, the Middle East, Australia, South Africa, the U.S.A. there is no difference. Your hospital may be the District General, Westminster, or Guys: it does not make any difference, your Friend is there. You will say when you get there, "My Friend is here. He went in front of me, made the arrangements and did everything for me." O the untold volume there is, and the realisation you are not alone. I realise there are many facets to the subject. Jacob was left alone, and there are times when you feel lonely in reference to human props, to the good, profit and peace of your souls. But the Lord is

saying, "Come unto me." Can you evaluate, or could you write a testimony concerning the glory of having Him as your heavenly Father? "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." There it is, the same word in all languages, wherever there is a saint of God. If He is your Father it will be so positive. Father will say to you, "Come unto me. Come, My daughter, My son. Come unto me." You will say the same to your affectionate children; to those who are shy. "Come to your father, your mother." What a welcome! This is the concept: the Lord will not have us left alone, and you will not be. I can demonstrate. Take a child of God in need, distress, anxiety every day with the problems of life, and you feel out for your heavenly Father, to find Him with you. How dare I go into the pulpit without? He will not have you alone. Take a child of God in affliction: they want to find the dear Lord there. In your advance to the theatre you want to find Him with you. That is the concept. "Look, My child, you labour, travail, you are heavy laden. This is what I will do ~~you~~ for you. I am calling you to Myself. It is honouring to Me and delightful for you. It is to My glory and for your salvation, peace, comfort. Come unto Me." It makes you realise you belong to Him, you belong to the heavenly family. The biggest tragedy on the earth level is when people feel they do not belong. The Lord makes His people realise they belong to Him. He wishes their company and communion. He says to them, "Come unto me." There could not be a more loving, gentle, kind word. If the concept sinks into your spirit it will be full of worth and beauty: it will put new life into you. "Come unto me." It expresses wonderful relationship, and it is especially as we travel through this dark world of sin and sorrow that we need all this. How shall I name life to you? It is the travail of mortal life. I know this is a word that is applicable to those who have reached eighty years of age, but a realisation of it begins sooner. Their strength becomes labour and sorrow. Will the dear Lord leave you as poor isolated souls in the desert, as if you had no one to love or care for you? No: He says, "Come unto me." Whilst love, true love and affection and measurable sympathy is appreciated on the earth level, no one can come where you are or do you good, only the dear Lord. All creatures have a limited capacity, a

measure of experience of the same thing: it is very limited. There is only One dear One who says, "Come unto me." (It looks as though we shall spend all day with the beloved flock on this part of the subject.)

There is another aspect of it. When He says "Come unto me" you are in a place where no one else understands, and you do not understand yourself. You may feel nonplussed, in a dilemma, perplexed and bewildered. The dear Lord says "Come unto me." He knows, and it is sweet to be able to look up to Him and say, "Thou knowest." So "Come unto me." I will spend a little longer on the case description. The people here addressed are those who labour and are heavy laden. We have spent a while on travail: it is constant. There are so many things within and without you and it is travail. The Lord gives it you by His Spirit and there is so much that opposes it: "Come unto me, all ye that labour," It is good to labour, not to be indolent, slothful, lethargic, but to labour specifically under the influence of the Spirit. Take a case you know of that describes travail,- the case of Jacob and his blessed Master. He travailed, wrestled, because the Lord wrestled with him. This is one of the most profound portions of Scripture. The whole object of wrestling is that one should down the other, get him down on the ground. Giving to Jacob super-human strength he was able to say, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." There is this in the word labour, travail. "Lord, I must have the blessing." It is a remarkable thing to lay hold of the Lord and to know you have by faith. There are times when you want a thing badly, and your prayer is beating the air. Once you get hold of the Lord you can say, "Lord, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Travail is most exhausting. It is a very true fact, in any profession where people put heart, soul and life in it, by the time they come off duty they are like a rag; all their strength is gone, and this applies to the ministry. Do you know what labour is, spiritual labour and travail? Surely if the Lord is pleased to grant this the day will come when you will say as did Hannah, "For this child I prayed." There is a result.

The second word in the case is 'heavy laden'. We could be called beasts of burden. Since the fall of man life on this planet has never been easy: it is 'by the sweat of the face'. In the office, on the farm, or whatever form it is, "In the sweat of ^{thy} face shalt thou eat bread." So

we have the word 'heavy laden'. I wonder how soon you begin to realise you are heavy laden? You are not disillusioned: presently in some phase of life the child of God enters this. Usually with every sweet and beautiful thing there is an added load. My wicked heart and sin is the top priority; my past life, backslidings, sins of youth and growing years; all those sins since I have known the Lord. We are heavy laden in so many ways. In our endeavour to dissect the word we may present three things. Category A is, those who know the Lord, who have had years in the way of life, holiness and peace. There are acute and chronic trials, singular and peculiar to you and your lot. You are heavy laden. It is not a matter of being married or single: it comes to every child of God. People meeting you for the first time have no idea you are heavy laden. You have acute things that come suddenly: they are very painful and they are all over in a fortnight, and it is a good thing if they are. While ~~it~~ ^{the} lasts it is intolerable, the pain of it is excruciating. In the old ^{days} an abscess had to be lanced and out pours the pus. If you are in an acute thing you find it is exceedingly painful. If the Lord did not intervene soon you would have to go into your coffin. The nature of an acute thing is it is so profound that human life would never last. The Lord says, "Come unto me." I did hope to day some of you precious souls would be favoured to come to Him, or when you get home you would really come to Him.

"Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden." You know, there is an interesting word concerning the nature of the enjoyment of rest. It is to be found close to the Lord Jesus and to learn a little about Him. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." That is the way to get rest, not the opposite to meekness and lowliness. If you sit at the feet of the Lord Jesus and see His meekness "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."- you will find rest. It is proud, determined nature breaks our rest,- a proud disposition that is so headstrong. "Learn of Me." that is how you get rest. The best place to be found in acute distress is at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in our right mind. There is an inexpressible feeling of relief when the Lord appears for you: your load is all lifted evaporated, dispelled, gone from you. You put your head back on His

bosom and breathe deeply the heavenly atmosphere, and feel the cloud has passed over. And there are chronic troubles. He says, "Come unto me,"- if you are in a right spirit; if you have got the Spirit of the blessed One, meek and lowly in heart, "Come." It is very precise, beautiful. And there is another interesting word at the end; "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. This is the way things are made light and easy,- by My love, Spirit, grace." With a sense of sinful unworthiness and the preciousness of the dear Lamb of God, then "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

We have in category B chronic things, and they may be expounded. They are things for a child of God to carry to the grave, or for a long time, year after year,- chronic things. Poor soul! and there are things that God's people carry to the grave. I will hearten you with the realisation that the good Lord who turned Job's captivity is able to turn yours. You are in it a long time, and the Lord turns it, "as the streams in the south" and you are like them that dream. It is the Lord's appearing. For you it is the same word Jesus speaks. Why not hearken to your blessed One by His Spirit? why not ask Him to help you to come? Why stay so far away when He says to you, "Come unto me."? Why tarry? We debar ourselves of much comfort: it is unbelief. Why stay away? why not try Him? I speak with profound reverence: why not venture on Him now by the help of God? I say in a reverent manner to those who are wise; why not venture on Him now? venture wholly. There is no legality in it: there are the sweet influences of Pleiades in the gospel. Dear Esther said, "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law? and if I perish, I perish.- I will perish at His feet, but I will go."

"I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try; Do you know this sweet
spirit? For if I stay away I know
I must for ever die."

"I will venture." So He says, "Come unto me." What do you think He will do? He has said, "Is there any thing too hard for the Lord?" This indicates He will demonstrate His power and skill. It is right through the Word of God. "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." So "Come unto me." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous

to be moved." "Come unto me."

I must give you a pause. This is what the preacher can say. I wish I could live at His dear feet. In a certain sense we do live there when we are in the rich enjoyment of the Text. It opens out a glorious potential for the people of God. You are toiling with rowing, in painful travail. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,"- with a load of responsibilities on you. It is certain at some stage in life you arrive at the conclusion that you have got more on you than you can carry. Is that right? Your burden is too heavy for you. I wonder how many of you understand and appreciate this? It is as though the dear Lord says "I have loaded your shoulders well with woe or responsibilities. The purpose is, I will have you come unto Me." You will never be able to carry it on your own, only as the Lord helps you and is with you. It will be a matter of coming up from the wilderness, leaning on your Beloved. There are deep things for the wise; especially for those who are more established in their souls. So what does He say? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, sweet rest. Come and lean on My bosom; rest in My everlasting arms, in the Covenant of Grace, on My sweet Person, in the bed that is green, in My atonement, in My heart, on My promises, My faithfulness, lovingkindness, compassion. Come unto Me. Come and rest. For so He giveth His beloved sleep." "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep."- rest. What a rest is Christ to me! what a resting place!

So you have your responsibilities, and the heavy load of spiritual exercise. The burden of it becomes the heaviest of all; it is almost intolerable. If you are in these things they will grow to such a degree that you will not be able to bear yourself until the Lord has accomplished it. "Come unto me." There is something singular about all this. "I will give you rest."- sweet rest in His love, covenant, grace, in His arms, on His bosom. Think of sweet rest; not a care or anxiety.

"And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

for Time and Eternity, body, soul, spirit, family, Church, all that concerns me. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The word is applicable to those about to take

their flight to Glory: it is also for those who will live. He says, "I will give you rest." and you are resting on Him, in His atonement, on the green bed; and when you are, He comes and puts His yoke on you. What for? The yoke of authority, power, of His commandments. It is the apparatus He puts on you. This yoke is specially prepared, a hollowed frame that fits your shoulders. What is it for? It is for service. There is the indication by divine authority that He will put weights on you. "Take my yoke upon you,- in My House, among My people, in My Church. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart:and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Take my yoke on you." I leave you with that: - in His blessed service; in following and obeying Him as His servant. Blessed be God.