

## May 2009 Week 2 TEACHING

# *A Loving Invitation*

Did you ever imagine in your wildest dreams that you would live in a day and time like the present. Some of the most amazing things have happened, things that have brought us a great deal of joy. It feels like a shift has occurred, like we've all been invited to a big bash, but nobody knows the when, what, and where. Something different is in the air, and there's a sense that whatever it is that is going to transpire, it is just around the corner. Feelings of optimism and joy surround some who sense this, but a great many others are dismayed, and feel that things will only get worse. They feel that what's just around the corner is a life filled with more doom and devastation.

I have no doubt that those who lived a generation ago also experienced a nuance that caught them by surprise, and they reacted much the way many of us do now. The difference between them and us is that we know more, and are therefore more accountable. But who wants to hear that? Particularly at a time when the situations facing many of us can seem so bleak. With rampant job losses and the dismantling of relationships left and right, it is hard to fathom handling anything more than what is already on our plates.

God never adds to our burdens. Although for some it is very comforting to hear and think that the old saying "*He will never put more on you than what you can handle.*" is true, you won't find that sentiment in the bible. What you will find is a loving invitation by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

### **Matthew 11:28 NLT**

*28 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.*

*29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*30 For my yoke fits perfectly, and the burden I give you is light."*

The first thing you are going to look for on a hand-written or printed invitation is the "**What**". You want to know exactly what it is you are being invited to. Jesus Christ handled that in three words, he said "*Come to me...*" He is telling us that if we will just come into his presence, it will be well worth the time. He guarantees that if we will simply open our hearts to receive something from him, he will deliver; you will be better than you were before you came. There isn't any person, place, or thing capable of extending an invitation like that.

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It's a pretty standard courtesy to always bring along a small token or gift whenever we are invited to a function; to give something that reflects our appreciation for being thought of and included. Jesus Christ doesn't ask us to bring anything but ourselves and our burdens. He says *"I want you to know that whatever it is that you are carrying right now, you can bring it to me. I know all about it, and I can fix it. Just bring it with you when you come, and please know that you won't be leaving with it. I'm going to give you rest, and I'm going to teach you how to lay that burden down and leave it there. I want you to replace it with my love, my peace, my rest."*

Jesus Christ said in verse 29, *"I am humble..."* In essence, he is telling us that he's not about playing head trips on us. He won't play with our emotions and leave us high and dry. He isn't trying to swindle us out of anything. He is humble and lovely. Ephesians 1:21 NLT says that he is *"... far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come."* He could employ his power in any way that he chooses, and he chooses to offer it to us.

Jesus Christ is fully aware of his power. If anyone has a right to brag about it-- it's him, but he doesn't do that because that's not who he is. He wants to share, and to show us the heart of the Father. He wants to teach us how to take authority over our circumstances so that we don't feel defeated and depressed, but victorious and thankful.

The second thing you look for on an invite is the **"When"**. You want to see if you can fit the date into your schedule. If you are like me and have a pretty full plate, you might start to think about how you can juggle things around a bit to accommodate yet another thing to do. Jesus Christ knows the propensity of our minds. He knows how difficult it is for some of us to commit, especially when we are not quite sure that we can let go of the worry and doubt we clinch so tightly. His invitation says *"Listen, whatever it is that you think is so important, I got it covered. My Father took care of the need before you knew anything about it. I got chu' in every way, so don't stress. Don't let anything keep you from coming to me, because nothing is more important than what I will give you."*

No matter how long you've been a Christian, you need to be reminded of what Jesus Christ so freely gives. He doesn't need anything from anyone; he just wants to pour into us, so that we can become better than we were.

When we allow the condition of the world to dictate the condition of our souls, our lives can become stale and mundane, but our Savior knows that we were never intended to fit into the world's mold. He said *"I've tailor-made my yoke to be a perfect fit for you. Put it on like a second skin and wear it everywhere you go. Then, no matter what happens, or when it happens, you'll be prepared."*

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In our day and time, we are all strategically positioned to access some of the most exciting revelations from the Word of God that has ever been available in the history of humankind. Jesus Christ said in Matthew 11:30 NLT that the burden he gives us is light. It doesn't weigh us down the way that our worries and fears do. It lifts us up into the glorious light of our Heavenly Father's love. The more we know about Jesus Christ, the more we will begin to see that the Father has not left us alone. He has a plan that includes our well being and happiness, and He would like nothing more than to share it with us. So don't continue to carry feelings of doubt, anxiety, and fear about your circumstances. Take them off, accept his invitation, and leave everything at his feet. He will give you rest and a whole lot more.

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