

“Find Rest for Your Souls”

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**"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, ...
and you will find rest for your souls."**

Jesus, Matthew 11:29



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Find Rest for Your Souls - Matthew 11:29 - Yoked Oxen Pulling a Loaded Cart Together

"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." (Matthew 11:29)

The expression, "You will find rest for your souls" occurs only twice in the Bible, in Jeremiah 6:16 and Matthew 11:29. This lesson explains how rest for our souls is found according to the Bible.

The scripture quotations in this lesson are taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless noted otherwise (Ref. 1).

Consider. According to the Bible, how does a person find rest for their soul?

(continued next page)

1. Rest for our souls is found where God's ancient, good way is honored.

"This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.' But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'" (Jeremiah 6:16)

In Jeremiah 6:16, God promised the people of Jerusalem that they would find rest for their souls if they would walk in obedience to God's good way as God had instructed their ancestors. God's good way was expressed primarily in the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:1-21, Deuteronomy 5:33).

In Jeremiah 6:16, the promised "rest" in "rest for your souls" means *inner peace and tranquility* (Ref. 2, Ref. 3). This Hebrew word for "rest" in Jeremiah 6:16 occurs only once in the Old Testament (Ref. 2).

Unfortunately, the people of Jerusalem chose to refuse God's instruction. Their ears were closed and the word of the Lord was offensive to them (Jeremiah 6:10). By choosing their own way, they did not find rest for their souls. By choosing their own way, they soon suffered siege and being carried away into captivity (2 Kings 24:10-14).

2. Jesus is the source, the giver of rest to the weary and burdened.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

In Matthew 11:28, we find the first part of Jesus' two-part summons. The first part of his summons is "Come to me." The second part, in Matthew 11:29, is "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me."

Jesus is the giver of true rest (Matthew 11:28). When we come to Jesus as he has already invited us, he gives us rest from our toil, and rest from our burdens. When we come to Jesus, he unburdens us by forgiving our sins and taking away our anxiety as we place our faith and trust in him (1 John 1:9, John 14:1).

In Matthew 11:28, the rest that Jesus gives us is *anapauó* [pronounced, *an-*

ap-ow'-o], which means *refreshment* (Ref. 4). The rest [*refreshment*] that Jesus gives from our anxiety, grief, and sin prepares us to enter (or re-enter) service to Jesus. By coming to Jesus, and only to Jesus, we find the peace, comfort, and forgiveness that we need (John 14:27, Matthew 5:4, 1 John 1:9).

3. True soul rest is found in submission to Jesus' gentle yoke.

"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." (Matthew 11:29)

The surprise and main point for this lesson is that rest for our souls is found in submission to Jesus' gentle yoke. Jesus said we are to take his yoke upon us and learn from him, and we will find rest for our souls.

In Matthew 11:29, the Greek word for "rest" is *anapausis* [pronounced, *ah-NAH-pow-sis*] which means *inner tranquility* (Ref. 5). This definition for "rest" is similar to the rest the Lord promised we would find by walking in his good way (Jeremiah 6:16, Ref. 2).

Jesus teaches that we find rest [*tranquility*] for our souls by responding to both parts of Jesus' two-part summons. First, we come to Jesus and he unburdens us by forgiving our sins and taking away our anxiety as we trust in him (Matthew 11:28, 1 John 1:9, John 14:1). Second, as Jesus promised, we find rest for our souls by taking on Jesus' yoke, and learning from him. Taking on Jesus' yoke and learning from him is not "one and done," but is a continuing spiritual process throughout our lifetime (Matthew 11:29).

Rest for our souls is not found in escape from work and service but in submission to Christ for work and service. Let us then take on Jesus' yoke, learn from him, and serve him daily. Then we will find that his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matthew 11:30).

Apply. Come to Jesus in prayer. Receive his forgiveness, and release your burdens to him. Take on his yoke by submitting your will to him, and learning from him. Ask him to direct you in the work and service he would have you do for others. Then you will find Jesus' promise -- rest for your soul.

Related Lessons

"The Way of the Lord (Old Testament)" - Deuteronomy 5:33

"Jesus' Invitation - Come to Me and Rest" - Matthew 11:28-29

References

1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible/>
2. <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4771.htm>
3. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/repose>
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