

HWMR: THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST AS REVEALED IN MATTHEW (Week 5)

Christ as the One Who Gives Us Rest

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26, 31—2:2; Matt. 11:28-30; Exo. 31:12-17

- Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
- Gen. 1:31 And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
- Gen. 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth and all their host were finished.
- Gen. 2:2 And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.
- Matt. 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
- Matt. 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
- Matt. 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
- Exo. 31:12 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
- Exo. 31:13 Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you.
- Exo. 31:14 Therefore you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.
- Exo. 31:15 Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to Jehovah; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death.
- Exo. 31:16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.
- Exo. 31:17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.

Day 1

Matt. 11:28-30 - Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

- I. **“Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light”**—Matt. 11:28-30:
- A. To toil here refers not only to the toil of striving to keep the commandments of the law and religious regulations but also to the **toil of struggling to be successful in any work**; whoever toils thus is always heavily burdened.
- B. After the Lord extolled the Father, acknowledging the Father’s way and declaring the divine economy (vv. 25-27), He called this kind of people **to come to Him for rest**.
- C. Rest refers not only to being set free from the toil and burden under the law or religion or under any work or responsibility, but also to **perfect peace and full satisfaction**.
- D. To take the Lord’s yoke is to **take the will of the Father**; it is not to be regulated or controlled by

any obligation of the law or religion or to be enslaved by any work, but to be **constrained by the will of the Father**.

E. The Lord lived such a life, **caring for nothing but the will of His Father** (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38); **He submitted Himself fully** to the Father's will (Matt. 26:39, 42); hence, He asks us to learn from Him:

1. The believers **copy** the Lord in their spirit by taking His yoke—God's will—and toil-ing for God's economy according to His model—11:29a; 1 Pet. 2:21.
2. The Lord, who was **submissive** and **obedient** to the Father throughout His life, has given us His life of submission and obedience—Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 5:7-9.
3. Christ was the first God-man, and we are the many God-men; we have to **learn of Him** in His absolute submission to God and His uttermost satisfaction with God.
4. God is doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ that we may be able to do His will (13:20-21); **God operates in us** both the willing and the working for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

The rest in verse 28 is spoken of this way: "*Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.*" This rest is the **rest of salvation**. Verse 29 is the **rest of victory**. The first rest is the rest of being **reconciled with God**. The second rest is the **rest within us**. The first rest is the rest of our salvation. The second rest is our rest on earth.

"Come to Me all who toil and are burdened," Brothers and sisters, perhaps you do not realize what the world is. There are many people whose days on the earth are not many, yet they have much experience of the world. They would tell you that the world is in a fever. When I cross the big streets, I see many people walking to and fro. All of them are so busy. I would ask, "What are they doing? Are they mad?" I pity them. Probably the whole world is in a fever. Oh, **they do not have rest**. The Lord did not say here, "Come to Me all who are sinful and wicked, and I will give you rest." This is because the pleasure of sin is sweet, and a sinner desires to have more pleasure in sin. Therefore, the Lord used another term and said, "**Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.**" **You are toiling, and you are burdened**. Some people may feel that sin is pleasant and sweet. But everyone feels that he is toiling. Many people do not think that sin is painful. But everyone feels that their experiences are painful. Therefore, regardless if a person is a millionaire, a high-ranking person in the political world, a renowned scholar, a student, a businessman, a civilian, a coolie, or a beggar, no one is satisfied with himself. For a while I thought that those who pull rickshaws surely would sigh, but that millionaires do not need to sigh. However, one time when I was staying in a millionaire's home, I heard him sigh also. There is the pleasure of sin, but at the same time the labor of life makes a person sigh also. One time when I preached to an illiterate lady, she said, "Ah, unfortunately I do not know how to read; otherwise, I could believe and read the Bible." I thought if an illiterate lady would sigh, "Ah," perhaps a well-educated college professor would not sigh, "Ah." Actually, **both sigh just the same**. There was a foreign college professor in a certain school who was always very pessimistic. He always sighed, "Ah!" no matter what he saw. One day the sun was bright, the sky was clear, and the grass was green. The campus grounds were filled with the fragrance of flowers and the singing of birds. A few colleagues of the professor came to speak to him, saying, "See how wonderful today is? There is no need to sigh 'Ah,' today." He looked at the sky and everything around him; there was indeed nothing for him to sigh about. But did he stop sighing? Not at all. In the end he said, "Ah, unfortunately this time will not last long. Ah!"

One can see men **toiling and restless everywhere**. All day long, they are **unsettled in their worries**. Where should they settle down? I am afraid that you are not at rest and are still laboring.

Many people feel the weight of their burden and the toil of their labor. They realize that they do not have rest. I did not realize how heavy a burden can be until one time when I went down to a village to preach the gospel. The village where I went was on the other side of a mountain, and no steamboat could get there. I traveled first by a small steamboat to one place. After getting off the boat, I had to walk over the mountain to reach that place. The weather was very hot at that time. I brought with me gospel books and tracts, food, clothing, etc. I was not able to hire anyone to carry these things for me and had to carry them myself. I did not feel anything when I walked the first twenty steps. But after that, I began to find them too heavy for me to carry. I thought how nice it would be if I could get home soon and have a little rest. There were no trees on the mountain to provide shade. Just then, I realized how painful are those sinners who are toiling and are burdened. They would probably think that it would be nice if they could rest for a little while. Today among those in the audience, there are still some who have not yet believed in the Lord Jesus. You do not have rest. What will be your end? Come and hear the Lord Jesus' word today, which says, "Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

Oh! This world is a tiresome world. Many people have money, yet they say, "I am tired!" Many people are in business, yet they say, "I am tired!" Many people have received fame and love in this world, yet they are tired. They think they can never rest until they have gained a certain item. The world realizes clearly that rest is good, but because their burdens are too heavy, they dare not seek after rest; they would be happy enough if their labor could be reduced. They are like the Israelites in the Old Testament, who only hoped that Pharaoh would reduce their labor and had no hope for rest. The condition of the Israelites represents the world. The Israelites only hoped that their labor could be lightened; they dared not hope for rest. In the same way, you only hope that your burden would be reduced a little, and that you would be free from tiredness and worries. However, I must tell you that **what our Lord Jesus gives is not only a reduction of your toil but absolute rest; He causes you to stop everything.** I wonder if you know what rest is? Rest means not to work or to stop working. You have suffered from the heavy burden and entanglement of sin and lust and do not have rest. **You have to understand that the Lord Jesus wants you to come and have rest. You do not have to do anything to have this rest.**

(Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 1) Vol. 17: Notes on Scriptural Messages (1), Chapter 11)

Day 2

Eph. 4:20-21 - But you did not so learn Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus.

- F. To be **mEEK**, or **gentle**, means **not to resist opposition**, and to be lowly means **not to have self-esteem**; throughout all the opposition the Lord was meek, and throughout all the rejection He was lowly in heart.
- G. **He submitted Himself fully to the will of His Father**, not wanting to do anything for Him-self or expecting to gain something for Himself; hence, regardless of the situation He had rest in His heart; He was fully satisfied with the Father's will.
- H. The rest that we find by taking the Lord's yoke and learning from Him is **for our souls**; it is an **inward rest**; it is not anything merely outward in nature.
- I. We learn from the Lord **according to His example**, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection—Eph. 4:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:21.
- J. The **Lord's yoke is the Father's will**, and His burden is the work of carrying out the Father's will; such a yoke is easy, not bitter, and such a burden is light, not heavy.
- K. The Greek word for *easy* means "**fit for use**"; hence, good, kind, mild, gentle, easy, pleasant—in contrast to hard, harsh, sharp, bitter.
- L. If we take the Lord's yoke (the Father's will) upon us and learn from Him, **we will find rest for our souls**; the yoke of God's economy is like this; everything in God's economy is not a heavy burden but an enjoyment.

Many people live a life of toil and burden with respect to the world. But many others toil and are burdened with respect to their salvation also. They think that by gritting their teeth to do something and by suffering a little, God may have pity on them and save them. Many Hindus do this. They put nails onto a door with the spikes pointing upward. Then they lie on such doors full of sharp nails, thinking that by suffering this way, the God whom they do not know may by chance have pity on them and forgive their sins. **Many people think that if they suffer more, God will forgive their sins.** Even a little child would think this way. Once a little child told me, "After I commit a sin, the first thing I have to do is to make myself suffer to the uttermost; then God will forgive my sin." Not only do little children think this way, most people in the world think this way also. They think that by laboring strenuously, they can work themselves to the point where God will forgive them. **They do not realize that this is a lie. It is a self-deception and will never earn them anything.** It is not by bearing more burdens and suffering more toil that one can have rest before God. The calling today says, "Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest." **Redemption has been accomplished, and the Lord has borne our sins.** Whosoever will may come to the Lord to have rest. No sinner can obtain rest by himself. If you come before the Lord, you will have rest. (*Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 1) Vol. 17: Notes on Scriptural Messages (1)*, Chapter 11)

Day 3

Exo. 31:13 - Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you.

Gen. 2:2 - And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

II. In Exodus 31:12-17, after a long record concerning the building up of God's dwelling place, there is a repetition of the commandment to keep the Sabbath; according to Colossians 2:16-17, Christ is the reality of the Sabbath rest; He is our completion, rest, quietness, and full satisfaction—Heb. 4:7-9; Isa. 30:15a:

- A. The fact that the insertion concerning the Sabbath follows the charge for the building work of the tabernacle indicates that the Lord was telling the builders, the workers, to **learn how to rest with Him as they worked for Him.**
- B. If we only know how to work for the Lord but **do not** know how to rest with Him, we are acting **contrary** to the divine principle:
 1. God rested on the seventh day because He had finished His work and was satisfied; God's glory was manifested because man had His image, and His authority was about to be exercised for the subduing of His enemy, Satan; as long as man expresses God and deals with God's enemy, **God is satisfied and can rest**—Gen. 1:26, 31—2:2.
 2. Later, the seventh day was commemorated as the Sabbath (Exo. 20:8-11); God's seventh day was man's first day.
 3. **God had prepared everything for man's enjoyment;** after man was created, he did not join in God's work; he entered into God's rest.
 4. Man was created not to work first but to **be satisfied with God and rest with God** (cf. Matt. 11:28-30); the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

God had prepared everything for man's enjoyment; after man was created, he did not join in God's work; he entered into God's rest. God had prepared everything, including the heavens, the stars, the earth, all the animals, the trees, and the air, for man's enjoyment. After man was created, **the things God created were not only for man's sustenance and existence but also for his satisfaction. On his first day man had nothing to do.** Man's first day was a holiday, a day of rest. God prepared all things for man; therefore, on the first day man did not join in God's work. This does not mean that man would never work. On the contrary, man has to work, but he did not begin with working. God did not want man to start working the moment he was created. He wanted man first to learn how to enjoy everything that He had accomplished for man.

When the Lord Jesus was dying on the cross, the last words He said were, "It is finished!" Then "He bowed His head and delivered up His spirit" (John 19:30). Three days later He was resurrected, and we were resurrected with Him on that first day, because Christ had accomplished everything. **Christ has accomplished everything that we need. He has done it all. We just need to enter into what He has accomplished.** Praise the Lord that everything has been done!

We entered that first day to be satisfied with God and to rest with God. We entered into His rest and His satisfaction. The Lord said that the **Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.** The Pharisees misapplied the Sabbath. They made man bear the burden of the Sabbath. That was never God's intention. The Sabbath, the seventh day of rest, was for man. God was saying, "Do not go to work first. Come first to Me and enjoy Me, and then you can go to work. When you are filled with Me, have been refreshed by Me, and are satisfied with Me, you can go to work. When you go to work in this way, you will be working as a filled, happy person. Then your work will be the overflow of the inner life." Hallelujah! (*The Ministry of the Word, vol. 30, No. 1, chapter 5*)

Day 4

Exo. 31:15 - Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to Jehovah; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death.

Exo. 31:17 - It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.

- C. Exodus 31:17 says, "In six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day **He rested and was refreshed**":
1. The Sabbath was not only a **rest** to God but also a **refreshment** to Him.
 2. **God rested after His work** of creation was completed; He looked upon His handiwork, at the heavens, the earth, and all the living things, especially at man, and said, "Very good!"—Gen. 1:31.
 3. **God was refreshed with man**; God created man in His own image with a spirit so that man could have fellowship with Him; man, therefore, was God's refreshment—v. 26; 2:7; cf. John 4:31-34.
 4. God was a "bachelor" before He created mankind (cf. Gen. 2:18, 22); He wanted man to **receive** Him, **love** Him, be **filled** with Him, and **express** Him to become His wife (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25); in eternity future God will have a wife, the New Jerusalem, which is called the Lamb's wife (Rev. 21:9-10).
 5. Man was like a refreshing drink to quench God's thirst and satisfy Him; when God ended His work and began to rest, **He had man as His companion.**

6. To God the **seventh day was a day of rest and refreshment**; however, to man, God's companion, the **day of rest and refreshment was the first day**; man's first day was a day of enjoyment.
- D. It is a **divine principle** that God does not ask us to work until we have had enjoyment; after a full enjoyment with Him and of Him, we may work together with Him:
1. If we do not know how to have enjoyment with God, how to enjoy God Himself, and how to be filled with God, we will not know how to work with Him and be one with Him in His divine work; **man enjoys what God has accomplished in His work.**

Day 5

Exo. 31:13 - ...You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you.

Acts: 2:4 - And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, even as the Spirit gave to them to speak forth.

2. On the day of Pentecost the disciples were **filled with the Spirit**, which means that they were **filled with the enjoyment of the Lord**; because they were filled with the Spirit, others thought that they were drunk with wine—Acts 2:4a, 12-13.
 3. Actually, they were filled with the enjoyment of the heavenly wine; **only after they were filled with this enjoyment did they begin to work with God** in oneness with Him; Pentecost was the first day of the eighth week; therefore, concerning the day of Pentecost, we see the principle of the first day.
 4. With God it is a matter of **working and resting**; with man it is a matter of **resting and working**.
- E. In doing God's divine work to build the church, typified by the work to build the tabernacle, we must bear a sign to indicate that we are God's people and that we need Him; then we will be able to work not only for God but also with God by being one with God; **He will be our strength to work and our energy to labor**:
1. We are God's people, and we should **bear a sign that we need Him** to be our enjoyment, strength, energy, and everything so that we may be able to work for Him to honor and glorify Him.
 2. The Sabbath means that before we work for God, **we need to enjoy God and be filled with Him**; Peter preached the gospel by the infilling God, the infilling Spirit; therefore, Peter had a sign that he was God's co-worker, and his gospel preaching was an honor and glory to God—v. 14.
 3. As God's people, **we must bear a sign that we rest with God, enjoy God, and are filled up with God first**, and then we work with the very One who fills us; furthermore, we not only work with God but also work as those who are one with God.
 4. In our speaking to God's people, we must always seek to bear a sign that our Lord is our strength, our energy, and our everything for ministering the word—2 Cor. 13:3; Acts 6:4.

Day 6

Exo. 31:13-14 - ...You shall surely keep My Sabbaths;...that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you...Keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you... Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Exo. 31:16 - Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.

- F. Keeping the **Sabbath is also an eternal agreement**, or covenant, that assures God that we will be one with Him by first enjoying Him and being filled with Him and then by working for Him, with Him, and in oneness with Him—Exo. 31:16:
1. It is a serious matter to work for the Lord by ourselves without taking Him in and enjoying Him by drinking and eating Him—cf. 1 Cor. 12:13; John 6:57.
 2. As Peter was speaking on the day of Pentecost, he was **inwardly partaking of Jesus**, drinking and eating Him.
- G. The Sabbath is also a matter of **sanctification** (Exo. 31:13); when we enjoy the Lord and then work with Him, for Him, and by being one with Him, spontaneously we are **sanctified, separated unto God** from everything that is common, and saturated with God to replace everything that is fleshly and natural.
- H. In the church life we may do many things **without** first enjoying the Lord and without serving the Lord by being one with the Lord; that kind of service results in **spiritual death and the loss of the fellowship** in the Body (vv. 14-15).
- I. Everything related to God's dwelling place leads us to one matter—to the Sabbath with its rest and refreshment of the Lord; in the church life we are in the tabernacle, and the tabernacle **leads us to rest, to the enjoyment of God's purpose and of what He has done!**
- J. The building work of the tabernacle and all its furniture (typifying the work of the Lord to build up the church) should begin with the enjoyment of God and continue in intervals with the refreshment by enjoying God; this will indicate that we do not work for God by our own strength, but **by the enjoyment of Him and by being one with Him**; this is to keep the principle of the Sabbath with Christ as the inner rest in our spirit.