“Do You Know Jesus” by Hezekiah Walker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgh5DcENWq0>

“Do You Know Jesus” sung by the Nagoya Christmas band

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9CAtZINWV4>

“Do You Know Jesus” sung by the Kenosha First Assembly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKlcuOR1zYU>

“Do You Know Jesus” sung by the Mt. Rubidoux SDA Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vxb6OVEUoU>

“Lord, Do It” with Hezekiah Walker and Pastor Kervy Brown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9W8tyczXGwI>

“There is No Way” with Ricky Dillard and Nikki Ross

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Msw6aXNXL4>

“Changed” by Jennifer Hudson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmHxFBNVMrw>

“He Wants It All” by Forever Jones

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUMRqJCV9Q4>

“Put It On the Altar” by Jessica Reedy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=174tMY01iqo>

“Better” by Jessica Reedy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwO2qU6VK64>

“Flow” by Jessica Reedy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_qsP-obYaU>

**Rest for Our Souls in God and the Example of Jesus**

***Matthew 11:28-30***

In *Matthew 11:28-30,* Jesus said, *28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest.*

*29 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.*

*30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

So many of us labor and are heavy laden. This week in the news, the Chief Executive Office of Yahoo! announced that she was pregnant and that she would only take two weeks away from her job to take care of her baby when she goes into labor. It sounded like a proud moment of dedication to professional excellence. But many of us try to find comfort in our achievements when we labor and are heavy laden. Is 2 weeks too little time to spend with your newborn child? Are any parts of our lives overburdened?

Jesus invites those of us who labor and are heavy laden to come to Him so that we can rest. In Jesus we will find a rest that gives us strength for the rest of our lives.

Jesus tells us to take Jesus’ yoke upon us and to learn of Jesus. What does it mean to take on Jesus’ yoke? I always thought of it as taking on some unique Christian task. I always understood Jesus to invite us to take on Jesus’ yoke.

But that is not what I think Jesus meant. I believe that Jesus wants us to take on the yoke from God that Jesus carried. Jesus carried a yoke from God and tells us that if we take on this same yoke, Jesus’ yoke from God will be easy; and Jesus’ burden from God will be light for us.

My textual evidence for this is that *Chapter 11 of Matthew* started with John the Baptist wanting to know if Jesus was truly the Messiah that Israel was looking for. Life didn’t look that way to John the Baptist. John the Baptist was in prison. And the world of First Century Palestine must have looked pretty much as unjust as it did before Jesus came into it.

Jesus may reign over lives and it may not look like Jesus is king.

But Jesus invited John the Baptist’s disciples to come, hear, and see what Jesus was doing. There, they would find strength for John the Baptist. *4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see:*

*5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them:*

*6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended me. Matthew 11:4-6.*

Blessed are all of us who are not offended in Jesus and in what God is doing in our lives. When God enters our lives, we may not see everything we expect to see because somehow God sees our lives and our victories differently.

Jesus spoke to His disciples about how many wise and prudent people could not understand God’s works. As strange as it sounded, Jesus remarked that God saw this to be a good development. *25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*

*26 Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. Matthew 11:25-26.*

It seemed strange that Jesus would bear a yoke from God, His Father. Jesus bore a yoke from God like a cow that wore a yoke to pull a plow. Jesus bore a burden from God that in the Greek was like a ship that carried freight. (Strongs:G5413) But this was good in God’s sight.

And there is something awesomely good about what God is telling us to embrace in this passage. We work hard and are heavily laden in our search for money, success, accomplishment, and fame. But there is a good way. And that way is to, like Jesus, take on God’s yoke to simply pull along in God’s Will. This way is to simply take on the freight that God brings into our lives and to carry it to where God wants it delivered.

This seems like a menial task; and hard labor from God. But when God puts His yoke upon us, we will find our lives to be easy. And when we commit to carrying what God puts into our lives to His assigned destination, we will find our burden to be light. God saw things differently than how we saw them. But God saw them better such that doing His Will shall give us wonderful lives.

In *Matthew 11:29,* Jesus also said, *[L]earn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.* I think that becoming like Jesus is just as challenging as doing God’s Will above our own. Jesus was meek or gentle and lowly in heart.

What does it mean to be lowly in heart? I am not sure. Part of me leads me to think that there is an advantage to being sensitive and vulnerable to the point that your heart is lowly instead of high and untouchable. I am still wrestling with that idea because so many of us grapple with anxiety, oversensitivity, and depression.

*Philippians 2:3-11,* though, makes a good statement of Jesus’ lowliness. The theme with lowliness and meek gentleness is that God comes to bless and exalt the meek and the lowly.

*3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

*4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

*5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

*6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

*7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

*8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

*9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

*10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

*11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* God highly exalted Jesus, and similarly *Proverbs 3:34* notes that God *giveth grace unto the lowly.*

God does the same for those of us who are meek and gentle. *The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live forever, Psalm 22:26. The meek will [God] guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way, Psalm 25:9. [T]he meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace, Psalm 37:11. Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite. The Lord lifteth up the meek… Psalm 147:5-6a. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation, Psalm 149:4.*

This last one is so awesome to me. God will beautify the meek to the point where people will look at you and seesalvation all over you. God saved you and God saved you and God saved you and people will see that all over you. How beautiful you will look!

It will be awesome when we come to Jesus and find rest. We will make God the Alpha and the Omega of our lives. As the Alpha of our lives, God will instruct us about where to go and what to do, and we will follow God’s Will like an ox pulling a plow and a ship carrying freight. We will follow Jesus’ example and live in lowly service to others and gentle meekness. God will be the Omega of all of our situations, lifting us up and blessing us with abundance, peace, and salvation – over and over again.

Here, may we find rest for our souls,

Tobias Pinckney, 9/5/15

**The Altar’s Call to Rest For Our Souls**

What is God calling us to do right now? Are we doing it? Do we find peace in doing God’s Will?

How can we be more like Jesus? Can we be more gentle and meek? Can we be more lowly and committed to serving others and God’s Will?

What do we need God to do for us? May we ask and receive it in God’s Will.

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