

The Rest and the Rest-Giver

by Horatius Bonar

God invites all weary sinners to come to Christ for a free gift of rest.

Scripture: Psalm 62:1, Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 11:28, Luke 11:46, John 4:14, John 6:35, Hebrews 4:9

Topics: "Rest in Christ", "Divine Compassion"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the compassionate invitation of Jesus to the weary and burdened, highlighting that it is not mere human sympathy but the divine love of God reaching out to offer true rest. He addresses the inhabitants of Galilee, who were deemed the least deserving, yet are called to receive this gift of rest, which is freely given and cannot be earned. Bonar explains that this rest is specifically for those who are weary from any form of toil or burden, and it is obtained by coming directly to Christ. He stresses that this rest is a gift from Christ, meant for all who recognize their need for it, and that it is accessible through a personal relationship with Him. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging the weary to accept Christ's invitation to find rest in Him.

Transcript

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."--Matthew 11:28.

The Speaker here is the Son of God. It is not man speaking to man and sympathizing with man, but it is God himself coming up to us and uttering his divine compassion. He sees our case. He knows exactly what we need. He is able to bless us to the full. It is not helpless love giving vent to kind but unavailing sympathy; it is the love, the pity, the tenderness of Omnipotence. It is heaven that is pouring out its compassionate yearnings over earth, and stretching down to it the helping hand of power. It is the great Creator drawing near to his alienated but sorrowful creature, and presenting him with rest. After the great work of Creation God "rested"; he invites his weary creatures to share his rest.

Rest in me and rest with me is his gracious message. It takes omnipotence to give rest to the weary sinner.

II. The persons spoken to are the inhabitants of Galilee. That region was reputed the worst in the land; yet it was to them that the Son of God spoke. The crowd that he was speaking to was composed of the inhabitants of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum,--the worst in Galilee. They were compared with Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrha, and declared worse than these by our Lord himself. They had more advantages than others. They were the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done. They were the

least deserving of favor of all the inhabitants of the land; the most deserving of wrath.

III. The character under which they are spoken to is that of toiling, burdened ones. "All ye that labour and are heavy laden." They were sinners; but that was not all; they were sinners "toiling" and "borne down with heavy burdens." The word "labour" is frequently used to denote the toiling process itself (Luke 5:5), or the result of it in weariness, as when it is said, "Jesus being wearied with his journey," sat down, thus wearied, to rest by the well (John 4:6). The "burdens" are such as those with which the Pharisees loaded their followers (Luke 11:46). It is no particular kind of labour or burden that is meant here; but any labour, any burden whatsoever. It may be worldly toil, and vexation, and disappointment; it may be the wretchedness, and weariness, and soreness of spirit which sin brings after it; it may be the feeling of those who are asking, Who will shew us any good? what matters it? It is human wretchedness and weariness from whatever cause,--human thirst, human hunger, the emptiness of an aching heart that would fain be happy, but knows not how or where to find happiness. They who are spoken to are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not. The words then are very wide, wide as the wide earth. They are broad and full. They are unconditional and universal. They mean every one. They take in every weary son of Adam. The question is not, "Is your labour of the right kind?" or, "is your weariness a true and spiritual weariness?" but, "are you a weary sinner?" And who is not? Though indeed some are more weary than others.

But now let us mark the substance of the Lord's invitation, as thus given out to the worst and most weary of the sons of men. That which is promised here is rest. This rest is for the weary. This rest is a gift. This gift is from Christ. This gift is obtained by going to this Christ.

(1.) Here is rest. It is what God calls rest; and therefore must be truly such. It is what man needs; and without which he must drag on a weary sorrowful life. You need rest, O man! Here it is for you. Never did you need it more than in this restless, noisy, bustling, pleasure-loving age. Do not reject it. Rest for the weary! This is our message.

(2.) This rest is a gift. It cannot be bought with money, nor found by search, nor obtained by travel. It is a gift. Free rest! This is our gospel. Rest to all who need it. Rest to any one who will take it. O free gift of rest, how art thou despised by the sons of men! They are weary, and would buy rest at any price; but they will not take it free!

(3.) This rest is Christ's gift. "I will give you rest." I will refresh you. I will be as the dew unto, Israel, refreshing and reviving, after the heat of the day. From the hand of Christ alone it comes. He brought it with him from heaven, and he gives it to us. It is blood bought rest. It is love-given rest. Jesus stands with this precious blessing in his hand; or rather He goes up to every weary child of Adam and offers him rest,--his own rest,--the rest of the Father and the Son.

(4.) This rest is for the weary. Simply for those who need it! For all Christ's gifts are suitable. I am the resting-place, He says; weary sinner, sit down here; sit down, just because you are weary. As the thirsty man drinks because he is thirsty, and the hungry eats because he is hungry, so the weary rest, because they are weary! How near is rest to us! How simple is God's way of giving it!

(5.) This rest is got by coming to Christ. It is only from Him that we can get it; and there must be a direct dealing with Him concerning it. The knowledge of Him is rest! His words are rest! His cross is rest! All we know concerning him is rest! We try other resting-places; let us try this. We go to others; let us go to Him. Let us transact with Him. It is the weary that He welcomes! It is with the weary that He delights to share his

blessed rest! Go to Him for rest, O weary one! He will not deny it.

He invites. Come unto me! Is not that enough? Do you need further warrant? He beckons. It is as if he were stretching out his hands,--beckoning you to draw near!

He beseeches. His are earnest words, and He himself is in earnest, thoroughly in earnest. He entreats you to take his rest; as if rest were no rest to Him till you shared it.

He commands. The words before us are imperative. He commands you to come. You cannot lose this rest, but by deliberately disobeying his command! Could rest be brought nearer than this?

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