

Rest and closeness to God

△ Matthew 11:20-30, John 15:1-8

Intro

Today we have our communion
and prayer ministry service

We are sharing communion

And if you want we can pray for you

But what would you like to pray
for?

It can be anything

health

family & friends

something that is worrying you

But what about praying for our
relationship with God

Father, Son & Spirit?

Maybe you want to pray for that

It is one thing to know that

Jesus is the Son of God

That through him we have salvation
and eternal life

But as we see, Jesus wants more
of us

He wants to partake in our lives

And us to partake in his life

It is called a relationship

Being in a relationship is life changing

When I got married to Ada I stopped being a batchelor

I could not anymore do the things I wanted to do

I also wanted Ada to be involved in my life

And Ada wanted that too

So that meant compromise

By living a life together

Even if you are not married, but have close friends

It means that your life is changing so you can accommodate that friend

And you expect the friend to do likewise

This is also what Jesus wants of us

A relationship

Meaning, that our lives change because of us being in a relationship with Jesus

And it is the only relationship that we have that will extend into our eternal life

Come to me

The vss in 28-29 are very famous

And we like to use them in isolation

But here we have read them in context

As how Jesus meant them to be read

Uncomfortable reading

v20-24 make uncomfortable reading

They speak about repentance and judgement

Jesus takes three Jewish towns and compares them to three non-Jewish towns

Non of these non-Israelite towns were know for their virtue

And even Sodom was destroyed because of their deeds appalling to God

But Jesus claims that if he had been too these towns and did all the things he had done in Chorazin, Bethsaida and even his home town of Capernaum

They would face the day of judgement in a better way (more tolerable) than the Jewish towns

And Sodom would not have been destroyed

Why?

Because these non-Jewish towns would have accepted Jesus as the Messiah

And would have changed in order to have a relationship with them

But the Jewish towns

Even though they claim to know God the Father

1 a11e1

Did not accept the Son as His Messiah

And did not change

Instead they stuck to their religious practices

Which were quite a considerable effort to do

And thought that that will give them life, life to the full

Instead they are still facing death

Jesus thanks his Father

Jesus then ("at that time") thanks his Father

For those who have recognised Jesus for what he is: The Son of God and the Messiah

They did not do this by their wisdom, intelligence or religious practices

No, Jesus calls them little children or infants

Those who are fully dependent on others to live

They recognise who Jesus is and that they are also to be fully dependent on him

to be in a close relationship

Because Jesus is the only one who knows the Father

And he makes the Father known to those who he chooses to reveal him too

The little ones, the dependent ones

Come to me

It is then that Jesus puts forward his invitation: "Come to me"

Those who are weary and heavy laden

Now we may think this is to do with all our daily troubles

And that is true

But by using the image of a yoke, Jesus refers specifically to the religious burdens that the people have taken on themselves

The Jewish rabbis often spoke of the 'yoke of the Toray' or the 'yoke of the Kingdom'

Jesus speaks of 'his yoke' - claiming the authority of God

But the 'rest' and the 'easy' do not refer to living an easy life

but of release of the artificial burdens of human religion

A barrier to the true fellowship of the Kingdom of God

A relationship with Jesus

Jesus does not give us rest, like an easy life

It is still a yoke, and the burden is easy and light

Because we carry it with Jesus

And it is what Jesus wants us to do

Not what we add ourselves

Another aspect is that Jesus says:
'learn from me'

LEARN FROM ME

Again that speaks of a relationship

He does not say learn from books or even scripture

He says learn from **me!**

This is having a true relationship

And you do not have to be wise, intelligent or special to have a relationship with Jesus

He says it to all of the hearers in his vicinity

And he says it to us!

I am the vine

In the passage in John 15, Jesus also speaks about a close relationship between him and his followers

The image of the vine and the branches, really does not need an explanation

But I remember in our previous house, I needed to cut a bit of vine off to replace some windows

This was in the summer

I was surprised about the strength and duration of the stream of water coming out of the cut off branch

It looked like a tap

This is also the strength of relationship that Jesus means

And the relationship is with his Father

I am the true vine, and my Father is the wine grower

As well as his relationship with his followers

I am the vine and you are the branches

What is the result of the relationship?

That the branches bear much fruit

What is that fruit?

Here in the context of Jesus discourse is is love

A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another

△ John 13:34

And that is not the only reference to Love in this chapter

vs 12 in this chapter repeats his original commandment

Vs 10 if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love

It is Jesus's love for us that flows from him to us as the branches

and from there flows to the people around us

Those who are in the Christian community

As well as those who are outside

As Jesus loves everyone equally

A relationship that changes us

From both passages we see that being in a relationship with Jesus changes us

Changes us

In Matthew the change is from following the religious rules religiously

To having a yoke that is right fitting and light

Life will still give us challenges and is still difficult

But know we look at it with Jesus perspective and not our own

We want to achieve Jesus' priorities and not our own

And then also we hear in John

If you abide in me and I in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you

But of course when we are in Jesus and Jesus is in us, what we wish is going to be the same as what Jesus wishes for us

So, yes, there is a change in priority, outlook and perspective

The other change is what we produce

Jesus does not measure us with what we have achieved

No he measures us with how we love

Love comes from the heart and not the brain

Anyone can love, whatever your status in society

Perhaps Children love easier than adults

And this is the change that Jesus

And this is the change that Jesus expects from us: to love one another as he loves us

Prayer request?

So is this what is the most important prayer request

That we come to Jesus and tell him that we love him?

That we tell him that we want Him in our lives?

That we tell him that he is invited to our lives

And that we are willing to be in relationship with him

And therefore willing to change?

You may say that you have done this before

But I know that there is always more

To knowing and loving Jesus than what we currently have

His love for us is always exceeding our love for him

There are always ways to deepen our relationship with Jesus

So I pray that when you are sitting in your chairs, or coming forward to one the teams for prayer

That this is your prayer today

Amen

