

# The Gospel According to Matthew

By

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### MATTHEW 11:25-30

THERE can be no doubt that these last verses of chapter eleven tell the story of what happened immediately in connection with the events recorded in the previous verses. The King had upbraided the cities; He had pronounced woes upon them; He had declared that the measure of light creates the measure of responsibility; and with great severity, in every tone of which there vibrated the pity of His heart, He had pronounced the doom of the impenitent cities.

And now what followed? He turned from upbraiding the multitudes, and spoke to God. Having done that, He spoke again to the multitudes in proclamation and invitation.

It is important that we recognize this order and sequence. Pausing in His upbraiding, He lifted His heart to God: **“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, Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.”**

Having thus spoken to God, He made a proclamation concerning Himself:

**“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.”** And then immediately, without a break, He said, **“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”**

Not as though rest were something apart from Himself. It was the mother love of God that spoke, **“Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest. 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. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

- First, then, He offered praise to God.
- Secondly, He made the proclamation concerning Himself; and wonderful are its terms.

Then, turning to the multitudes, He called them to Himself in the light of the proclamation He had made, promising to lead them into relationship with the Father Whom He had worshipped, that they might find their rest.

Taking first of all His attitude toward His Father, we notice that the King worshipped in the presence of difficulty, that He offered praise in the face of discouragement.

One supreme value of this chapter is its revelation of the fact of His restfulness even in the face of obstacles. John, loyal soul, whom He was so careful to defend, was wondering, perplexed by His methods; His own generation was petulant, unreasonable, complaining; and the cities that had seen the working of His power were rejecting Him. All these things He clearly understood, and yet He took the position of the worshipper.

There was yet one other class of persons with whom He came in contact, the simple-hearted, who perhaps did not think deeply enough to be perplexed about anything; they were merely babes. The King saw more clearly than we do, and He said, **“Thank Thee, O Father.”**

That fact in itself comes as a ministry of inspiration, and of love. Are you discouraged? Have you felt as though the people you are trying to reach are hopeless, always perplexed, always criticizing, always impenitent? Pause then and worship! Make your difficulty the occasion of your thanksgiving. But this we shall never do save as we live very near to Him.

Now let us look at the reason of His praise. That reason He distinctly stated. God had hidden the things He had come to make clear from the wise and understanding, and had revealed them to the untutored, the immature. He praised God for this method.

The first thing to be noticed is that the King rested in the absolute supremacy and will of His Father. He thanked God that this was so because it was God’s will. Perhaps some of us must rest there very often, being unable to understand the reason of the will.

We may press this matter a little further and ask the question: was the fact that this was God’s way the only reason for the thanksgiving? No, the Son knew that it was the best way, that it was the only way; this way of hiding these things from the wise and understanding, and the revealing of them to babes. Our Gospel is a Gospel for those who are fools and blind. That is not to say that the Gospel is not wise, that it lacks intelligence.

Who are the people from whom the Gospel is hidden according to Jesus? He called all people, but there are those whom He described as **“the wise and prudent (understanding)”** who do not come.

- **“The wise”** are, very literally, people who are gifted with practical skill, natural acumen, and ability to understand.

- The **“prudent”** are those who are able to put things together.

Jesus says, Father, Thou hast hidden these things from the people who are naturally wise and have the power to put things together. We have heard a man say, “Oh, believe me, I know what two and two make.” That is the man! Not that he does not know what two and two make; not that it is wrong to put two and two together; but that the putting of two and two together brings the man to the conclusion that when he has put two and two together he knows everything.

It is the man of natural acumen who is able to put things together and come to logical conclusions; who imagines that he can express the things of the Spirit in the formulae of the mind; from whom these things are hidden. The condition for acquiring knowledge is always conscious ignorance. The moment a man says he does not know, then at least he has fulfilled the first condition for acquiring knowledge.

Some years ago a remarkable article appeared in *The Engineer* discussing the question whether the man of technical knowledge, or the man without it, was most likely to serve his age by the way of invention. In the course of that article the writer said:

“There is not a portion of the framing of a bicycle that is not, in the eyes of any one carefully educated in the strength of materials, utterly wrong. If any one of our readers will take the trouble to work out the stresses in a bicycle weighing twenty-eight pounds, and carrying at ten miles an hour, a man weighing twelve stone, he will see that from first to last the whole machine is so completely impossible that nothing of the kind exists outside the land of dreams.

“Let us suppose that a law was passed under which no one was permitted to use a bicycle that was not pronounced to be quite safe by the Board of Trade; and let the Surveyors of the Board deal with the cycle precisely on the same lines as they deal with marine boilers, and see then what the Board of Trade machines would be like. Is it too much to say that, twenty years ago, any and every thoroughly trained engineer would have pronounced the modern light roadster a mechanical impossibility? Such men would know too much to attempt to produce anything of the kind . . .

“Knowledge is too often assumed to have reached finality, when it has done nothing of the kind, and the belief is fostered and inculcated by those who write books, and treatises, and teach in various ways.

“Lastly, we would point out that it is not the possession of knowledge that stops progress; the mischief is done by the assumption that the knowledge is final.”

That is the philosophy of our paragraph. There were men of Jesus’ day who said; “We know this is so, and that is so, and therefore this must be so; therefore He is wrong!”

They were wise men, they were understanding men, they put two and two together, and they called it four; and they said this is final, there is nothing beyond, we know all to be known. And Jesus said, “**I thank Thee, O Father, . . . because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent;**” that Thou hast not revealed these things to these men.

To what sort of people, then, does He reveal these things?

To babes.

And here the Greek word traced to its root means “*not speaking,*” and in this use indicates the immature, which means that they are not indisposed to receive.

Or again, to leave the figure of the infant, let the Master speak as He spoke on another occasion, and we see how His philosophy is always the same. **“Except ye be converted”** - *turned back* - **“and become as little children”** believing that there is something you do not know, believing that the knowledge in your possession is not final unless you get there, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

**“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent”** - the men of acumen who put things together and imagine all God’s truth can be expressed in the sequence of their reasoning **“and hast revealed them unto babes,”** who do not know anything, but who are dreaming towards truth, in whom is the spirit of romance, the spirit that soars.

What a blessed thing it is that God has always revealed these things to the simple-hearted and the simple-minded!

One may have lost the priestism of ecclesiasticism, but there is a new priestism abroad to-day which says that we cannot interpret this Book unless we know original languages in all their ramifications. It is not true. The man who can put two and two together as to Semitic languages, and as to Greek dialect, may never see the flame of glory that any little child can see who takes up the Book and studies it with the simple heart of the babe.

Having uttered these words of worship, the King made the claim for Himself. His words are so clear and comprehensive, we need do little more than read them.

The statement falls into three parts.

First, the King claimed His own investiture with some peculiar authority. **“All things.”** What things? We must go back to the previous verse, **“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.”**

Revealed them:

- The things of truth,
- The things He had come to reveal,
- The things at which the unreasonable generation scoffed,
- The things the impenitent cities would not accept,
- The things of truth and righteousness and love.

God has given Me, said the King, all these things. **“All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.”**

You may say, But does not this break down your argument? Would you speak of Jesus as a babe, as immature in any sense? We are speaking of Jesus in the realm of His humanity, as One Who did not depend upon His own human wisdom.

He spoke always and only out of the infinite wisdom of His Father.

We speak of Jesus as He spoke of Himself before these words were finished; said He, **“I am meek and lowly in heart;”**

- I am not petulant and unreasonable,
- I am not disobedient to light as it falls upon My soul.
- I am amongst the babes, and therefore all things are delivered unto Me.

He was the great Mystic, the One Who, in all simplicity, waited for light, and recognized in all its infinite reaches, its relation to God and eternity. Speaking out of the realm of His perfect humanity He said, He hath committed all things unto Me; I come to bring the words of revelation.

This is what Paul meant concerning Him in the Colossian Epistle when he wrote, **“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.”**

Jesus thus stood in the midst of the men of His age and said to them, “The things that wise men did not understand, the things that understanding men could not formulate and finally state, are committed to Me. I know them, not by deduction and logical sequence, but because God has committed them to Me, seeing that I am meek and lowly in heart.”

Having thus claimed investiture, He went on to say, **“No one knoweth the Son, save the Father.”**

Here He was accounting for the fact that men had not understood Him. He thus declared the mystery of His own personality; no one perfectly understands Him, except the Father. This, is a perpetual truth, and it may be said to this hour that no one knows the Son save the Father.

Let us carefully observe what now immediately follows. **“Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”**

Consider, then, this twofold fact. Jesus declared that no one can know the Son perfectly, except the Father; but He affirmed that the Father can be known through the Son.

We have a far more correct knowledge of God at this hour than we have of Jesus. The great mysteries and the great problems, and the great perplexities, are still concerning the Person of Jesus.

Grace operates by revealing the things that never were known through the instrument of a Person; but the things revealed are so mighty that the instrument of their revelation must remain a mystery.

**“No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal.”**

We make a great mistake when we commence to quote this passage at verse twenty-eight. We have no right to begin at **“Come unto Me, all ye that labour.”** If we do so, we miss the music; we may indulge in a great deal of sentiment around this text, but all its strength, that upon which the soul of man takes hold for strength, is missed if we omit verse twenty-seven and fail to recognize the connection.

This is no mere lullaby; it was no mere expression of sentimental pity when Jesus said, **“Come unto Me.”**

Reverently changing the actual wording it is as though He had said:

- Come unto Me and I will reveal the Father unto you;
- Trust Me, and find God;
- Accept My law of life by accepting Me, and so find rest;
- For My yoke, the yoke I wear, is easy; and My burden, the burden I bear, is light.

Come to Me, be identified with Me:

- Let Me become the window through which the light flashes,
- Let Me be the door through which you pass to God.

The trouble with men is that they do not know the Father, and seeing that they do not know the Father, they are hot, and restless, and feverish, and in agony. To all such He said, Come unto Me, I know the Father; I will bring you to Him, and when you find the Father you will find your rest. **“Come unto Me, all ye that labour.”**

Notice finally that this call was uttered, not merely to the babes, but to all the multitude.

**“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.”**

- It was His call to John when John was in difficulty about His method - Come to Me, and I will rest your perplexed spirit.
- It was His call to the unreasonable and unsatisfied age, to come to Him and be satisfied, by faith, and wait for the dawning light for full explanation.
- It was His call to the cities, rejecting, and rejected - Come to Me, and I will come back to you with healing and with blessing.
- It was His call to the babes - Come to Me, be obedient, and gain the light that leads you into the places of God’s own wisdom.
- It was His call to all.

They did not all obey as John did in his perplexity. When his disciples went back and set the works of Jesus in relation to the ancient prophecies, surely there came to John a quiet sense of rest. He found God anew in the dungeon, because in honest perplexity he had sent directly to Jesus.

Perhaps some of the discontented children of the age found rest because they ceased their criticism and became babes. The cities would not come, and Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum are names only, their very sites being blotted out. And the babes? Thank God they have been coming ever since, and as they come, they find God and rest.

Mark the conditions:

- **“Come,”** that is the first.
- **“Take My yoke,”** that is the second.
- **“Learn of Me,”** that is the third.

We must get to Him, we must submit to Him, we must obey Him. By these things we find our rest, a twofold rest some commentators say, but probably they are two manifestations of the same rest the rest of finding the Father; the rest of obeying the Father.

Oh, there is rest for the storm-tossed soul in finding God! The cries of the old Bible are the cries of to-day. **“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!”** **“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!”** And not in tones that ring through centuries only, but in the still small voice sounding in our hearts to-day, we hear the same sweet Saviour say, **“Come unto Me.”**

We have tried to find God, we have tried to encompass Him; but we have felt that such small atoms as we are, must be of small account; and it is almost impossible to be sure of God by these processes. But, when the Infinite Word, Whose tones fill eternity, Whose wisdom guides, and Whose power upholds all things, becomes flesh, a Man of men, human, warm, sweet, tender, we come to Him, and we find God. With one's head upon His bosom there comes to the fevered heart the rest of eternity, the peace that passeth all understanding.

How shall we perfect our rest? By obeying Him. When Jesus said, **“Take My yoke upon you,”** He did not mean only the yoke He would give us, the burden He would impose upon us. He did mean that ultimately; but primarily He meant the yoke that He wore is easy, the burden that He bore is light. What burden did He carry? There was only one. The burden of doing God's will, the burden of obedience to the Divine command. **“I do always those things that please Him.”** **“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.”** **“I must work the works of Him that sent Me.”** That was the master-passion in the life of Jesus. He said, His burden was light. We hardly believe it. We say it is hard work to please God. In that view we are wrong. It is fearfully hard work to please our neighbors. It is impossible to please our friends. It is absurd to try and please ourselves. Then let the prayer of each one of us be; **“Teach me to do Thy will, O my God.”** That is the easiest, the sublimest, the simplest law of life; and therein is rest. May we all find it.

~ end of chapter 27 ~

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