

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – September 6, 2020

Theme: The Certainty of God's Word

Topic: God's Promise of Rest

Main Text: Matthew 11:25-30; Hebrews 4:1-11

Key verse: Matthew 11:28-29 – *'Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.'* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: When you think of rest, the idea of cessation of work will most likely come to mind. And you would be right. The dictionary defines rest as cessation from action, motion, labour, or exertion. Another dictionary definition of rest is to cease work or movement to relax, sleep, or recover strength. These dictionary definitions of rest remarkably parallel God's promised rest. In Matthew 11, Jesus draws attention to man's double-mindedness – people who neither danced to wedding songs nor mourned when funeral songs were played; and those who neither were satisfied by Jesus' identification with sinners nor accepted John the Baptist's austere disposition; the terrible fate which awaits unbelief; and lastly the unenviable position of those who think themselves wise rather than child-likely coming to God (Matthew 11:1-26). This is the setting where Jesus situates His invitation *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"* (Matthew 11:28-29 NKJV).

1. (a) How does the rest God offer us in Christ Jesus (in Matthew 11:29) differ or compare with the dictionary definitions or our popular conceptions of rest? (b) How does this rest God offers help us understand the "labour" and heavy laden" Jesus refers to in Matthew 11:28? (c) What does it mean to take on the yoke of Jesus in practical terms?

The background to the message of Hebrews 3 & 4 is in Numbers 14 and Psalms 95. In Numbers, the children of Israel rebelled against Moses and God after hearing the spies' report about the Promised Land. Ten of twelve spies brought a report that there were giants in the Land they could not overcome. God then swore that they would never enter the Land because of their unbelief and disobedience. In Psalms 95, God exhorts His people not to harden their hearts as they did in the rebellion, instead asking them to "hear His voice" (vs.7-8). Although one generation missed out on entering God's rest, God's promise endures to another generation.

2. (a) What does the story of the rebellion in Numbers 14 and the exhortation of Psalms 95 tell us about this rest God offers? (b) Jesus promises that His "yoke is easy" and His "burden is light". What other yokes could we bear that are hard and heavy? (c) Why would someone choose a yoke other than the one Jesus offers?

In Hebrews 4, we are reassured that *"we who have believed do enter that rest"*, and that the Word must be *"mixed with faith"* in our hearts for us to profit from it (Heb. 4:2-3). The Scripture is clear about the place of faith in receiving the promised rest – we need to believe the good news about Jesus Christ that has been preached to us. It is more than simply hearing the words. The key is in the response to what has been heard (Heb. 4:2, Gal. 3:8). A wrong response is as good as disobedience

1. (a) According to Hebrews 4:6, 7, 11, how do we know when we are responding to God's word with faith? (b) Why is it important that one enters God's rest? See Hebrews 4:8-9 (c) What other practical steps can we take to ensure we are daily experiencing God's eternal promise of rest?

Prayer: Father, thank You for Your promise of rest through Jesus Christ our Lord. May we boldly enter by faith and dwell in this rest all our days in Jesus Name. Amen.