

Giving People the Whole Gospel

Matthew 11:16-30

Code: 82-12

I trust that all of us, upon hearing what we will hear tonight from the Word of God, will shape our future evangelism and gospel testimony around these truths. If I could title what I want to say to you tonight I would call it “Gospel Honesty. Gospel Honesty.” And by saying that, I am acknowledging to you that I believe there is dishonesty in preaching the full message of the gospel. So I want us to talk about gospel honesty.

Gospel ministry, evangelism, demands honesty. It demands that we tell sinners the whole truth, not part of it, but all of it. And this kind of gospel honesty is the only acceptable ministry as far as our Lord is concerned; anything less than this falls short of our calling. And the truth is, honestly, that the gospel is both glorious and dangerous. It is eternally enriching, and it is eternally ruining. The gospel has the power to compound joys everlastingly and to compound sorrows everlastingly. The gospel will escalate pure pleasure forever or escalate pure pain forever. After hearing the gospel with a measure of understanding, no sinner is the same – no, not in time, and certainly not in eternity.

Exposure to the gospel makes sinners better or it makes them worse; doesn't leave them the same. No one who understands the gospel and its claims and its commands remains the same in time or in eternity. This truth is laid out for us in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 by the apostle Paul. He says in verse 14, “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.” In other words, preaching the gospel compounds death as it compounds life; no one is left the same.

In the book of Hebrews, the familiar words of chapter 10 all of us know very well. “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment” – reject the gospel, go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of gospel truth, and what you should expect is a terrifying judgment – “and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three

witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

If you've heard the gospel and reject the gospel, you will have a severer punishment. So the gospel leaves no one the same; you're either better or worse, not the same. Our Lord address this in Matthew 11. So let me ask you to turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 11, and I want us to follow His thought starting in verse 15.

Matthew 11:15, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." This is a call to listen. This is a call to be alert. It is not the only place that that call is given. Chapter 13, "He who has ears, let him hear," verse 9. Chapter 13, "He who has ears, let him hear," verse 43. And it appears many times, as we will remember, in Revelation 2 and 3. It is a call to the seriousness of what is about to be said. And if we are those who preach the gospel and we are the ones responsible for bringing people from the nations to Christ, we need to know what our Lord expects of us as we enter this task. "Listen to this," that's what our Lord is saying.

Now our Lord was a missionary, the consummate Missionary. He had a heart for the lost; He wept over them. He brought them the truth; He offered them the gospel of salvation. He did it with love, compassion, tenderness, and kindness. He told them to believe the Scripture. He told them to believe the prophets. He told them to believe John the Baptist who had said of Him, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." And He told them to believe Him. Not only the Old Testament, not only the prophets, not only John the Baptist, but to believe His words concerning Himself.

The previous ten chapters of Matthew provide revelation that clearly tells us who He was: the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah, the King, the only Savior, the only Redeemer. Ten chapters are laid out by Matthew under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to make it crystal clear who Jesus Christ is. And there's a crescendo at the end of that tenth chapter where He says, "You must receive Me." Verse 32 of chapter 10, "Whoever confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who's in heaven." After ten chapters of revelation concerning His identity, He calls for an open confession such as we heard tonight in baptism.

Then He warns, "Whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny before My Father." And He lays out the reality that there's a price to pay for this, because there will be division in a family. "He didn't come to bring peace, He came to bring a sword. Set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."

And then He said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who doesn't take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life will, for My sake, find it."

So this is the call at the end of the ten chapters to embrace Him, to embrace Him even if it cost you everything – all your relationships and all your life.

As we come into chapters 11 and 12, we have recorded the responses to these opening ten chapters. We will see, were we read through chapters 11 and 12, and even into chapter 13, that there were a number of responses. In the early part of chapter 11 one response is doubt. Another response in the early part of chapter 11 is confusion or perplexity. And when you come into chapter 12, we find there are a few other responses: superficial amazement, a kind of fascination with miracles, the rejection, which progresses even to blasphemy.

But in our passage, starting in verse 16, we find the most common form of unbelief. I suppose we could just sum it up by saying it is a kind of cynical disinterest or indifference. After all that has been revealed about our Lord, all that He Himself put on display for the people of Israel, there was doubt, and there was perplexity, and there was amazement, and there was fascination; but in the end, that nation rejected Him, and blasphemed Him, and called for His death. But for most people, there wasn't that kind of vicious blasphemous hatred of Jesus that showed up in Jerusalem when He was driven to the cross.

The most common form of unbelief is just disinterest, indifference. And our Lord makes that clear starting in verse 16. In traditional rabbinical fashion He speaks in figures of speech. "But to what shall I compare this generation?" This is the most common form of rabbinic teaching, the most common form of teaching in all of Jewish literature: metaphor, simile, illustration, figure of speech. In this case we could even call it a parable.

And so, our Lord makes up a story, as He did so often. "What shall I compare this generation to? What describes this generation best?" Well, He says, "It is like children sitting in the marketplace, who call out to the other children, and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you didn't dance; we sang a dirge,' – or a funeral song – 'and you didn't mourn.'" He says, "This generation is like children, children who are hanging around the open marketplace." That would be the square in the center of every little village and town where various goods were sold at periodic times during the week.

But for the rest of the time it was like the city park, and it was the convenient playground for neighborhood children. It's the *agora*, like a public park open to everybody when vacant. And Jesus sees in this open space little children playing games. And children's games inevitably mirror adult games, don't they, or adult events, or adult social significant events. So these children are playing games really designed to follow the two most dramatic events in all of social life: a funeral and a wedding.

The kids are playing funeral, and they're playing wedding. Somebody is the dead body. Some people are the mourners. Some people may be the bearers of that body. There's maybe some weeping, and they're playing funeral. And they're also playing wedding. And somebody's the bride and somebody's the groom, and somebody is the best man and somebody is the maid of honor, and everybody has a role to play.

Wedding is a glad game. And so, we read that, “We played the flute for you; you didn’t dance.” The wedding game called for a flute, a musical instrument because of joy, and it called for dancing. They also played the funeral game, and that called for a dirge and mourning, “But you didn’t follow that, you didn’t mourn.” In both cases what we see is stubborn indifference.

By the way, this is the only biblical reference to children’s games. But this is intended to illustrate that stubborn perversity of human sinful nature. It isn’t that they are hostile, it isn’t that they are vicious, it is that they don’t want to play.

How is He applying this? Verses 18 and 19: “John came neither eating nor drinking,” – he came in funeral mode – “and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking,” – He came in wedding mode – “and they say, ‘Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’” These are peevish children.

Jesus came in a wedding fashion, John came in a funeral fashion. Think about that in verse 18: “John came neither eating nor drinking.” He had virtually no interaction with society. We know what characterized him, you can go back to chapter 3 and read it. He ate locusts and wild honey, and he lived in the middle of nowhere in the wilderness, no social life, isolated; and his message was repentance. It was a doomsday message: “Repent or die.” He says things like, “Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” And our Lord said, “You didn’t want to enter into John’s game, you didn’t want to be a part of that. Rather, you said about Him, ‘He has a demon. He’s demon-possessed. He’s deranged, He’s a mental case.’” So instead of repentance there was ridicule.

On the other hand, Jesus was the very opposite. He didn’t live in the wilderness, He went from village to village, to village, to village. He spent His entire childhood until He became an adult and began His public ministry in the town of Nazareth, sitting at the table every day of His life with the family and the community. We find Him eating many times in many places with many different groups of people. He’s in the middle of everything, because it’s a time for joy. His message does touch on the note of repentance, but it’s much more that, “The Messiah is here.” It’s time for joy.

Go back two chapters to chapter 9 and verse 14. “The disciples of John” – who’s in funeral mode – “come to Jesus’ disciples, and to Jesus, and ask ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?’” If your message is constantly repentance or doom, you’re in a sad mode, and fasting belongs to that.

Jesus responded in verse 15: “The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast.” This is wedding time; this is celebration time; this is the time for life and joy. But what did they say about Him? Verse 19, “They said, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”

They rejected John the Baptist and his message of repentance. They rejected Jesus and His message of kingdom salvation. They rejected repentance and they rejected faith in the Son of God. So they basically do what sinners always do; they create an excuse for their indifference, for their diffidence, for their indifference, one that justifies them. They are too righteous to stoop, to buy the message of John the Baptist; he's demon-possessed. And they are also too righteous to listen to this man named Jesus because He is sinful. He is a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners. This is sort of the common response to Jesus: "He doesn't come up to my standards."

Our Lord's immediate response is axiomatic, it is a truism, it is a self-evident reality. He says, bottom of verse 19, "Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." Or as it says in Luke 7:35, "Wisdom is vindicated by her children." What does that mean? What it means is true wisdom will show up in what it produces. Corrupt human wisdom produces corrupt deeds, such as the very false accusations of the people against John and Jesus. But on the other hand, the true wisdom from on high, the wisdom that John was preaching and Jesus was preaching produced righteous people who repent and believe; and wisdom is thus vindicated.

In James chapter 3, this is laid out a little more in detail, verse 13, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior in his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom." If you are truly wise, if you have received wisdom, it'll show up in your deeds. "If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. The wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

Wisdom shows up in its children; the children are virtues. Wisdom shows up in deeds, virtuous deeds. Divine wisdom will be vindicated. The ultimate verdict on the gospel – listen – the ultimate verdict on the gospel is not made by its rejectors. The ultimate verdict on the gospel is made by those who receive it and demonstrate its truthfulness in their repentance, in their faith, and in the fruit of those things. Impenitent and unbelieving, self-righteous sinners create reasons to reject. They even mock the gospel like the peevish children who won't join the game.

Now when that message is rejected, when that message is refused, as it is most of the time – we all know that – what did our Lord do? When the message of repentance and faith was rejected, what did He do? Was that disappointing to Him? How did He handle that? I'll tell you what He didn't do. He didn't change the message, and He didn't change the method; He just pronounced devastating judgment.

In fact, at this very incident there's a significant turning point. A line is drawn here. There's a huge divide in the ministry of Jesus at this very point. All the way up from the beginning of the gospel of Matthew to the nineteenth verse there has been gentleness and compassion. But starting in verse 20, everything changes.

“Then He began to denounce.” This is required by gospel honesty. This very incident launches a new approach, a great divide, a new direction in our Lord’s ministry. “Then He began to denounce.” Some would translate it “revile,” some “reproach.” It’s a very, very strong term for holy anger that bears judgment.

This is where that compassion that we’re so used to seeing is replaced by fury. And the target? “He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done,” the cities in which most of His *dunamis*, acts of power were done. It’s not the buildings and it’s not the institutions of the cities, it’s the people. So this is a divine denunciation of the people who were exposed to Him and His power, because, verse 20 says, “they did not repent.” They did not repent, and obviously they did not believe.

“To whom much is given, much is required.” The amount of exposure to the Lord and to the gospel to divine truth aggravates their guilt. It’s what I was saying earlier: no one is ever left the same. If you reject the gospel, guilt is aggravated, punishment is escalated. And if you continually reject the Savior and the gospel day after day, after day, after day, month after month, after month, the aggravation is exponential. The greater the gospel exposure, the greater the knowledge of the reality of Christ and His words and works, the greater the guilt. And the greater the guilt, the greater the punishment.

So we read in verse 21, “Woe to you, Chorazin!” – that’s a word for damnation, cursing, wrath – “Woe to you, Bethsaida!” two cities whose inhabitants had been exposed to the gospel. They had been exposed to the gospel again and again, and again, and again. The words of our Lord here should have terrified them the way the words of Jonah terrified Nineveh, so that the whole city repented.

But these people do not repent, and so doom is pronounced on them: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And nevertheless I say to you it’ll be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you.”

He pronounces curses on Chorazin, about two-and-a-half miles north of Capernaum. Today it is extinct. He pronounces a curse on Bethsaida, also little northwest of Capernaum; the home of Philip and Andrew and Peter. This area is Galilee. This area is really just very near Capernaum, which really for much of our Lord’s Galilean ministry was ground zero. They saw many miracles. John at the end of his gospel in chapter 20, and again in chapter 21, verse 25, says that He did so many miracles that they couldn’t even write them all down. These are highly favored populations of people, and as our Lord says, “If the miracles they saw had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” Sackcloth and ashes are symbols of humiliation and sorrow and mourning and repentance.

Chorazin and Bethsaida are to be judged more severely because of more exposure to the Son of God. Privilege brings responsibility. Increased privilege brings increased responsibility. What was happening in Chorazin and Bethsaida was the message of Christ was producing death to death to death to death, compounding degrees

of punishment in hell. That's why verse 22 says, "It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than you."

Tyre and Sidon never heard the gospel. You might think that because these two cities heard the gospel, that was an advantage. No, just the opposite, just the opposite. Tyre and Sidon were idolatrous, full of Baal worship, immorality, wickedness, pride. They were worthy of judgment and damnation, and it came. You can read about in Ezekiel 26 to 28, Isaiah 23. And prophets like Amos and Joel and Jeremiah pronounced judgment on those two coastal cities: Tyre and Sidon.

They hadn't been totally destroyed, because in Matthew 15:21 it says Jesus visited them. But our Lord says, "If the miracles that had been done in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done there, they would have repented." So Chorazin and Bethsaida, granted so much more privilege than their rejection, received so much more punishment. And that is to say there are degrees of punishment in hell.

Then in verse 23 and 24 He adds a second illustration: "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades"; – or hell in this case – "for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." Which is worse, to be a sodomite, trying to rape angels, or be a religious Jew in Capernaum rejecting Jesus Christ? Hell is hotter for the religious Jew who rejected Jesus Christ than it is for a sodomite who tried to rape angels; because judgment is connected to how much revelation you have received.

Capernaum exceeded Chorazin and Bethsaida in privilege. There were more of our Lord's miracles done in Capernaum even than those other two towns. Sodom exceeded Tyre and Sidon in wickedness. Tyre and Sidon were wicked, but they're still around even today, or remnants of them. They were around in our Lord's time. Not so, Sodom. God buried Sodom under fire and brimstone for their homosexual perversion. In the judgment it will be worse for the people in Capernaum, who saw Jesus, heard Jesus, witnessed the miracles and rejected Him, than it will be for the inhabitants of Sodom.

This is gospel honesty. This is gospel honesty. This is not what people talk about, even Christian people when they present Christ. They avoid this. But this is gospel honesty, of how much severer punishment shall he be thought worthy who tramples underfoot the blood of the covenant, who rejects the cross.

There is no evidence that these towns ridiculed Jesus; they were just impenitent. They were just unbelieving, they were indifferent. Oh, yeah, they were amazed by His teaching, they were amazed by His miracles. They were impressed by His works and His words. They were religious, they were respectable, they were self-righteous; but they were unmoved. Respectable people, respectable religious people exposed to the truth of Jesus Christ and the gospel will receive the severest punishment in hell. That is gospel honesty. It'll be worse for them than sodomites.

So gospel honesty up to this point demands a compelling warning, doesn't it. It demands a compelling warning. Yes, it demands a compassionate plea; and the compassionate plea was there in verses 16 to 19, and the compelling warning was there in verses 20 to 24.

There's something else that comes next in gospel honesty; it's in verse 25. Let's call it a confident, a confident doctrine. Was Jesus grieved over this unbelief? Of course. Did He weep over it? Of course. Was He disappointed? Of course. Did He feel like Isaiah, "How long, O Lord, will I do this and they reject?" Of course.

But notice verse 25: "At that time Jesus said, 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.'" Now wait a minute. Is that the response to the rejection of the gospel that we would have expected? Is that what we would expect? Is that how you respond when you're confronted with indifference? Do you immediately praise God? Do you say, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants"?

What is our Lord saying here? He's saying this, that "I can praise the Father even when the gospel is rejected and compounds judgment, because salvation is totally an act of God." This is the glorious confidence of the Son in the sovereignty of the Father. "I praise You, Father."

I know in ministry you get discouraged, and you're endeavoring to tell people the gospel and you become discouraged. If you're going to be gospel honest, you're going to tell them, "Look, you're now in deeper trouble than you were before you heard this. And every time you hear it again and reject, you're compounding your eternal punishment." Realizing the horror of that, can you also turn immediately to worship and say, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You've hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants"?

That verse begins at that time, right there in the middle of that reality, at the very moment when Jesus was facing this typical response of sinners – no repentance, no faith; typical of the nation of Israel, typical of the world. He is not defeated, He is not discouraged, He is confident, because salvation is in the purpose and plan of the Father. "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth." And isn't it rather obvious that if You are the Lord of heaven and earth, You are in charge. If You are the sovereign Creator, sustainer, ruler, and consummator of all that exists, You are in charge.

Praise is the response of our Lord Jesus when the gospel is rejected. He's done all He can do. He has made a gracious offer, they didn't want to play, so He pronounced damnation on them. If the wooing grace and mercy and love of the gospel invitation didn't move their hearts, and the threat of increased guilt and eternal punishment didn't move their hearts, He can still praise God, that God has hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to *nēpios*, sucklings, nursing babies, those who are helpless.

This sounds a lot like what Paul's talking about in 1 Corinthians 1 where he says, verse 18, "The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." And then down in verse 26, He says, "For consider your calling, brethren, there were not many wise according to the flesh," – not the wise and intelligent – "not many mighty, not many noble"; – and then this; why? – "because God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"

It's not the wise and the intelligent that believe, it's the ones God has chosen. Why? Why did God reveal this only to those He chose? Verse 26, "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. It was well-pleasing in Your sight."

Why was God so pleased to elect people to salvation? Ephesians 1: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace." Why did He choose? For His own glory's sake. "I praise You, Father, because this was pleasing in Your sight, because it gave all glory to You," all glory to the Father.

And then He adds in verse 27, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father." Jesus said in John 6, "No man comes to Me unless the Father draws him." Every person who comes to salvation is a love gift from the Father to the Son, chosen before the foundation of the world, name written down in the Book of Life, drawn by the Father and given to the Son.

"All things have been handed to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone" – listen to this – "to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." The Father saves whom He will, and the Son, in perfect agreement with the Father, reveals Him to whom He will.

Even in the middle of your ministry where you pour out your heart to sinners, and you give them gospel honesty, you talk about the need to repent and believe. And when they reject that and you warn them about inevitable judgment and the escalation of that judgment, the more they know and the more they reject, and they still are indifferent, they still have no interest; you turn to this confident reality that all whom the Father has chosen will come. They will be love gifts from the Father to the Son. The Son will receive them, the Son will keep them, John 6, "He will lose none. He will raise them all at the last day."

Salvation, repentance, and faith in the gospel is entirely dependent upon the will and purpose and plan of the Father and the work and will of the Son. Martin Luther said, "Here the bottom falls out of all merit, all powers and abilities of reason, or the free will men dream of, and it all counts nothing before God." He must do everything. That's why we always triumph, right?

But notice this final portion here in chapter 11. With firm, perfect understanding of the doctrine of divine sovereignty, as only the Lord Himself would have, with a true understanding of the salvation of the elect, the Lord does an amazing thing: He gives a final invitation. And notice what He says in verse 28: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." How could He say that? But He says it with no hesitation at all, no caveat, no explanation, no self-conscious fear of contradiction as if there is some kind of antipathy between sovereign election and human responsibility; the Lord gives an invitation.

Gospel honesty makes a merciful, gracious plea. Gospel honesty pronounces severe compounded judgment on rejectors. Gospel honesty rests comforted in the divine sovereignty of God. But gospel honesty also makes an open offer. We don't know who the elect are. So our Lord says, "Come to Me, all." His perfect understanding of sovereign election did not restrain the offer. "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden, I'll give you rest."

But to whom did that offer come? Please note: all who are weary and heavy-laden, all who are weary and heavy-laden. They're the ones that will respond. Crushed under the load of the law, crushed under the weight of sin, buried under guilt and fear with no relief, our Lord's offer of rest is to them what they desire.

We're not talking about the self-righteous anymore. We're not talking about the wise and the intelligent, and we're not talking about the religious, the self-satisfied, peevish children. We're talking about desperate people now, those who have exhausted all human resources. And gospel honesty also says, "Look, the offer of eternal salvation is to anyone crushed under the weight of sin and guilt and fear of judgment, anyone being pounded by the Spirit of God who is convicting of righteousness and judgment and sin. To those, I say come, all of you crushed under the weight of sin, and I'll give you rest, salvation rest, salvation rest."

And He describes that rest in verse 29: "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me." May have been that when Jesus was a carpenter He made a lot of yokes. Here He is saying, "Come to Me, and I'll give you rest." You say, "Well, wait a minute. If He's going to give us rest, what's His yoke about?" Well, "Take My yoke upon you." What does that mean? You are put in a place where somebody else controls you. That's what a yoke was.

So you are confessing Jesus as Lord, and you are submitting to Him as His slave. "Come and acknowledge Me as your Lord. Come and acknowledge Me as your teacher and learn from Me. Be My slave, My *doulos*, and My *mathētēs*, My student. And you're going to love this relationship, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Well, we've said a lot. I think you get the picture. Gospel honesty extends mercy when it is rejected. Gospel honesty warns about the compounding severity of eternal judgment on those who hear the truth and reject it. Gospel honesty rests in God's sovereign purpose. And then at the same time, gospel honesty calls to all crushed under the weight of sin to come to Christ. This is the fullness of an honest gospel. It has a compassionate plea, it has a compelling warning, it has a confident doctrine, but it also has a comforting promise; and we can offer to sinners.

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