

## Matthew 11:25-30

### Vision Sunday 2020

**“At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”**

Good Morning. If it's your first time joining us - Welcome. This morning we're going to be talking a bit about where we've come from and where we are going as a church community.

How many of you set goals for the year? Probably most of us set some sort of goal for this year - goals to lose weight, to exercise and diet, to be more intentional in relationships, to read more, to better educate ourselves - go to the dentist! (Anyone have a super random goal or resolution?) Well as great and well intentioned as many of these goals and resolutions might be - I would like to encourage you that before any goal you set or resolution that you make, you would make it your aim to think through Jesus' offer here in Matthew 11 - that you would take upon yourself Jesus' yoke and that your aim, your highest goal for this year would be to learn from him to become like him - In our series last year - The Character of Christ - we learned that the Yoke of a Rabbi was his way of life and his teachings - it was a metaphor for becoming an apprentice or disciple - it

was a call to be with your teacher, to take on his rhythms, habits and way of life, to become like your teacher, and ultimately to do what your teacher did. In this passage Jesus promises us, that if we take his yoke, if we come under his training, if we learn and practicing his way of life - we will find rest for our souls. - a rest like no other, a rest that only he can give..

I want to challenge you with three focused practices for the year:

**Presence - seek the face of God in prayer and worship - Be with Jesus**

**Spirit Filled Formational community - study and practice the way of Jesus - Become Like Jesus**

**Mission - Alert People to the universal reign of God, in Jesus Christ - Do what Jesus did!**

**1. Be With Jesus. - seek the Presence - seek the face of God in prayer and worship - Be with Jesus**

- a.** This last year we talked many times of absolute necessity for a disciple to spend time their teacher. Ladies, I know you just finished Jon Tyson's book - The Burden is light for your women's fellowship - Let's be a church that priorities time spent in the presence of God. It's so easy to move on from things we've heard or "learned" without actually applying them - let's not make the mistake of being hearers without being doer's and practitioners of what we learn.
- b.** I challenge you to set a time for at least one day each week that you will devote to being with Jesus. Cultivate a real desire to be with Jesus - as you would with a dear friend or spouse. Practice silence and solitude - in order to allow him to speak

into the deep places in your heart and reform and reshape your desires.

- c. The value of growing closer to Jesus only comes with deliberate time that is set apart. Through this we learn intimacy with God, we learn to hear and discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and to cultivate God's continual presence with us, and finally we learn to conform our lives to the will of God.
- d. I know for me seeking the presence of the Lord in silence and solitude - was absolutely vital to my spiritual health this last year - I am currently working my way back to a healthy rhythm of doing it...I don't know if it's something we every perfect or even attain - it really is a practice and a cultivating of the continual presence of God with us.
- e. I think about Paul the Apostle, he never stopped pursuing Jesus, he never stopped cultivating the presence of Jesus in his life. He said to the Philippians, **"I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."** - **Philippians 3:7-11**
- f. I have a list of books that I highly recommend in order to help you along the way:
  - i. Peter Scazzero - emotional, healthy spirituality - The Daily office
  - ii. Spiritual disciplines handbook By Adele Calhoun
  - iii. The Common Book of Prayer - Anglican Church
  - iv. The Relational Soul - *Richard Plass and James Cofield*

- v. *Spirit of the Disciplines By Dallas Willard*
- vi. *How to Un-hurry by John Mark Comer*
- vii. *Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton*

1. *Make it your aim, your pursuit, your practice to seek the face of God this year*

- g. **Scripture:** - Stay in the story! We spent a whole year reading through the Bible together - but don't stop there make a plan how you will continue to take in the story of God, in order to make it your own story!
  - h. We must be a people who continually take in and learn the story of God, that has been accomplished in Jesus, in order to make it our own story. To join God in his story of redeeming the world. A story still unfolding and being written, journeying through life with our resurrected King and savior, Jesus Christ. Only Through reading, studying, meditating on, listening to the preached word, and obeying the scripture we are trained in the knowledge of God - who God is, what he has done, who we are, and what we are to do in light of the story of God.
  - i. I encourage you - make a plan that you will be a student of God's word this year. (Read Scripture App; Scripture memorization; Reading through the Gospels; Reading through the Epistles, Reading and studying along with us through the Gospel of Mark)
  - j. Join us for Men's and Women's Fellowship, meet up during the week to discuss the sermon or your weekly readings - stay in the story!
2. **Spirit-Filled Community Practicing the Way of Jesus:** - Practice the way of Jesus in community with Others - Become Like Jesus
- a. We aren't a club, or people who all look the same, who prefer Apple to Microsoft products, or third wave coffee to Starbucks. Also, Church is not an event where we spectate. We are the Spirit-filled formational community of God - practicing the way of Jesus. It's not about perfection, or even about trying. It's

about training. It's about determining to love one another the way Jesus has loved us, to serve and prefer one another over ourselves. It's about seeing our gifts that the Holy Spirit has given us as a stewardship and a tool to help others to grow in Christlikeness. It's about speaking the truth to one another and building one another up in love so that we all reach maturity and fullness of the stature of Christ.

- b.** In our last series we talked about discovering and practicing our spiritual gifts in order to serve one another - How awesome would it be - for all of us to be using our spiritual gifts all of the time? Each time we gather coming with that intentionality to be used by God to help, to encourage, to teach, to exhort, to affirm, However God has gifted you - use it!
  - c.** It's through the intentional rhythms of being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, doing what Jesus did, that we practice and train in order to be what God has redeemed us to be - the light of the world, a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. To be, as Eugene Peterson describes the Church, "a colony of Heaven in the country of death."
  - d.** Let's continue to be a community that practices the way of Jesus together and helps one another discern what is the perfect will of God - to challenge one another to do - what would Jesus do if he were me - in my Job, with my friends and relationships, with my time, money and resources.
- 3. Mission:** - Alert people to the universal reign of God, in Jesus Christ  
- Do what Jesus did
- a.** "Mission is more than and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is the alerting of people to the universal reign of God through Jesus Christ." - David Bosch, *Believing in the Future*
  - b.** Living lives, both in words and actions, that alert people to the reign of God. We desire, through both word and deed, to make known the story of Jesus in our community through telling

others about him and displaying the same life of set apart-ness, love, and care that Jesus lived. We practice this by doing good works of righteousness, justice, and shalom, in both small and big ways, that show what God's kingdom is like until he comes again to rule and reign - world without end.

- i. "Preach the gospel; Teach the way of Jesus; Heal the sick; Cast out demons; Do justice; Eat and drink with those who are far from God; Pray and prophesy; Stand up against religious hypocrisy and pride; Speak truth to political power" - John Mark Comer
- ii. Some Practical Challenges for the year - From 5 habits of highly missional people:
  1. Bless - I will bless 2 people this week, at least one of whom is not a church member
  2. Eat - I will eat with 2 people this week, One of whom is not a church member
  3. Listen - I will spend at least one period of my week listening and cultivating the voice of God's Spirit.
  4. Learn - I will spend one period of this week learning the way of Jesus - studying and reading scripture
  5. Sent - I will journal throughout the week of the ways I alerted others to the universal reign of God in Christ.

4. *"The greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as 'Christians' will become disciples – students, apprentices, practitioners – of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence."* - Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*