

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
Mt. 11:28

COME UNTO ME

by Craig Marlatt

It seems so easy these days to get caught up in things that keep us busy and out of touch with the Lord. We're living in expensive times and it's hard to support a family while keeping oneself removed from the rat-race mentality, yet still keeping our eyes focused on *“things above”*, as Paul admonishes in Colossians 3:1. Having a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus certainly includes many things, but above all I think the emphasis should be on the word ‘personal’.

Certainly at times we are all guilty of going astray in one way or another. Often it is because we have taken our Christianity for granted and have let slip away that vital link to God, which is provided for us through the blood of Christ: personal communion with Him.

There are several things that Jesus wants us to do that will help us have a successful personal relationship with Him:

A. *“Come unto me”* -

Jesus wants to help us. He calls us to himself as the answer to our many needs and cares. He knows how difficult our lives can be since He himself once walked the path of humanity with His own beautiful feet. He understands the burdens of life and the difficulties of living in a world filled with temptation, darkness and genuine evil. He's been where you and I are and yet He conquered and arose victorious. But it's not enough just to come. Once we have decided to come we must give ourselves to the instruction Jesus has given to those who would come:

1. *“Take my yoke upon you...”*

Like the guiding harness of oxen hitched to a team Jesus tells us we are to take His yoke. No doubt that to the oxen it seems like an endless monotony of row after row of plowing dirt fields. Little does he know that his labor is producing a crop that will feed multitudes of people. Yet as Christians we have the sure promise that our labors are producing fruit unto everlasting life. Sometimes, even to us, life can seem like an endless row of plowing. At times like these we need only look to the promises of God that are written for our benefit, and rejoice that we are doing something which will produce a future reward, not only for ourselves, but also for those who will benefit from our labors.

Jesus wants to lead us and guide us in the way. It is easy to get lost or sidetracked and even deceived if we are not firmly in the yoke and staying within range of the Masters voice. Like the Good Shepherd He says, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”* (John 10:27). To this end He has certainly given us the Bible, but He has also given us the Holy Spirit as a guide in the path of righteousness. In John 16:13 it speaks of the Comforter saying, *“He will guide you into all truth”*.

2. *“... and learn of me”*.

I've never met a strong Christian who did not take time to learn of the Lord. There are many who claim certain spiritual experiences and revelations, but the apostle

Paul warns of these in Colossians 2:18,19. There can be nothing more spiritually rewarding or gratifying than to know the Lord Jesus and have communion with Him on a daily, even moment by moment, basis. To do this you must study his word and pray. If you will drink from the cup He will surely fill you.

B. "Love one another"

John 15:12 commands us to love one another as Christ loved us. Living our lives to fulfil this commandment is certainly the highest quality of human existence known to man. The love of Christ was selfless, giving, caring, truthful, abounding, steadfast and powerful. Because He loves us we can love each other. No matter how much people hurt or even despise us we can reach down into the well of love that Jesus has deposited in us and find love to give in return. Because there is no limit to His love for us neither should we limit our love for those around us, be they friend or foe. Always be willing to forgive.

C. "Be filled with the Spirit"

There is nothing that can defeat us if we are living a life filled with the Spirit of God. No discouragement too deep; no challenge too big; no devil in hell; no power on earth. But to be filled with the Spirit we must first be emptied of ourselves. The disciples experienced the filling of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter 2, but it wasn't until they were first emptied of themselves by the raw exposing power of the Cross. The cross empties us... the Spirit fills us. When we come to the Cross we see our void and our need and we cry out to God in guilt and repentance. Once cleansed we need to be filled with the Spirit so our lives can walk close to the One who has forgiven us.

Jesus wants us to live the Spirit filled life, but first He must prepare us through crushing up the hard ground in our lives. It is not you possessing the Holy Spirit that is needed but rather the Holy Spirit possessing you. If only the former is true than you will be like a car out of control. Before the cross the disciples were more concerned with things like position and power, boasting and ambition. After the cross they were broken and humble men. Before the cross when Jesus sent them out to minister they came back saying, Look what we can do! (Luke 10:17). But after the cross, resurrection and baptism of the Spirit they said, "Look what He can do!" (Acts 3:12-18).

D. "Go ye into all the world"

There's a genuine need for missionary minded Christians in the world today: people who are willing to lay down their own lives and give themselves to the work of reaching the lost for Christ. But on the other hand we can't all go. When troops go out to fight in a war they are dependent upon those who don't go to supply them with the necessary tools and support to make the victory sure. So it is also with Christian service: we must find out what our part is and be willing to do it. But one thing is for sure . . . everybody has a part. Finding out what God wants us to do with our lives is the most important thing for us next to becoming a Christian.

You may abhor the Mormon doctrine but one must admire their ability to get their people committed to the task of evangelism. Nearly every young Mormon spends two years on the mission field after they graduate from High School. In like manner those called Jehovah's Witnesses eagerly give their time and energies to taking their message to the world. Is it any wonder these two sects have experienced such amazing growth in

our time?

We too as born again Christians must make this a priority in our lives. Jesus was sent into the world to save sinners and to seek and save that which was lost, and He told his disciples: "*As the Father sent me so send I you*". When we see how much Jesus loved the lost then we too are struck with the burden and care for those who are astray.

It is enough for the disciple to be as his Master. Giving our whole heart to Him is a continuous on-going experience throughout the whole of our lives, and He is waiting patiently to lift the cares and burdens from our shoulders whenever we come to Him. But let us make sure that we do come. That we never forget how much He loves us and wants to commune with us in the secret place where other saints of old have found Him waiting. Maybe you have not been to visit Him there for a while and it's time that you went back to the well to fill your cup. Why don't you go to Him now? He's still waiting there for you, I'm sure.