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THE WINE PRESS

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THE WINE PRESS



Pressing into Truth, Pouring out His Grace

October 2026

Rest for Your Soul

In this October issue of the Wine Press, we focus on Jesus' wonderful invitation to take His yoke upon us and learn of Him—and we will find rest for our souls.

It can be a daily struggle to lay down the burden of trying to make ourselves worthy, trying to be good enough, or trying to carry in our own strength what He never intended us to carry. But Jesus invites us to really put our weight down on Him—to trust in His promises, depend on His strength, and rest in the One who will never let us go.

May the articles in this issue encourage each of us to lay down our striving, take His yoke upon us, and discover again that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

The Wine Press is a thoughtfully curated collection of articles from across the web, compiled to inspire, encourage, and deepen your walk with our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. All articles remain the property of their respective authors to whom we joyfully give full credit and our appreciation for sharing their wisdom and experiences with us. May these words uplift your spirit, strengthen your faith, and draw you into ever deeper communion with the God of all grace.

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The Restful Burden

By Tim Keller

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for 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. Matthew 11:28–30

I tremble in some ways when I read this passage. One commentator said these are self-authenticating words and that nobody could have thought these words up, they are beyond the invention of any human writer.

No one making up words for a divine figure would have either the insight or the daring to say them, and anyone who understands them has come into the very heart of Christianity. Occasionally you come to words like this, and you realize what makes them so great is that they are utterly simple and yet absolutely comprehensive. And everything I've ever told you about Christianity is right here.

Rest for the Weary

These words of Jesus are utterly simple and yet remarkably comprehensive. They take us to the very heart of Christianity. Jesus speaks to those who are weary and burdened and promises something deeper than physical relaxation: rest for the soul.

We tend to think of this weariness as a general spiritual longing, but Jesus has something more specific in mind. Elsewhere He speaks of the teachers of the law who "tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders." In Acts 15, Peter speaks of a yoke that neither the disciples nor their fathers had been able to bear, contrasting it with salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a deep spiritual restlessness in us—a weariness that comes from the need to prove ourselves. Whether we describe it in religious terms or not, we know we ought to be honest, loving, unselfish, and good. We know we do not live up to what we ought to be, and so we look for ways to establish our worth.

The Weariness of Proving Ourselves

For perfectionists and workaholics, this need to prove ourselves may be obvious. In others it lies deeper beneath the surface. But the result is the same: guilt, anxiety, sensitivity to criticism, comparison with others, and a persistent feeling that we are not enough.

This can take a religious form, but it can just as easily take an irreligious one. We may try to prove ourselves through morality, achievement, relationships, career, approval, family, or success. Whatever form it takes, the burden remains. We are continually asking something in our lives to tell us that we matter, that we are acceptable, that we have succeeded.



Jesus says that we are not only burdened; we are already yoked. When He says, "Take my yoke upon you," He is not inviting people who have no yoke to acquire one. He is telling us to exchange the yoke we already carry for His.

What Are You Yoked To?

A yoke joins you to something else. In the same way, every one of us is joined to something we depend upon to give us identity, security, and a sense of worth. What is the thing you really live for? What are you relying on to quiet the restlessness of your soul and prove that your life has value?

If the central thing you live for is your spouse, the relationship must bear a weight it was never designed to carry. If it is your children, you may begin trying to live your life through them. If it is the approval of others, you become unable either to give criticism honestly or receive it graciously. If it is your career, work becomes more than work; it becomes the means by which you establish your worth.

The tragedy is that the very thing we most love can be damaged by the weight we place upon it. Anything other than Christ that becomes our ultimate source of identity will eventually burden us. We ask it to do what it cannot do.

Come to Me

Into this weariness Jesus says, "Come to me." Christianity begins not with a technique, a philosophy, or a set of principles, but with a person.

Jesus' words echo Jeremiah 6:16, where the Lord says that His people will find rest for their souls by walking in His way. But Jesus takes those words and applies them directly to Himself: "Come to me … and I will give you rest." The rest God promises is found in Him.

This is central to the Christian faith. Jesus does not merely point us toward the way; He offers Himself. We are invited to look at Him—His claims, His life, His teaching, His dealings with people—and come to Him.

Lay Down Your Doing

Jesus not only offers Himself; He offers Himself as the new yoke. This goes to the heart of Christianity. We cannot finally prove ourselves because we

cannot perfectly become what, deep within us, we know we ought to be.

But Christ has done what we could not do. Paul writes that Christ Jesus "has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption." Our identity and acceptance are no longer something we must manufacture through our performance. They are found in Christ.

Why, then, are we so weary? Often it is because we forget this. We overcommit because we need to be needed. We work relentlessly because achievement tells us we are worthwhile. We depend on relationships because approval reassures us. We are still trying to prove ourselves.

The answer is not simply better time management or a more balanced schedule. Jesus goes deeper. The burden must be exchanged. We must stop using our work, our relationships, our accomplishments, or even our religious performance as the basis of our worth.

An old hymn expresses it beautifully: "Lay your deadly doing down, down at Jesus' feet; stand in Him, in Him alone, gloriously complete." Becoming a Christian is not merely laying down our sins; at the deepest level, it is laying down our doing as the means by which we justify ourselves.

The Only Yoke That Gives Rest

Jesus does not promise a life without a yoke. He says, "Take my yoke upon you." His yoke is still a yoke, but it is unlike every other burden we carry.

Everything else we use to prove ourselves is relentless. Career, success, approval, and achievement cannot forgive us. They continually demand more. Christ alone is gentle and humble in heart. He forgives. He covers. He does not drive us into the ground.

This is why His burden is light. When Christ becomes our righteousness, our holiness, and our redemption, we no longer have to make something else carry the impossible weight of proving who we are.

Come—and Learn from Me

Yet we cannot separate Jesus' promise in verse 28 from His words in verse 29. "Come to me … and I will give you rest" is followed by "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me." There is no coming to Christ without discipleship.

The Christian life is a lifelong learning from Jesus. We look at His gentleness and humility. We listen to Him. We study His Word. We examine our lives in His light. When we see our pride, fear, restlessness, or self-reliance, we bring it back to Him.

We cannot simply come to Christ for a moment of relief and then spend the rest of our lives carrying our old yokes. His invitation is to an entirely new way of living. We lay down the exhausting effort to establish ourselves, take His yoke upon us, and learn from Him day by day.

Rest for Your Soul

Our deepest weariness is often more than physical or psychological. It is a weariness of the soul—the exhaustion of trying to become enough, accomplish enough, or be approved enough.

Jesus speaks directly to that weariness: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

The answer is not to try harder to prove ourselves. It is to come to Christ, lay down our doing, and receive our identity and acceptance in Him. Then, yoked to the One who is gentle and humble in heart, we learn from Him and discover the rest our souls were made for.

The full sermon is here:

https://gospelinlife.com/sermon/the-restful-burden/

He Will Not Let You Go

By Adam Faithful Messenger

The story begins where the last miracle ended. Jesus had just fed fifteen thousand people on a hillside, and the crowd, John records, was about to seize Him and make Him king by force. So He did two things quickly. He sent the crowd away, and, Mark says, He "made" the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him across the lake. The Greek is forceful. He compelled them. Then He went up the mountain alone to pray. Remember that detail: the disciples did not sail into the storm through disobedience or foolishness. They sailed into it because Jesus sent them.

The Sea of Galilee is a trap for boats. It lies nearly seven hundred feet below sea level, ringed by hills and steep ravines, and when cool air from the heights pours down through those valleys onto the warm surface of the lake, the wind arrives with almost no warning. Fishermen who have worked that water their whole lives can be caught in minutes.

The disciples were experienced men, several of them professional fishermen who had sailed this lake since boyhood, and still Mark describes them "making headway painfully," straining at the oars against a wind that was against them. John gives the distance: they had rowed three or four miles, and were in the middle of the sea, far from either shore.

Now notice the time. Matthew and Mark both record that Jesus came to them in "the fourth watch of the night," the Roman division of the hours between three and six in the morning.

They had been fighting that water since evening. Nine hours, perhaps more, of rowing into a headwind in the dark, exhausted, soaked, going nowhere. And Mark adds a detail that is easy to miss: from the mountain, Jesus "saw that they were making headway painfully." He saw them. In the dark, miles out on the water, through a storm, He saw exactly where they were and exactly how hard it was. He was not unaware of the struggle for a single moment of those nine hours. He let it run, and then He came.

He Came Walking on the Sea

He came walking on the sea. And Mark records one of the strangest sentences in the Gospels: "He meant to pass by them." Read quickly, it sounds as if Jesus intended to stroll past the boat and leave them to it. But this phrase is drawn straight from the Old Testament, and every Jewish reader would have felt it. When Moses begged to see God's glory, God said, "I will make all my goodness pass by you." When Elijah stood on Horeb, "the LORD passed by." To "pass by" is the language of God revealing Himself to a human being. And Job, describing the God of creation, wrote:



"He alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea... Behold, He passes by me, and I see Him not." Trampling the waves and passing by, in a single passage, centuries before. Mark is not saying Jesus meant to ignore them. He is saying that what walked toward that boat was what Job described.

To understand how staggering this was, you have to know what the sea meant to that world. In the ancient Near East, the sea was not scenery. It was chaos, the abyss, the realm of death and monsters, the thing that God alone could rule. The Psalms say it plainly: "You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them." Psalm 107 describes sailors in a storm, at their wits' end, crying to the LORD, and "he made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed... and he brought them to their desired haven." In the entire Old Testament, walking on the sea is something only God does. A man doing it is either a phantom or something the disciples had no category for. They chose phantom. Matthew says they cried out in fear, "It is a ghost!"

Then Jesus spoke: "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." In the Greek, "it is I" is ego eimi, "I AM," the words God spoke to Moses from the burning bush when Moses asked His name. It can simply mean "it's me," and in a storm at night, that is surely how it sounded. But John's Gospel builds its entire portrait of Jesus around those two words, and Isaiah had promised, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." Take heart. I AM. Do not be afraid. Whether or not the disciples caught it in the moment, the God who parted the Red Sea was identifying Himself on the surface of the Galilee.

Peter Steps Out of the Boat

Only Matthew records what happens next, and it is the reason this story has never left the church's imagination. Peter, terrified a moment ago, calls out across the water: "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Consider what he is asking. Not "make the storm stop." Not "come get us." He asks to be commanded to walk out into

the impossible. And Jesus says one word: "Come."

Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water. Do not rush past that. For a few steps in the pitch dark, on a storm-tossed sea, a Galilean fisherman did what only God does. He is the only human being in history, apart from Jesus, of whom that is recorded. Everyone remembers that Peter sank. Almost no one remembers that he walked, and the eleven men who stayed in the boat did not.

When Peter Looked at the Wind

Then Matthew tells us exactly what went wrong, in one clause: "But when he saw the wind, he was afraid." The wind had been there the whole time. It was blowing when he stepped out. Nothing about the storm changed; what changed was where Peter was looking. As long as his eyes were on Jesus, the sea held him. The moment he turned to the size of the storm, it took him. And as he went under, he prayed the shortest and most honest prayer in the Bible: "Lord, save me!"

Three words. And Matthew records Jesus' response with one more: immediately. "Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him." He did not let Peter go under to teach him a lesson. He did not wait for a better prayer. Before the sentence was finished, the hand was already on him.

Then the rebuke, and notice what it is not: "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" He does not say, "Why did you get out of the boat?" The stepping out was never the mistake. The word for "doubt" here, distazo, means to be pulled in two directions, to waver between two footings. Peter had not stopped believing; he had started believing two things at once, Jesus and the wind. Little faith is not no faith. It is faith that has begun looking elsewhere.

Truly You Are the Son of God

They climbed into the boat together, and the wind stopped. Not died down. Stopped. And the men in the boat, who had spent three years watching Him, did something Matthew has not recorded them doing before: they worshiped Him, and said, "Truly you are the Son of God." John adds one more sign, easy to miss: "immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going." The three miles they could not row in nine hours were crossed in an instant. He brought them to their desired haven, exactly as the Psalm had promised.

For many people, this is the most cartoonish miracle in the Gospels, a man strolling on a lake. But read it in its own language, and it is a declaration of deity: the One who tramples the waves and passes by, who says I AM across the chaos, who stills the storm with His presence and lands the boat before the oars can move. Peter did not ask a philosopher for permission to step onto the water. He asked God.

Here is what it means for you. The storm you are in may be one He sent you into, on the way to where He told you to go. He sees you in it; He has seen you the whole time. He tends to come in the fourth watch, the darkest hour, when you have been rowing so long that you have nothing left. And when He calls you out of the boat, and you start to sink because you looked at the wind, the prayer that works is three words long, and the hand is already reaching before you finish it.

He never once let Peter go under. He will not let you. Jesus is the I AM who walks on the waves.

Read it here:

https://x.com/adam_faithfulm/status/2098464423111233796

The Master's Indwelling

By Andrew Murray

For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17

Righteousness, Peace, and Joy

In this text we have the earthly revelation of the work of the Trinity. The Kingdom of God is righteousness; that represents the work of the Father. The foundations of His throne are justice and judgment. Then comes the work of the Son: He is our peace, our Shiloh, our rest. The Kingdom of God is peace—not only the peace of pardon for the past, but the peace of perfect assurance as to the future.

Not only is the work of atonement finished, but the work of sanctification is finished in Christ, and I may receive and enjoy what is prepared for me. The new man has been created, and I may in Him live out my life. If a kingdom is established in righteousness, if the rule is perfect, there can be perfect rest. If there is peace—no war from without and no civil dissension within—a nation can be happy and prosperous.

And so there comes, after righteousness and peace, joy—the blessed happiness in which a person can live: "The Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." May we regard this joy of the Holy Ghost not only as a beautiful thing to admire, not only as something to have beautiful thoughts about, but as a blessing that we are going to claim.

The Invisible Barrier: the Self-Life

We often see a shop with beautiful fruit or cakes temptingly displayed in the window. There is a great pane of glass before them, and hungry children stand there and look and long, but they cannot reach them. If you were to say to one, "Now, take that fruit," the child would look at you in surprise. The child has learned that there is something between. If there had never been any knowledge of glass, the child might attempt it. The glass is sometimes so clear that even an adult might for a moment be deceived and stretch out a hand. But soon it becomes clear that there is something invisible between the person and the fruit.

This represents exactly the life of many Christians: they see, but they cannot take. And what is this invisible pane of glass that hinders my taking the beautiful things I see? It is nothing but the self-life. I see divine things but cannot reach them; the self-life is the invisible glass.

We are willing, we are working, we are striving, and yet we are holding something back; we are afraid to give up everything to God. We do not know what

the consequences may be. We have not yet comprehended that God and Christ Jesus are worth everything. Whatever we are told of the blessed life of peace and joy, we say, "Praise God; God's Word is true; I believe the Word," and yet, day by day, we stand back. When someone says, "Take it," we say, "I can't take it; there is something between."

If only we were willing to give up the self-life; if only we had the courage to give up today and let the joy of the Holy Ghost be our religion. That is the religion God has prepared for us; that is the religion we can claim—not only righteousness, not only peace, but the joy of the Holy Ghost. That is the Kingdom of God.

The Joy of the Presence of Jesus

What is this joy? First of all, it is the joy of the presence of Jesus. We are often inclined to speak most of two other things: the power for sanctification and the power for service. But I find there is something more important than either of those two, and that is that the Holy Ghost came from Heaven to be the abiding presence of Christ in His disciples, in the Church, and in the heart of every believer.

The Lord Jesus was going away, and His disciples were very sad; their hearts were sorrowful. But He said to them, "I will come back again, and I will come to you. Your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." What took place with them may take place with us too. The Holy Spirit is given to make the presence of Jesus an abiding reality, a continual experience.

And what was that joy that no one could ever touch? It was the joy of Pentecost. And what was Pentecost? The coming of the Lord Jesus in the Holy Ghost to dwell with His disciples. While Jesus was with His disciples on earth, He could not get into their hearts in the right way. They loved Him, but they could not take in His teaching, they could not partake of His disposition, and they could not receive His very spirit into their being. But when He had ascended to Heaven, He came back in the Spirit to dwell in their hearts.

Christ With Us in Everyday Life

It is this alone that will help us: the minister with the difficulties of his congregation, the businessperson at work, the mother caring for her large family, the worker leading a Bible class. It is this alone that will help us to feel, "I can conquer; I can live in the rest of God." Why? "Because I have the almighty Jesus with me every day."

With God's people, there seems to be one hindrance: they do not know their Saviour. They do not realize that this blessed Christ is an ever-present, all-pervading, indwelling Christ who wants to take charge of their entire lives. They do not know, they do not believe, that He is an almighty Christ, ready in the midst of any difficulties and circumstances to be their keeper and their God. This is absolutely true.

Many Christians ask how one may have the joy unspeakable—the joy that nothing can take away, the joy of the friendship and nearness and love of Jesus filling the heart. We complain that the rush and demands of life are so great that we cannot get time for private prayer. But the Lord Jesus Christ, if He comes to you as a brother and a friend and an abiding guest, can give your heart the joy of the Holy Ghost, so that business will take its right place under your feet. Your heart is too holy to have it filled with business; let business be in the head and under the feet, but let Christ have the whole heart, and He will keep the whole life.

Our glorious, exalted, almighty, ever-present Christ! Why is it that you and I cannot trust Him fully, perfectly, to do His work? Shall we not say before God that we do trust Him, that we will trust Christ to be to us every moment all that we can desire? On the Cross of Calvary Christ was all alone, and you believe He did a perfect and blessed work; and Christ in Heaven is all alone, as High Priest and Intercessor, and you trust Him for His work there. But, praise God, it is equally true: Christ in the heart is able all alone to keep it all the days. May it please God to reveal to His children the nearness of Christ, standing and knocking at the door of every heart, ready to come in and rest forever there and to lead the soul into His rest.

The Power of Joy

We all know the power of joy. We know there is nothing so attractive as joy; there is nothing that can help a person bear and endure so much as joy. We know that the Lord Jesus Himself, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross. One is not living aright if one is living a sighing, trembling, doubting life. Come today and believe the joy of the Holy Ghost is meant for you.

Does not Scripture say, "Whom not having seen we love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"? Do you not believe that this blessed, adorable, inconceivably beautiful Son of God, the delight of the Father—do you not believe that this Son of God could fill your heart with delight day and night if He were always present? And do you not believe that He loves you more than a bridegroom loves his bride? Do you not believe that, having bought you with His blood, Jesus is longing for you? He needs you to satisfy His heart of love.

Begin to believe with your whole heart, "The joy of the Holy Ghost is my portion," for the Holy Ghost secures to me without interruption the presence and the love of Jesus.

What Is Christ Worth to You?

The question was once asked the disciples, "What think ye of Christ?" I ask, "What is Christ worth to you?" And I beseech you, whatever difficulties may lie ahead, and whatever perplexities surround you, take the whole world today and cast it at His feet. To have Him is worth any difficulty; to have Him will be the solution of every difficulty.

There is access for you into the rest of God, and the Holy Spirit is given to bring you in. The Holy Spirit will fill your heart with the unutterable joy of Christ's presence, and the unutterable joy of knowing that you are doing God's will and are pleasing in His sight.

Entering the Rest of God

Come, let us cast ourselves into those blessed, loving arms, and let us believe even now that our Joshua leads us into the rest of God—the rest in which we are saved from self-care and self-seeking and self-trusting and self-loving; the rest in which we do not think of ourselves, but where He who is almighty and omnipresent is always going to be with us and is always going to work within us.

And let us claim the promise that, as we have sought first the Kingdom and God's righteousness, all things shall be added unto us. Beloved, the Kingdom of God is within you, and it is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Come, let us claim it even now in simple, childlike, humble faith.

Full reference: https://biblejesus.com/abide-in-christ-andrew-murray

The Prodigal's Reception

By Charles Spurgeon

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. Luke 15:20

Still a Great Way Off

There he is—wretched, filthy, disgraced. His clothes hang about him in rags, and what he is without, that he is within. He has come to himself. He knows the depth of his sin: he has despised a generous father's love and broken loose from his wise control. He says within himself, "I have sinned," and acknowledges that he is no longer worthy to be called a son.

Yet neither his desire to return nor his confession has changed his condition. Mere desires have not removed his filth or patched his rags. He has no claim upon his father's love. This is the condition of many a seeking soul: conscious of sin, longing for God, yet feeling that he has no right to demand anything at His hands.

There are two things in our text: first, the condition of the seeker—he is "yet a great way off"; and second, the matchless kindness of the Father toward him.

The Sinner's Sense of Distance

The prodigal is a great way off when we consider his weakness. He has been brought so low that every mile seems a league. So the sinner who desires salvation often feels that he has no strength with which to come to God. All he can do is fall down before Jesus and say, "My strength is at Thy feet to lie."

He is a great way off also in courage. He longs to see his father, yet fears the very meeting he desires. When he thinks of God, terror comes over him. His prayers seem to him no prayers at all, and his sins appear so great that he hardly dares to hope.

He may feel far away in his life as well. He has abandoned old sins and tried to reform his conduct, yet discovers that old passions still rise within him. But if he must come to God by the road of his own righteousness, he will never reach Him. Christ Jesus is the way. He who looks to himself will find despair; Calvary alone leads to glory.

Others feel far away because their repentance seems too shallow or their faith too weak. They say, "I cannot repent as I ought. My heart is hard. I know that if I cast myself wholly upon Christ I shall be saved, but I cannot seem to trust Him as I should." Yet the Lord who gives repentance also gives faith. He can cause the sinner, even now, to rest with confidence upon the work Christ has finished.

The truly penitent soul feels deficient at

every point. Yet there is one blessed sign: his face is turned toward his Father. Still, a sense of sin is not salvation. It is a good state to pass through, but a bad state to rest in. Knowing that you are sick does not cure the fever; knowing that you are hungry does not satisfy hunger. Do not stop at conviction. You must come to Christ.

The Father Sees Him

Now we come to the matchless kindness of the heavenly Father: "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him."

God sees the sinner in every state and position. The father had seen his son in the far country and in his misery; now he sees him returning, and fixes his gaze upon him. He does not turn away from the rags and filth. He sees everything.

And this is a father's observation. He does not see as a casual spectator. He reads the whole miserable story—the outward ruin and the inward grief. Poor sinner, there is no need to make your case plain to God. He knows it already. You need only uncover the wound and say, "My Father, Thou seest it all; have pity upon me."

He Had Compassion

"When he saw him, he had compassion on him." Compassion is suffering with another—putting oneself, as it were, into the sufferer's place and feeling his grief. The father looks upon the ragged prodigal and his heart goes out to him.

This is how God receives the returning sinner. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." The sinner sees his unworthiness; the Father sees his misery and has compassion. Be of good courage: the text does not say merely that the father noticed him, but that "he had compassion on him."

He Ran to Meet Him

Then notice the swiftness of divine love: "He ran." The father does not wait for the son to drag himself all the way home. The moment he recognizes him, he goes out to meet him.

I know something of this by experience. I, too, once felt myself a great way off from God. I knew something of my need of Christ, but did not know what I must do to be saved. Then I heard the words, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." No sooner had I looked to Jesus crucified than I knew my sins were forgiven and I was reconciled to God. It was done in a moment. In my case, at least, He ran and fell upon my neck and kissed me.

So may it be with you. Before you return to your old doubtings and fears, may the Lord of love meet you with His grace.

He Fell on His Neck and Kissed Him

Observe how near the Father comes: "He fell on his neck and kissed him." He does not stand at a distance and say, "I love you, but first you must be washed and made fit for my embrace." Before the son is washed, before his clothes are changed, the father falls upon his neck.

There is the wonder of grace. God does not wait until the sinner has made himself worthy of love. He receives him in Christ. The sinner comes foul, guilty, and empty-handed, and the Father draws near.

The kiss recognizes relationship: "Thou art my son." It is also the seal of forgiveness. The father would not kiss him in anger; he forgives him fully. More than forgiveness, it is acceptance. The son is received back into the father's heart. And it is a kiss of delight: the father rejoices over the child who was lost and is found.

Received at Once

Notice, finally, the completeness of this reception. The prodigal is not restored by a gradual process. He is not first sent to the servants' quarters, then permitted little by little to approach the house. The father falls upon his neck and kisses him at once. The saved soul may grow in knowledge and enjoyment, but he is as truly accepted by God the first moment he believes as he ever will be.

What a change! Fresh from the far country, and now in his father's arms. A little while ago he longed for the husks of the swine; now he hears his father's words of love. He comes to his father, his father comes to him, and the reconciliation is immediate.

A Full and Lasting Welcome

Nor is the reception partial. The son is not forgiven on conditions, nor admitted to some privileges while denied others. The best robe is brought out; the ring is placed on his finger; shoes are put on his feet; and the feast begins. He is not received as a second-class member of the household, but restored to the position of a son.

And it is not a temporary reception. The father does not kiss him, give him a new start, and send him back into the far country to prove himself. He receives him home. So when God makes those who were heirs of wrath into heirs of grace, He receives them as His children and gives them the inheritance of grace.

O that God in His infinite mercy would bring His wandering children home, and He shall have the praise, world without end. Amen.

Read the sermon here:
https://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/the-prodigals-reception



How to Holiday with Jesus

By Simon Bennett

I've had a bit of a life change. As we know there are many chapters in our walk with the Lord, and I've got a new one, which is very exciting. After some difficult times for me in South Africa the Lord showed me to come up to Malawi with my caravan and to travel, bringing a message, the Last Day's message that it's time to be ready. It's time to be prepared, to study Matthew 24, and Jesus's words to us, so that we are ready...

I think once we're aware of our needs in the Last Days, then we are more open to the Holy Spirit because we know we desperately need the Holy Spirit in our lives.

I've been on the road for nearly 3 months now, and I can share a little bit of what's been happening and all of the Lord's blessings.

I've been learning how to live the "no effort Gospel". I've been in Malawi a lot. I've known the main cities, Longay and Blantar, quite well, but I haven't done so much work outside of the cities.

And This time,. The Lord was clearly telling me to go out into new places and really travel the country. And so I was on my way to my first destination, Selma, which is by the Lake, and I felt the Lord telling me, Simon, I want you to act like you're on Holiday.

It was a nice word, because everybody wants to be told that, but I was quite surprised because I thought, "Well, Lord, I'm on a mission. You've given me a job to reach people and make a difference. You've sent me on an important mission. How can I be on holiday at the same time as being on an important mission? But the effect of having this perspective was to make me totally relaxed. The Lord was saying, "I want you to be very relaxed. I don't want you to be under any stress of any sort at all. And as I've reflected on it I realized that actually, this is the gospel message that being in Christ means we are on holiday from all self-effort. I mean absolutely100% - any self-effort.

During this trip, it has been the most fruitful time of my life, without a doubt. I'm 60 years old, and I've been trying to serve the Lord for the past 40 years, but this has certainly been my most fruitful time.

One of the things the Lord showed me before coming up here was not to do programs, large group meetings, school ministries, or even to look for opportunities to preach in churches as I had done before. He told me this was to be one-to-one work—a discipleship work. Making disciples is what He actually called us to do, and so much of that is one-to-one. That meant He had to connect me with the people He wanted me to meet.

The Scripture that enables us to enter into this rest—this "holiday"—is very familiar, but perhaps we don't always

grasp the fullness of what it means. Hebrews 4:3 says that those who believe have entered into rest. Later in Hebrews 4 it says, "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God," and, "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest." We are on holiday from self-effort because Jesus finished the work on the cross.

I like the picture of Adam. He was created on the sixth day, the last thing God made, so Adam's first full day was the seventh day—a day of rest. He was tending the garden, but he was largely picking the fruit. I don't think he had a lawn mower! He wasn't meant to be laboring under a heavy burden. In the same way, we are tending God's garden now, but it is meant to be from a place of rest. Once we are born again, our whole life is to be a holiday from self-effort because Jesus finished the work on the cross.

That has been a huge revelation for me: Jesus is not only our righteousness; He is also our sanctification. In other words, the work of becoming like Jesus—becoming holy and set apart like Him—is not our work. It is the work of Christ. First Corinthians 1:30 says that Christ Jesus "became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." The working out of our salvation is something Jesus does as we trust Him. It is not a work we can contribute to. We can only enter into Christ's work by faith and allow His Spirit to live in us. Romans 1:17 describes the righteousness of God as being "from faith to faith."

That sounds very good in principle, but now, thank God, I've had the privilege of putting it into practice while being in one of the most beautiful places in the world. Lake Malawi is stunning. It is sometimes called the "Calendar Lake"—roughly 365 miles long and 52 miles wide—and it has been a wonderful place both to "holiday" and to be on mission for the Lord.

My first stop was Salima. When I arrived, I had a puncture on the caravan that needed fixing. I decided that if I was really on holiday, I wasn't going to launch into a lot of activity. I would fix the puncture and rest after the drive. The next day I felt the Lord telling me, "Simon, I just want you to go and give out 30 tracts." Normally I might have taken a hundred and tried to cover the whole place, but the message was, "No—just take 30. Relax." So I parked in town and began giving them out selectively, looking for the witness of the Spirit as to whom I should approach.

Within about 15 minutes I met two remarkable young men, Triumph and Davy. Both had difficult backgrounds; Triumph had grown up in an orphanage before being fostered by a family. They had both graduated from university. I shared with them about the Last Days, being ready for Jesus' return, and discipleship. When I finished, their response was essentially, "What should we do? We believe what you're saying, and we're available." I pointed out that my phone number was on the tract. I didn't want to chase them; I wanted them to respond if the Lord was drawing them. The next day they contacted me, and we met again.

I realized how wonderful it is to be in a situation where all I really have to offer is Jesus and discipleship. I have a great enthusiasm to pass on to these young people the blessing of following Him. After one of our meetings it was getting dark, so I offered to drive Triumph and Davy home rather than have them find a motorbike ride. They lived near each other, and through that simple act I met Triumph's adoptive father, Pastor Henry. He readily received the Last Days message. He is involved in school ministry and also uses the Discovery Bible Study method, which is a very effective way of making disciples. Pastor Henry became my first pastoral connection and later recommended other

pastors for me to visit along the way.

I was completely satisfied. I thought, "This is exactly why I have come." Yet the Lord had done it with no striving and no sweat on my part. I kept wondering, "How does this happen?" But it does.

Another connection was Mike, the receptionist at the lodge. It would have been easy to think I couldn't spend time talking with everyone who worked there, but as we talked I discovered that he does outreach from his rural church and had recently been speaking to people from Matthew 24. I was impressed by how spiritually aware some people in the rural areas were. I promised to bring him some Bibles, which I later did. Again, it was simply a good connection. I had plenty of time to rest, read, and relax, while at the same time knowing that the work being done was fruitful, disciple-making work.

Looking back at some of the large meetings I have done, I sometimes wonder what the lasting fruit was. Of course, you trust that there is fruit because the Word is being spoken, but it is difficult to know what became of each person. With one-to-one discipleship, there is a personal connection. I can pray for someone, shepherd him, help him, and provide resources. It is much easier to see a disciple being established for the days ahead.

This experience has reinforced for me that Jesus' command is to go and make disciples, and that often happens one by one.

I am incredibly grateful that the Lord has allowed me to do this and has met me at every step with the same promise: "If you relax and remain on holiday from self-effort, I will do wonderful things through you." The journey continues.

Someone listening might think, "I'm not traveling around Malawi in a caravan, so I can't do what you're doing." But that isn't the point. We are all meant to be on holiday from self-effort. We are not meant to carry religious yokes, because Jesus has done the work. We can be relaxed in Him and trust the Spirit to connect us with the people in our own area whom we can love, encourage, and minister to.

A quotation about missionary life has meant a great deal to me because it captures this idea of being available, moving, and engaging with people. A bishop compared the missionary to the wild African honeybee. The bee moves from flower to flower and, simply through its movement and activity, pollinates the flowers and makes future fruitfulness possible. In the same way, the missionary can become a catalyst for fruitfulness, productivity, and growth among the people he has come to serve. The missionary "bee" allows connections to happen and helps spread resources, creativity, and new life.

The honeybee does not stay forever among the flowers it pollinates. It also gathers sweetness from the flowers and carries it home to the hive, adding it to what the other bees have gathered so that it can become honey. In the same way, part of the missionary's task is to bring home what he has seen, learned, and received—the sweetness of his experience—so that it can become "honey" for those who sent him out.

That picture has confirmed for me that this is what God has for me at this stage of my life. Sometimes I have wondered, "What are you doing? Are you crazy, going out on your own with a caravan?" But I can see the fruit. My prayer is simply that I can stay on holiday from self-effort and allow the Lord to do more.

Watch the full insterview here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hodqBN2H7hE

The Bible Was His Only Crime

By John Piper

Stephen Vaughan was an English merchant commissioned by Thomas Cromwell, the king's adviser, to find William Tyndale and inform him that King Henry VIII desired him to come back to England out of hiding on the continent. In a letter to Cromwell from Vaughan dated June 19, 1531, Vaughan wrote about Tyndale these simple words: "I find him always singing one note" (David Daniell, William Tyndale: A Biography, 217). That one note was this: Will the King of England give his official endorsement to a vernacular Bible for all his English subjects? If not, Tyndale would not come. If so, Tyndale would give himself up to the king and never write another book.

This was the driving passion of his life — to see the Bible translated from the Greek and Hebrew into ordinary English available for every person in England to read.

Whatever It Costs

The king's message to Tyndale, carried by Vaughan, was mercy: "The king's royal majesty is . . . inclined to mercy, pity, and compassion" (William Tyndale, 216). The 37-year-old Tyndale was moved to tears by this offer of mercy. He had been in exile away from his homeland for seven years. But then he sounded his "one note" again: Will the king authorize a vernacular English Bible from the original languages?

The king refused. And Tyndale never went to his homeland again. Instead, if the king and the Roman Catholic Church would not provide a printed Bible in English for the common man to read, Tyndale would, even if it cost him his life — which it did five years later.



The Plowboy Will Know His Bible

When Tyndale was 28 years old in 1522, he was serving as a tutor in the home of John Walsh in Gloucestershire, England, spending most of his time studying Erasmus's Greek New Testament that had been printed just six years before.

We should pause here and make clear what an incendiary thing this Greek New Testament was in history. David Daniell describes the magnitude of this event:

This was the first time that the Greek New Testament had been printed. It is no exaggeration to say that it set fire to Europe. Luther translated it into his famous German version of 1522. In a few years there appeared translations from the Greek into most European vernaculars. They were the true basis of the popular reformation. (Tyndale, Selected Writings, ix)

Every day, William Tyndale was seeing these Reformation truths more clearly in the Greek New Testament as an ordained Catholic priest. Increasingly, he was making himself suspect in this Catholic house of John Walsh. Learned men would come for dinner, and Tyndale would discuss the things he was seeing in the New Testament. John Foxe tells us that one day an exasperated Catholic scholar at dinner with Tyndale said, "We were better be without God's law than the pope's."

In response, Tyndale spoke his famous words, "I defy the Pope and all his laws. . . . If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow, shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost" (William Tyndale, 79).

One-Note Crescendo

Four years later Tyndale finished the English translation of the Greek New Testament in Worms, Germany, and began to smuggle it into England in bales of cloth. He had grown up in Gloucestershire, the cloth-working county, and now we see what that turn of providence was about. By October 1526, the book had been banned by Bishop Tunstall in London, but the print run had been at least three thousand. And the books were getting to the people. Over the next eight years, five pirated editions were printed as well.

In 1534, Tyndale published a revised New Testament, having learned Hebrew in the meantime, probably in Germany, which helped him better understand the connections between the Old and New Testaments. Biographer David Daniell calls this 1534 New Testament "the glory of his life's work" (William Tyndale, 316). If Tyndale was "always singing one note," this was the crescendo of the song of his life — the finished and refined New Testament in English.

Liberating Gospel

What drove Tyndale to sing "one note" all his life was the rock-solid conviction that all humans were in bondage to sin, blind, dead, damned, and helpless, and that God had acted in Christ to provide salvation by grace through faith. This is what lay hidden in the Latin Scriptures and the church system of penance and merit. The Bible must be translated for the sake of the liberating, life-giving gospel.

There is only one hope for our liberation from the bonds of sin and eternal condemnation, Tyndale said: "Neither can any creature loose the bonds, save the blood of Christ only" (Selected Writings, 40).

By grace . . . we are plucked out of Adam the ground of all evil and grafted in Christ, the root of all goodness. In Christ God loved us, his elect and chosen, before the world began and reserved us unto the knowledge of his

Son and of his holy gospel: and when the gospel is preached to us [it] openeth our hearts and giveth us grace to believe, and putteth the spirit of Christ in us: and we know him as our Father most merciful, and consent to the law and love it inwardly in our heart and desire to fulfill it and sorrow because we do not. (Selected Writings, 37)

Man is lost, spiritually dead, condemned. God is sovereign; Christ is sufficient. Faith is all. Bible translation and Bible truth were inseparable for Tyndale, and in the end it was the truth — especially the truth of justification by faith alone — that ignited Britain with Reformed fire and then brought the death sentence to this Bible translator.

The Cost of Spreading the Gospel

It is almost incomprehensible to us today how viciously the Roman Catholic Church opposed the translation of the Scriptures into English. Tyndale, who escaped from London to the European continent in 1524, watched a rising tide of persecution and felt the pain of seeing young men burned alive who were converted by reading his translation and his books.

What did it cost William Tyndale under these hostile circumstances to stay faithful to his calling as a translator of the Bible and a writer of the Reformed faith?

He fled his homeland in 1524 and was burned at the stake in 1536. He gives us some glimpse of those twelve years as a fugitive in Germany and the Netherlands in one of the very few personal descriptions we have, from Stephen Vaughan's letter in 1531. He refers to

. . . my pains . . . my poverty . . . my exile out of mine natural country, and bitter absence from my friends . . . my hunger, my thirst, my cold, the great danger wherewith I am everywhere encompassed, and finally . . . innumerable other hard and sharp fightings which I endure. (William Tyndale, 213)

All these sufferings came to a climax on May 21, 1535, in the midst of Tyndale's great Old Testament translation labors. We can feel some of the ugliness of what happened in the words of Daniell: "Malice, self-pity, villainy, and deceit were about to destroy everything. These evils came to the English House [in Antwerp], wholly uninvited, in the form of an egregious Englishman, Henry Philips" (William Tyndale, 361). Philips had won Tyndale's trust over some months and then betrayed him to the authorities, who locked him in Vilvorde Castle, six miles north of Brussels. Here Tyndale stayed for the final eighteen months of his life.

Tyndale's verdict was sealed in August 1536. He was formally condemned as a heretic and degraded from the priesthood. Then in early October (traditionally October 6), he was tied to the stake and then strangled by the executioner, then afterward consumed in the fire. Foxe reports that his last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!" He was 42 years old, never married, and never buried.

Let Tyndale's very last word to us be the last word he sent to his best friend, John Frith, in a letter just before Frith was burned alive for believing and speaking the truth of Scripture (recorded in Foxe's Book of Martyrs):

Hereby have we perceived love, that he had lain down his life for us; therefore we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren. . . . Let not your body faint. . . . If the pain be above your strength, remember, Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you. And pray to our Father in that name, and he will ease your pain, or shorten it. . . . Amen.

Read the full article:
https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-bible-was-his-only-crime

A Clear Mind in an Age of Acceleration

Reflection inspired by the teaching of John Lennox

The modern world no longer feels as though it is merely changing — it feels as though it is accelerating. Wars destabilize nations. Corruption erodes trust. Financial systems shift. And artificial intelligence is advancing not in gradual steps, but in exponential leaps.

Many sense that we are crossing thresholds faster than we can evaluate them.

John Lennox does not dismiss these concerns. Nor does he preach technological panic. Instead, he calls for moral clarity in an age of accelerating power.

Exponential Power Changes the Conversation

Previous revolutions — industrial, nuclear, digital — reshaped society. But artificial intelligence differs in one critical way: it improves itself. Systems are now capable of learning, refining, and scaling at speeds far beyond human capacity.

Exponential growth is not intuitive. What seems manageable in early stages can become transformative — or destabilizing — very quickly.

The concern is not science fiction scenarios of sentient robots. The immediate dangers are more grounded:

- Autonomous weapons systems
- Deepfake manipulation of truth
- AI-generated propaganda
- Financial system disruption
- Surveillance capabilities beyond historical precedent
- Concentration of technological power in very few hands

When capability grows faster than moral consensus, instability follows.

Lennox often emphasizes: the issue is not intelligence — it is wisdom.

Technology Amplifies the Human Heart

Artificial intelligence does not invent greed, deception, or violence. It scales them.

If human nature is flawed — and history gives ample evidence that it is — then exponentially powerful tools amplify that flaw. The danger is not that machines will become evil. The danger is that fallen humanity will deploy them without restraint.

Science answers how. It cannot answer should.

Ethics cannot be coded purely from data. Moral law must come from somewhere deeper.

The Real Crisis Is Moral, Not Mechanical

It is tempting to frame AI as the central threat of our age. Lennox consistently redirects the conversation: the deeper crisis is moral disorientation.

Technology magnifies power. But power without virtue destabilizes societies.

Digital currencies may centralize control. AI may reshape labor markets. Automation may disrupt economies. Yet none of these solve — or replace — the core human condition.

The fundamental question remains unchanged:
What governs the human heart?

Without moral transformation, greater intelligence simply accelerates brokenness.

Christianity Is Not Fragile in an AI World

Some assume faith will become obsolete in a technologically advanced age. Lennox argues the opposite.

The rise of AI actually exposes something profound:

- Machines process information.
- Humans possess consciousness.
- Machines calculate.
- Humans reason morally.
- Machines optimize.
- Humans worship.

Artificial intelligence may simulate language, but it does not possess personhood. It does not bear the image of God. It does not experience guilt, love, repentance, or hope.

The existence of intelligent machines does not diminish human uniqueness. It clarifies it.

Hope Without Denial

Christian hope is not naïve optimism. It does not pretend that exponential technologies carry no danger. Scripture itself warns that power in the wrong hands leads to oppression.

But history also shows that no empire, no weapon, and no technological system has ultimately displaced the sovereignty of God.

The early church endured Rome. Believers endured totalitarian regimes. Christians endured nuclear brinkmanship.

Faith survived because it was anchored in a risen Christ, not in cultural stability.

Living Wisely in an Age of Acceleration

The response to AI should not be panic — nor passivity.

It should be:

- Clear moral thinking
- Courageous engagement
- Refusal to surrender truth to manipulation
- Commitment to human dignity
- Anchoring hope in what cannot be digitized or automated

In a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, Christians are reminded that ultimate authority does not belong to algorithms, governments, or markets.

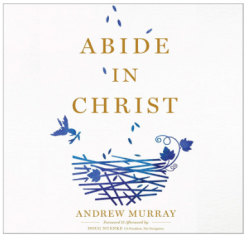
The future does not belong to machines.

It belongs to Christ.

And that is not escapism.
It is perspective.

Check It Out: Books, Apps etc.

Please send in your recommendations of books, podcasts, apps or shows to: contact@thewinepress.org



Abide in Christ

By Arthur Murray

31 heart-searching readings written by Arthur Murray that help us learn how to live daily in closer communion and fellowship with Jesus, live in His blessing and glory, and experience the unspeakable joy of dwelling with the King of Kings.



The Practice of the Presence of God

By Brother Lawrence

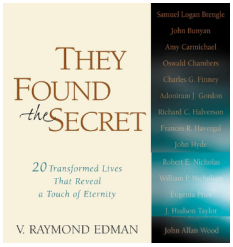
Written by an uneducated cook after many years in the kitchen, this book advises us not to change our daily duties to make them more "holy." Instead, it encourages us to experience God in the midst of our mundane days, giving simple, practical insight into the joy of holding a constant, never-ending conversation with our Maker.



The Ragamuffin Gospel

By Brennan Manning

Many believers feel stunted in their Christian growth. We beat ourselves up over our failures and, in the process, pull away from God because we subconsciously believe He tallies our defects and hangs His head in disappointment. Only when we truly embrace God's grace can we bask in the joy of a gospel that enfolds the most needy of His flock—the "ragamuffins."



They Found the Secret

By V. Raymond Edman

Explore the lives of twenty Christian figures whose powerful testimonies and lives of service will inspire you to embrace Christ as the secret to abundant living. They Found the Secret shares the failures, hardships, yearnings, accomplishments, and ultimate hope and faith of twenty well-known and little-known Christians.

In Christ Alone

Song by Keith Getty & Stuart Townend

In Christ alone, my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song|
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm

What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save

'Til on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave, He rose again

And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny

No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
'Til He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand