

June 6th – Sermon Notes – Pastor Dan Baty

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” From Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

Nothing plays the full keyboard of our emotions like family.

From family we experience the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. And because of its significance and its centrality to our lives, family is arguably *the* most powerful force that God uses to build our trust in Him and deepen our relationship with Him.

Text: *Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)* ²⁸ *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* ²⁹ *“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.”* ³⁰ *“For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

First, let’s consider, for a moment, Jesus’s statement. **“My burden is light.”** This is a paradox. How can a burden be light? The answer is, **lightness is found not in the weight of the burden but in the support for carrying it.** Jesus’ offer is not to take away the burden (the challenges and complexity of family life) but to make them lighter.

What Jesus is offering is a way to *carry* these burdens so they aren’t crushing, and not only that but so they become **constructive burdens**. Burdens that produce valuable things like the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness and self-control instead of destructive reactions like the deeds of the flesh: **infidelity, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition**, etc.

Main Idea: Those three simple words: “Come To Me.”

“Come to Me” is simple but not easy.

- It’s not easy because we’re often too busy to come.
- It’s not easy because the evil one persuades us it’s useless to come.
- It’s not easy because the flesh, which the Bible says is at war with the Spirit, resists our coming. (The flesh loves misery and misery loves company.)
- It’s not easy because we falsely believe nothing’s changed.
- It’s not easy because we don’t know exactly what it means or how to do it right.

Sometimes we only have time for a quick prayer (and God honors quick prayer, see Nehemiah 2:4), but that’s not *all* the time. “Come to me” is an offer from the Lord for more than a quick prayer.

Suppose for just a moment that Jesus was physically on earth, and He said to you, “I would like us to hang out together for about 50 minutes. And during that time, we can talk about anything you like, but let’s stay generally focused on your family. I may have something to say to you or not. I may just want to listen to you. You don’t have to give me a formal presentation, just talk to me about what’s going on with your family and how you’re feeling about things.”

Within that frame of mind, I’m sure your conversation with the Lord would be more extensive than “Lord help my son or daughter get that job she applied for.” Amen!

“Come to me” is offering us more. Come to me knowing I care. Come to me knowing I understand. Come to me knowing I am for you, no matter what you share with me. Come to me knowing I’m intensely interested in how you are feeling about things.

When Jesus spent the night in prayer with His Father, He wasn’t just asking the Father to fix a situation, that takes all of 15 seconds. No, He was in fellowship with His Father, pouring out His emotions, reviewing and discussing the days events and his reactions to them. **He was coming to the Father the same way He invites us to Come to Him.**

Come, not just with a prayer, come with fullness of heart and without fear of full disclosure.

When He says come to me, there is no time limit or time minimum. There is no frequency requirement or restriction. “Pray without ceasing” gives us unlimited access to come to Him.

The most important directive Jesus gives to us as His disciples is not “do this or do that” but “Come to me.”

Come to me involves more than asking Jesus to help us to be better and to do the right thing. The Lord is inviting us to give Him feedback on how *we’re* doing. If all the Lord wanted was compliance, He would not invite us to come to Him because His instructions for us are pretty clear and straight forward.

- Do all things without grumbling or complaining.
- In everything give thanks.
- Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
- Consider other more important than yourself.
- The Lord is not going to change His instructions. He is saying, “Let’s work on this together.”

[How the Lord made my burden about a strained relationship with a family member lighter.]

Even so, my joy is not a hostage of my desired results. God can use the worst of times to transport us to the best of times with Him.

For the Best of Times and the Worst of Times, Jesus says, “Come to Me.”

