

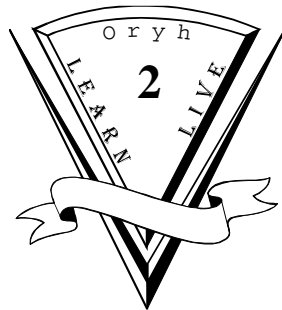


*Invitations of
Scripture*



Gregory Mayhew

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*by
Gregory Mayhew*

Invitations of Scripture

Mayhew, Gregory Erwin, 1934 -

Invitations of Scripture

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Invitations of Scripture

Foreword

There are some things about an invitation that make it very special.

First, it is a request of the offerer's own making. How good it is to know that God of His own good will has issued all of the invitations covered in this booklet.

Second, the invitation always has a central focus and purpose. All of God's invitations lead to Christ. He is the centre of all His counsels.

Third, a choice is always made by the one who gets the invitation. What will your choice be to each of God's gracious invitations?

Fourth and finally, there are always consequences to the choice made to an invitation. If the response is positive, then all of the benefits of the invitation can be enjoyed. On the other hand, if the invitation is refused all of the benefits are missed.

I am sure that you wouldn't want to miss out on any of God's invitations, so I urge you to read on to find out what they are and above all, please accept each one in the spirit in which it has been given.

This booklet is the second in a series based on exercises originating in the island of Barbados.

May God use this exercise of our dear brother Greg, to share these invitations in booklet form, to His honour and glory.

Samuel Rice
April 2004

Invitations of Scripture

Preface

How often in our lives have we been made to feel special by receiving an invitation from someone we love and respect? How much more special it is when that invitation comes from the “King of kings and Lord of lords”.

This little booklet consists of some of these invitations, and was a series of lectures given at Eastern Caribbean Senior Bible Camp a few years ago. I am grateful for the “prodding” and encouragement of my dear friend and brother in the Lord, Samuel Rice, whose suggestion it was, and who made sure that I was reminded from time to time of the project.

I am thankful for the constant support of my wife Cynthia, and her willingness to be a partner in the work.

Many thanks to my sister, Sylvia, who had the foresight to have these messages and others recorded, and spent many hours transcribing the notes from audiotapes. This labour of love could not have been done without her.

Finally, I am thankful for the prayer support of the many saints in various places who have kept me before the Throne of Grace. May this little booklet be used to the glory of God, and the blessing of many.

Gregory Mayhew
April 2004

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Invitations of Scripture

Invitation to Rest

1

The Invitation to Rest Matthew 11:28, 29

“Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

There are invitations throughout Scripture and these invitations are from God to man. One of the first invitations we find in Scripture is in the Book of Genesis and chapter 7. As God has pronounced judgment on the earth, He says to the man whom He has found faithful and who found grace in His eyes and His sight - Noah - “Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” As we go through the Old Testament we find the invitation given to Solomon, “Ask what thou wilt” and there was a promise from God of giving it to him.

As we go into the book of the prophet Isaiah, we have another invitation, “Come now let us reason together saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Further into the Book of the prophet Isaiah and in the 55th chapter there is another invitation, “Ho everyone that is thirsty, come to the waters.” That’s the Old Testament.

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As we come into the New, there is also the invitation given by John - the call to repentance. We find that the initial message that was delivered by John the Baptist was to the Jews. This was a call to self-judgment. It was a call to John's baptism. Let me hasten to say that John's baptism was simply an acknowledgment by those who came that they were deserving of death and they gave testimony to it by going into the waters of baptism. There was never any question as to whether that baptism could remove their sins for it could not- neither can Christian baptism remove our sins. Christian baptism is simply a testimony to the fact that you not only have received the Lord Jesus as Saviour, but now you want to be identified with Him. You want to be buried with Him. You want to come up out of those waters to walk in newness of life.

As we go through the Gospel of Matthew, we find that the Lord Jesus comes on the scene and He goes into the synagogue. Again the message is to the Jews and to them is the promise of the kingdom. He speaks to them, and then he demonstrates the signs of the kingdom. We are told that he healed divers diseases (many kinds of diseases) - epileptics healed, those who have the palsy recovered - these were all signs to this nation that their Messiah had come.

In Matthew 9 we have him passing by the receipt of customs and again he reaches out to one of that nation - a Jew - Levi or Matthew by name, and he says, "Come, follow me." As we get into the next chapter we find that there is the need for this kingdom to be presented to the nation. It must first be presented to them and so he sends out his disciples and he tells them not to go into any cities of the Gentiles because the message is to the house of Israel. But by the time we get to chapter 11, we find that this people to

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whom the message of the kingdom has been sent, have rejected the One who came to set up His kingdom and we see Him there crying over Capernaum and other cities. Those who had rejected His message; those who had seen the power of His works, but who had refused to believe on Him.

Not only did they refuse to believe on Him but later we hear them saying, “Away with Him, crucify Him.” And so, having been rejected by those to whom the gospel of the kingdom was sent - the message concerning their Messiah - now the invitation is extended to all. No longer is it just to the Jew; no longer is it just to the nation of Israel, but now the invitation goes out to all - “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

Now, therefore, the invitation by the Spirit is an ‘Invitation to Rest’. “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest”. There is a gift promised and it is promised to all those who are labouring. Today there are men and women who seek by the deeds they do to find this rest, only to discover that it cannot be done. There are some who toil in the heat of the day, toiling, giving out literature, hoping that by some means - maybe through the quantity of that which they give out and the many people they reach with this literature - that they might find favour with God.

**now the
invitation
goes out
to all**

And then there are others who do charitable works. They make sure that they give away some of that with which they have been blessed. They want to make the lives of others easier. They want to improve living conditions for others.

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They want to build housing for those who have no homes, and all the time their object is that by doing this they might find favour with the God of heaven. Meanwhile, He is saying, in no uncertain terms, 'that which is being offered cannot be earned. It cannot be worked for. It is a gift'. It cost God everything but He is willing to give it to you free of charge. So, if you are labouring today - if you are endeavouring by virtue of good works to make an impression on the God of heaven - forget it! He says the invitation goes out to those who are heavy-laden, and there are some reading this who are bearing the burden of sin.

You may be showing a happy face, smiling, having all kinds of fun, but underneath you know yourself, if you're honest, that you are bearing a burden that is too heavy for you to carry. But the invitation is given to you today - "Come unto Me". You are called to a person - the Man Christ Jesus. "Come unto Me" - and that inclusive word all, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden" - and the promise is that if you come to Him, He will give you rest. This is rest of conscience and how many of you need rest from those consciences that are pricking you. Every time you hear the Word of God, the Spirit of God convinces you that you need a change in your life. He says He will give you rest. There is only one who is able to give mankind rest - rest of conscience - and that is the Man Christ Jesus.

I wonder how many of you are still labouring, still bending over under the burden of sin; still trying to do the best you can; still endeavouring to please God by virtue of your works. I have no doubt that among mankind there are those who are morally upright, there are those who are great philanthropists - they can be pointed to as models, pillars in their community - but as God looks down on them He sees

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not the outward appearance, but the heart. And He says to each of them and to some of you that no matter how good you might be, all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight. But the invitation is given - "Come unto Me and I will give you rest". It is a message of love. It is a message designed to let you know that there is Someone who loves you, Someone who loves you so much that He was willing to lay down His life for you; Someone who loves you so much that He is willing to take away all the burden of your sin and He's willing to give you, in exchange for it, eternal life if you would but accept His invitation.

But the invitation doesn't end there. The invitation, first of all, is to come for a gift - for rest of conscience. But then there is a further invitation and for you - if you have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ - it is also an invitation to rest. But this is an invitation, which requires that you do something. You see in the first part of the invitation He says 'Come, I have a gift.' Now in the second part of the invitation - He says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest unto your souls".

What you need is no longer rest of conscience - many have already come and received that - God's free gift to them through the Lord Jesus. You now need rest of heart. You are so restless because you have not come for this rest. That's why the children of the 90's say, "I'm so bored." You do not have rest of heart so you're bored. You can't find any

**You do not
have rest of
heart so
you're bored.**

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excitement in life unless you're jumping up, swaying to music. And when the radio is shut off, when the jumping up is over, you're just as restless and just as bored. "Take my yoke upon you". Surrender to God; that is what is necessary.

There is an educational process that needs to go on in our Christian lives

You notice He didn't say He was going to bring a yoke and place it on you. He said, "Take my yoke upon you." It is an act that is voluntary. It is an act of surrender to His claims. "Take my yoke upon you," He says. But then He says, "Learn of Me." There is an educational process that needs to go on in our Christian lives. That's why the apostle spoke of "growing in grace and in the knowledge

of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a growth process involved. So, in addition to surrender (taking on His yoke), He says, "Learn of Me."

There is a woman in Scripture of whom we read who heard this invitation and she came to Him for rest of conscience. But later on we find her sitting at His feet and hearing His word. She had not only taken on His yoke but she was learning of Him. Subsequently there came a time that sorrow came into her life, the death of her brother. The Lord Jesus, who had been summoned when her brother was sick, in His omniscience, knew that he had died. We are told that word was brought to her that this blessed person, the Lord Jesus, had come there.

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And what do we read about her? We read that she sat in the house. Was that strange? No it wasn't. You see she had so learned of Him - she had received such rest of heart from Him - that though she was told He was there, her confidence in Him was such that she knew that she did not have to run off to Him. Her sister did and issued, as it were, a challenge - "Lord, if you'd been here my brother would not have died." But Mary sat in that house until someone came and said to her, "The master is come and He calleth for you." Only then did Mary move. You see she had learned at the feet of the Lord Jesus. She had rest of soul.

Mary fitted so beautifully into the words that we find in the epistle to the Philippians - "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard (or garrison) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus". Mary had the peace of God residing in her heart and not even the death of her brother - not even the fact that he was in the grave four days - could make her move out until the master summoned her.

Do you want to be like Mary? Do you want to have the peace of mind that she had? Not only will taking on His yoke give you peace of heart, but as you learn of Him - the more you learn of Him - there will be that which also emanated from Mary. We find later that as He sat in the house at Bethany, with some communing with Him - while others were busy in service - Mary came to His feet with that alabaster box of ointment and she broke it open, and she poured it on His feet, and she wiped His feet with her hair - an act of worship.

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Be assured, if you take on His yoke and learn of Him - not only will you find rest for your soul (heart rest) - not only will the peace of God engulf you, - but out of your own heart, expressed through your lips, will come worship and praise to Him. He says, "I am meek and lowly in heart." Meekness - perfectly demonstrated by the Lord Jesus - is something that is prized by God the Father. We are told in the 1st Epistle of Peter that a meek and quiet spirit is to God of great price. He prizes a meek and quiet spirit.

We are told in Galatians that meekness is produced by the Holy Spirit. It's the fruit of the Spirit. Lowliness - as demonstrated by the Lord Jesus - is something that occurs inside. There is no thought of self when there is lowliness. Meekness is the outward expression of that which has already taken place on the inside. It was said of Moses that he was more meek than any man who walked the earth. When his brother and sister rose up in revolt against Him, Moses did not respond. He waited for God to defend Him. Oh, that this attitude would mark some of us.

We're quick to be on the defensive and some of us feel that the best method of defence is a good attack, so we're constantly on the attack. Oh, that we might display the meekness that characterized the Lord Jesus who, "when He was reviled, reviled not again; who, when He suffered, threatened not". If there was one who had the ability to threaten and carry out His threats it was He, but He never uttered a word. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth". Oh, that I might learn - many of us might learn - that lesson to be silent, even when attacked, and allow God to take our part..

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The biggest problem many of us have is with our tongues - we just can't keep quiet. Beloved in the Lord, that is a problem because we have not taken on the yoke of the Lord Jesus. We have not learned from Him and, therefore, we cannot demonstrate meekness.

Where the call to rest for the unbeliever is a gift, the call to rest for the believer is a discovery. You will never, never discover what it is to have rest for the heart unless you take on the yoke of the Lord Jesus and you learn of Him. It requires an action on your part. Voluntary? Yes, but it requires an

action nevertheless. It is only as we take on His yoke - it is only as we learn of Him - that we will be able truly to enjoy a Scripture that we repeat but often like parrots - "for we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Many know that verse, having learned it in Sunday School; we repeat it, but, are we in the good of it? We will never, never be able to fully enter into that verse until we take on His yoke and learn of Him.

**the call to
rest for the
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The apostle Paul took on that yoke - "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" Then he went into that street called Straight and for three days he was learning. It is no wonder he could say, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or peril, or nakedness, or sword?" This man went through trying times - greater trials than any of us have ever experienced - but He could say "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor

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principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come (he wasn't worried about the future because he knew the One who had given him rest for his soul), nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." That was a man who had taken on the yoke, who had learned of the blessed person of the Lord Jesus, and he was settled in his soul.

Did you ever hear Paul complaining about being bored? There was too much to learn and too much to do. Oh that God in His grace, might affect my heart and yours that not only will we experience his saving grace through the Lord Jesus and find rest - rest of conscience - but may we acknowledge Him as Lord by taking on His yoke, learning of Him and experiencing that peace that passes all understanding.



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