

Jesus Brings True Rest

1. Life brings unrest: Why we need it

- Doing a short series here at church on 'What I love about Jesus'
 - As I said last week ... apart from dealing with our sin and reconciling us to God ... the thing I love about Jesus is he helps us to do life well
 - One of the ways Jesus helps us to do life well is ...
 - he helps us to forgive and reconcile with others
 - today > he helps bring rest to the weary
 - Not just rest for the body ... but rest for the soul
- Message we so need to hear

- When someone asks you... 'how's it going?
- We normally say
 - "Good"
 - "Ok"
 - "It's all good"
- But if they were to
 - scratch beneath the surface ...
 - dig a little deeper
 - for many of us ... life is not all good

- Many of us are tired, time-poor and exhausted with busy-ness of life
 - Others are struggling with stress, depression and anxiety
 - We're dealing with
 - financial pressure
 - young kids
 - aging parents
 - coping with illnesses
 - crazy work hours
 - uni assignments piling up
- Life is hard and we often feel like there's little or no light at the end of the tunnel

- Invariably when life gets out of control ... we crave rest!
 - We just want a break ... we want to get away from all the pressures and stresses of life that surround us
- So ...
 - We hang out for our holidays

- Look forward to the weekend
- We love a sleep-in in the mornings and nanna-nap in the arvo
- We take 'mental health days'
- Because we crave rest

- Those things are good ... but they're not enough
 - The rest doesn't last > it's only temporary > it's only a brief escape from the reality
 - Holidays come to an end
 - Weekend always seem way too short
 - No matter how good your sleep-in was today, you'll be tired again tonight

- So there's this constant frustration of seeking after rest that never satisfies or lasts
- Think about it ...
 - How often do you feel slightly depressed coming home from holiday?

- But what this passage shows us today is there's one who does bring hope and provide light for those who are feeling like this
 - It's Jesus - who says *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*
 - Jesus offers us real rest > true rest > rest for your soul > rest that will never end

- Now ... who are the weary and burdened who Jesus offers this rest to?
 - Is what Jesus offering here for everyone; or
 - Is this just for those people who are hurting, burnt out, anxious and exhausted ... and not for those who think they have it together
- I think it's an offer to everyone ... because everyone is burdened by something
 - Everyone is wearied by something
 - Let me explain

- What are the burdens that Jesus is referring to?
 - In Matthew 23:4 Jesus says about the religious leaders
 - *They tie up heavy loads / burdens and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.*

- Burdens Jesus is speaking of here are the burdens of man-made rules and religiosity that the Pharisees and teachers of the Law imposed on the people
- Had the effect of weighing heavy on people's souls as they were pushed into a religion of rule-keeping and away from a living a life that rejoiced
- Jesus is offering rest from all that

- So often when people think about Christianity they think it's all about law keeping and rules and religion
 - You keep all these religious commandments then God will love you and bless you and take you to heaven and hear all your prayers
 - That's an incredible burden! ... because you'll never know whether you have been moral enough, good enough, religious enough etc
 - Terrible burden!
- Jesus is saying ...
 - "No... I've come to bring rest from that"
 - "I've come to give you relief from that burden"

- So we can be burdened by religious rule keeping and uncertainty about where we stand with God that brings

- But there are many other burdens we experience that Jesus brings rest from ... even if you don't call yourself religious

- For some there's the burden of worldly success
 - Getting the right grades
 - Getting into the right Uni
 - Getting the right job
 - Being successful in your job > out performing your peers
 - Me at AMP > Peer comparison > stress > sick in gut walking to work

- For others there is the burden of being a good enough parent
 - Am I doing enough for my kids?
 - Are my kids going to turn out okay?
 - Will my kids need counselling because of me? ;)

- For others there's the burden from parents
 - To be good > do well at school > make the life choice that will please them

- So often we feel like
 - I'm trying to live up to some standards > your own standards or other standards
 - Often end up feeling like
 - I'm not good enough
 - I'm not living well enough
 - I'm not achieving enough
- So often we have these burdens that we are dealing with
 - Burden of morality > religious acceptance
 - Burden of expectation from others

- Jesus says I am the only one who can give you a solution to that

- Scientists say that if you don't have at least 2 hours rapid eye movement sleep / REM sleep a night ... you wake up exhausted
- Jesus says ...
 - you're taking time off
 - you're taking breaks
 - you're going on trips
 - And you still can't get the deep inner rest ... the REM of the soul that you so badly need
 - Only I can give you that

- And he's saying that to everyone in the world
 - Not just to the Jews of his time
 - Not just to religious people
 - To everyone
- I can give you rest for your soul that you crave

2. Jesus brings true rest: What is it

- What is it? What is this rest that Jesus brings?
- Jesus goes on to say something that goes completely against our culture and what we expect him to say
- Jesus is saying ... *"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest"*
 - How's he going to give you that rest?
 - He wants you to put his yoke upon you
 - *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me ... and you will find rest for your souls"*

- What is a yoke?
- That's an agricultural picture that Jesus is using that his hearers would've been familiar with
 - Yoke is a wooden frame that went over the shoulders of a pair oxen to help them pull a heavy cart or wagon
 - The yoke joined them together like a harness, so that wherever one went the other had to follow
 - Jesus says come and take **my** yoke upon you
- That's the kind of relationship Jesus is offering

- In Jesus day ... disciples yoked themselves to teachers
 - Whether it be
 - disciples of Pharisees or Teachers of the Law or
 - in Greek culture disciples would yoke themselves to philosophers like Plato, Socrates and Aristotle
 - In those days you lived with and served the teacher and you were totally yoked to the teacher in every way

- So when Jesus is saying to take his yoke upon you ... what he's saying is ... come be my disciple
 - In other words Jesus saying
 - I want you to come and
 - make me the centre of your life and
 - let me dominate your life
 - And that's how you find rest

- It would be much easier if he said come to me and I will give you rest
 - But no ... need to take on his burden of being yoked to Jesus

- Our culture rejects this idea ... because our culture says you mustn't give authority over your life to anyone
 - Our culture is anti-authoritarian > it doesn't like it at all
 - Our culture will says it's crazy to say that true rest comes in yoking yourself to anyone ... let alone Jesus
- But Jesus says the only real way to get true rest is to yoke yourself to him

- Now you might say ... I don't want to be yoked to anyone or anything
 - I want to be free
 - But do you realise that you are yoked to something ... we're all yoked to something ... and therefore none of us are completely free

- So you say ... "I'm not yoked to anything! What am I yoked to?"

- Well ... it's the thing that you live for in your life
 - What have you decided to live for?
- Everybody has to live for something
 - Some people live for
 - Pleasure
 - Family
 - Work
 - Cause
 - We all having something that makes life meaningful for us ... that makes us get out of bed in the morning
 - Whatever you live for you are yoked to

- What are you living for ...
 - Relationship > the thing that is your main joy and satisfaction in life is that person
 - Do you realise you are yoked to them
 - If that persons love and happiness is the main things you live for in life ... then
 - You'll be emotionally over dependent on them
 - You won't be able to take criticism from them because it will devastate you
 - Won't be able to give criticism to them or be honest with them because you can't take their anger ... because if they have a problem with what you say you can't take it
 - You're mastered by them
 - What if I live for my job / career
 - You say ... I'm not emotionally dependent on anybody
 - I'll be self sufficient
 - But you're not ... you're yoked to your career
 - You make the quality of your career the thing that gives you joy and satisfaction / measure of your worth
 - You might say ... I'm more noble than that ... I don't live for myself, or my career ... I live for my children
 - Means you're wellbeing, your happiness, your worth as a person and a parent is completely determined by the success or failure of your kids

- It means you put all other relationships and activities before you children
- It means you will tend to molly-coddle and pamper your children
- In the end you end up doing more harm than good as you
 - Put unnecessary pressure on them to perform up to your standards
 - Suffocate and dominate their life

- We are not free from anything
 - We're all yoked to something
 - Question is ... are you yoked to something that is going to give your rest for your soul ... or are you yoked to something that is going to be cause you unrest, anxiety and burden your heart

- Jesus says
 - Take my yoke
 - Yoke yourself to me
 - I'm the only one who will give you true rest

- Still doesn't sound very inviting does it
 - In fact it sounds rather restrictive being harnessed to someone
 - But that really depends on who you are harnessed to and why

- **Illustration – Skydive**
- Anybody done skydiving before?
 - Single or tandem?
 - Tandem? Why?
 - Jumping out of a plane at 14,000ft and never done it before ... you want to strapped to an instructor who knows what they're doing

- Example of being harnessed or yoked to someone
 - Physically connected to them
 - But if you've never skydived before ... your life depends on it
 - But because you're harnessed to an expert skydiver ... you're able to do something amazing that you wouldn't otherwise get to experience

- Same with Jesus
- When you come to Jesus and you yoke yourself to him ... you're yoking yourself to the best of the best
 - He's the good shepherd who takes care of his sheep
 - He's the suffering Messiah who willing died for your sins

- He's the powerful son of God to whom God the Father has committed all things
- He's the one who enables you to know and be in relationship with our Father in heaven

- So being yoked to Jesus ... being harnessed to Jesus ... means you're able share in the rest he offers that's far greater than any rest you get to experience in this life

- In case your still skeptical about being yoked to Jesus
- Jesus gives us two reasons for the weary and burdened to come to him
- First is in v29 ... because he is gentle and humble in heart
 - Jesus is gentle ...
 - He welcomed little children (Matt 18:1ff, 19:13ff)
 - Compassion on sick and suffering
 - Merciful to the sinners, tax collectors and prostitutes
 - Jesus is humble
 - Humble enough to wash the feet of his disciples
 - Humble enough to go to the cross and die for you
- When we yoke ourselves to Jesus ... we're not yoking ourselves to a harsh task master
 - We're yoked to one who is gentle and humble

- Second reason for the weary and burdened to come to him
 - v30 - *'My yoke is easy and my burden is light'*

- Jesus doesn't impose a burden on you ... he takes it off you
 - If you're a person burdened by the weight of be being moral or religious to be accepted by God ...
 - Jesus takes that burden off you at the cross
 - Jesus has already born the burden of our sin and our acceptability with God at the cross

 - If you're a person burdened by the weight of needing to be somebody in life ... Jesus taken that off you
 - Because at the cross he says ... you so valuable to me I am willing to lay down my life for you
 - You are not just somebody ... you're everything to me ... and I will go to the cross to prove it

- If you're a person who is burdened by the stress of finances and wealth having enough or keeping up the Joneses ... Jesus takes that burden off you
 - Because he was willing to forgo all his heavenly riches and become poor so that you may be blessed with all the spiritually rich
- Whatever it is that is weighing you down, making you weary, burdening your soul ... Jesus takes that burden and makes it light ... because when you yoke yourself to Jesus ... you will find his yoke is easy and his burden is light
- Which means ... taking in the yoke of being a disciple of Jesus is a joy and a privilege and frees us to experience the joys of life without the burdens it brings

3. Finding true rest: How do I get it

- So ... we know we need rest
- We know Jesus brings rest
- How do I get it?

- Need to come to Jesus like little children
- See in v25 Jesus says
 - *"I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.*

- Here Jesus is speaking about those who will accept his message of salvation and who will reject him
- He gets to the end and says ...
 - Wise and learned have Kingdom of Heaven hidden from them because they don't think they need it
 - But the truth about the KOH is revealed to little children and enter into Jesus rest

- This is actually a common way of Jesus talks about becoming a Christian > coming to him like a child
 - To become a disciple
 - To be converted
 - To enter into his rest are ... all ways of saying the same thing

- Why would Jesus say ... entering the KOH and entering into his rest is only for those who are like children
 - Because the characteristics of children teach us so much about how we receive the rest Jesus is offering
- Two ways little children that are like what you and I need to do to become a Christian
- Two characteristics of little children of how to come to Jesus and receive his rest
- First of all ... little children know they are helpless
 - They know they're dependent on their parents
 - I can think of countless examples where our kids know they're helpless and dependent on mum & dad
 - They come to you and ask you to do things for them or give them things they need
 - "I need to do wee-wee"
 - "Cuddle me"
 - "I hungry"
 - "Carry me"
 - They know they are helpless and they act like they are helpless
- To become a Christian you need to know and act like you are helpless
 - You have to humble yourself and swallow your pride and be someone who knows you can't be like the wise and learned
 - Realise you can't
 - Reason your way into heaven > earn your way > pay your way > moralise your way
 - You're utterly dependent on God when it comes to entering the KOH and enjoying his rest
 - You need to come to him like a child and say
 - "I need your grace > I need your forgiveness > I can't save myself > I can't pay my debt with you > I am spiritually helpless without you"
- That's the first thing ... realise you are spiritually helpless and utterly dependent on God when it comes to entering into Jesus rest
- Second thing ... children know they are greatly loved
 - An amazing thing about kids is they are exceedingly confident of the care and love of adults

- One of the blessings of teaching Kindy kids scripture here at PSPS ... is they love being loved
- You show them some care and attention in class ... and they'll love your for it
 - Walk through the playground > they call out "Mr Maze!"
 - Turn up at class ... run and give big hug > give my legs a hug!
- They know I love them and care for them

- That's the second thing about coming to Jesus and sharing in his rest ... is you have to believe that Jesus Christ loves you and cares for you
 - Like little children ... we know we stuff up in life
 - We know we get things wrong and we hurt people and we let people down and we do the same with God

- But the joy of coming to Jesus is knowing that despite all of that you are deeply loved
 - He says us to come to him just as we are ... with all our sins, failings, hurts, suffering, and submit ourselves to him like little children to him and his teaching ... and know you are deeply loved ... and he will give you rest

- We're all weary and burdened by something
- We all desperately need rest for our souls
- Jesus offers that rest
 - He says ... come to me, take yoke of discipleship upon you
 - And I will give you rest for your souls
- You just need to come to him like little children
 - Knowing you are spiritually helpless
 - Knowing you are deeply loved

PRAY