

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

434

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will focus on the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30: **“Come unto 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.”**

C. S. Lewis was born in Belfast, North Ireland Nov 29, 1898. He died Nov. 22, 1963 at the age of 64. He was an atheist for the first 30 years of his life. He is now remembered, however, as one of the most famous Christian authors of all time. Some of his works include widely acclaimed books on the Christian faith: *‘The Case for Christianity,’ ‘Christian Behavior,’ ‘Mere Christianity,’ ‘Miracles,’* and *‘The Problem of Pain,’* Etc. He was a brilliant man who held prestigious positions at ‘Oxford University’ and ‘Cambridge University.’ His writings have been translated into more than 30 languages and have sold millions of copies all over the world. When he considered the outlandish claims of Christ he wrote: *“A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell.”*

The quote of Christ from Matthew 11:28-30 is a case in point! This is just one of many audacious claims made by Christ. Jesus invited “all” who were weary and burdened to come to “him” and “he” would give them “rest”. The magnitude of this promise involves billions of people, and multiple problems that defy description. Lewis reasoned that Jesus had to be either a “lunatic” or “not a mere man”. He correctly concluded, of course, that Jesus was “not a mere man”. Lewis concluded that Jesus was actually “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). That’s why he became a Christian!

The claims of Jesus in that passage, however, go even further. Jesus invited “all” who were weary and heavy laden to “take his yoke” and “learn from him”. Again, teaching millions at the same time is a task for Deity. No “mere man” could ever do such a thing. Even more astounding was the His promise that those who took His yoke and learned from him would “find rest for their souls.”

The fact that the yoke promised by Jesus is “easy” is both interesting and significant. The Greek word translated as “easy” is “chrestos”. It means “well fitting”. Jesus, as you know, was a carpenter (Mk. 6:3). There is an old legend that Jesus of Nazareth made yokes that fit perfectly. It didn’t matter the size of your animal or the width of its neck and shoulders, Jesus custom designed a yoke that was “well fitting.” This would allow the animal to work hard without creating lesions or pain.

The point is that Jesus designs work for each of His followers that suits them perfectly. Our ability to do this work results from a spiritual “gift” given to us by God. The Bible word for this gift is “charisma.” The first part of this word is “chara” which is the Greek word for “joy”. Yes! There is “joy” in working for Jesus! To prove the point Paul’s letter to the Philippians was written while he was in chains as a prisoner in Rome (Phil. 1:7). Yet this letter is filled with references to joy and rejoicing. Even though Paul was a prisoner he “rejoiced in the Lord” and wanted the Philippians to “rejoice” with him! The noun “chara” (joy) is found 5 times in Philippians (1:4, 25; 2:2, 29; 4:1). The verb “charein” (rejoice) is found 11 times (1:18,18; 2:17,17,18,18,28; 3:1; 4:4,4,10). Christians love to work in the yoke Christ gives them and are the happiest and most fulfilled people on earth!

As we have said, a yoke is designed for work. Karen Tax wrote on LinkedIn Nov. 29, 2022: *“Meaningful work is more than something that just feels good. It’s also a powerful predictor of happiness and success. Working researchers, sociologists, psychologists, and other experts have been studying the link between meaningful work and human fulfillment for decades. Their conclusions are clear: People who find meaning in their work are significantly happier and more successful than those who don’t.”*

Elizabeth Elliot observed: *“The world looks for happiness through self-assertion. The Christian knows that joy is found in self-abandonment. “If a man will let himself be lost for My sake,” Jesus said, “he will find his true self.”* This “self-abandonment” for Christ can even enable a slave to find fulfillment. Paul wrote: **“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.” (Eph. 6:5-8)**

Our dear friend, the late Richard Metsker, worked for the city of Carthage and periodically was assigned to work in sewage disposal. He originally dreaded that assignment. When he understood these words of Paul to slaves, however, it transformed him. Disposing of sewage is a godly thing to do! It is an essential service for the health and well being of any community. Doing this job for Jesus completely changed his perspective] and provided him with a sense of fulfillment.

Granny and I love you very much and want you to live a life that brings happiness and fulfillment. May these words of Jesus help you to find the fulfillment for which you seek: **“Come unto 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.”**

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce