

BEDWELL GLOBAL MINISTRIES

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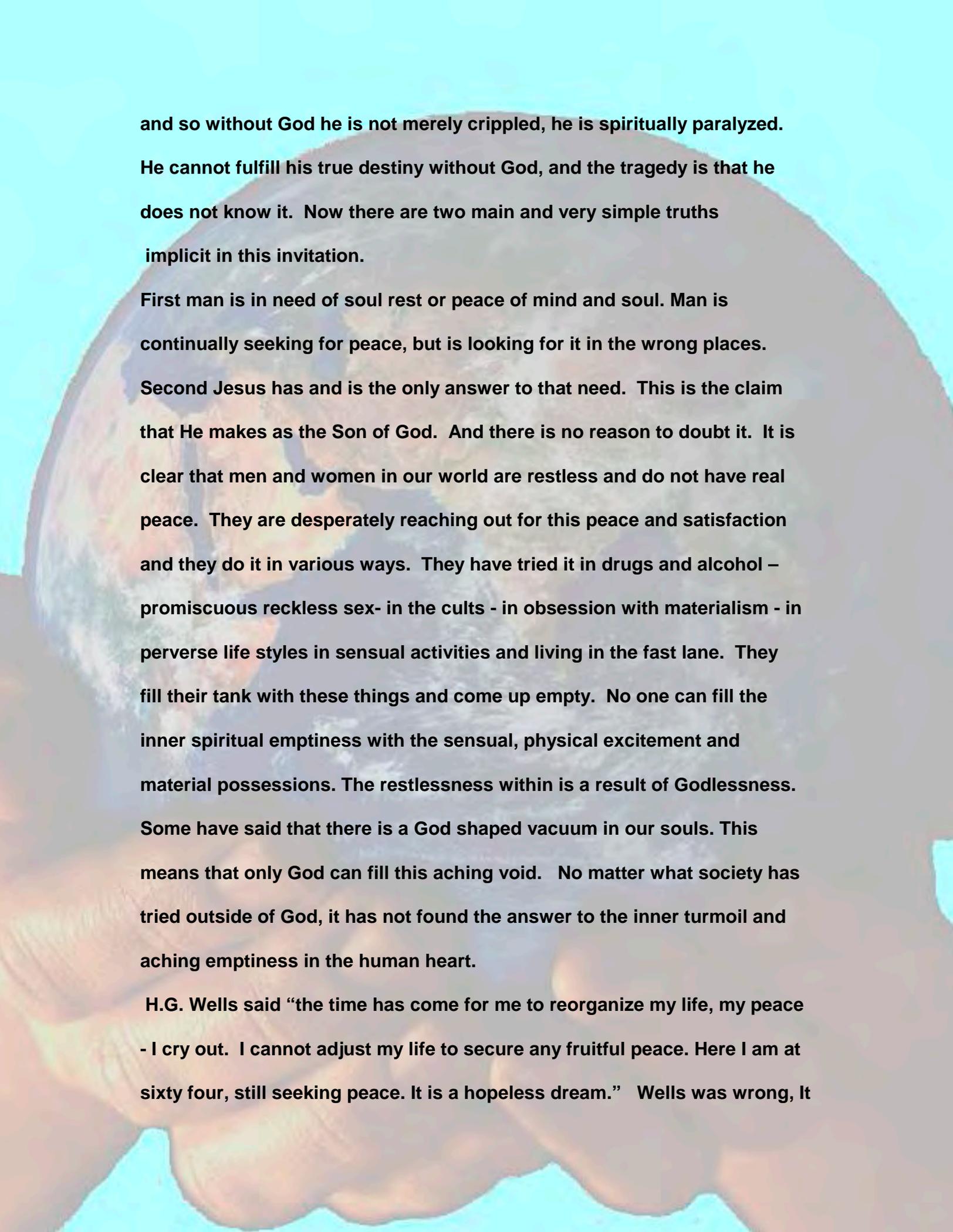
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THE INVITATION OF THE KING

Scripture Reading Matthew 11:25-30.

Introduction

Let me underline those amazing words of Jesus. “Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. V. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Jesus was speaking to the deepest need in the human heart. If there is anyone who can understand what the problem is within man, it is Jesus. Since this is true He, and He, alone can prescribe the solution to that problem. And so His words have something profound and significant to say to the condition of the human heart. Man in his natural state is divorced from God. He made that choice in the Garden of Eden. That choice brought about a dysfunction in the life of man. All kinds of problems arose when that happened. Man was made for God, by God,

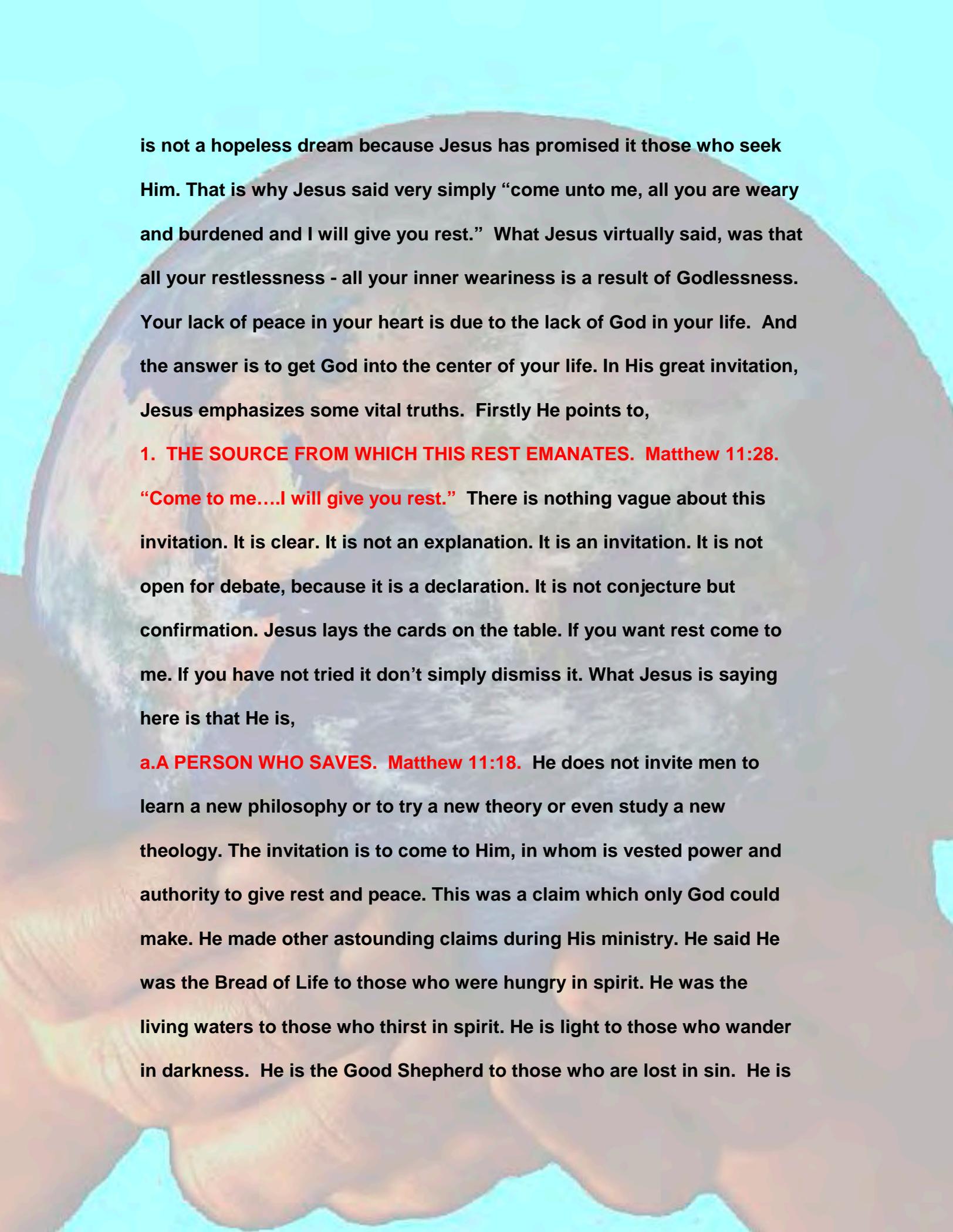


and so without God he is not merely crippled, he is spiritually paralyzed. He cannot fulfill his true destiny without God, and the tragedy is that he does not know it. Now there are two main and very simple truths implicit in this invitation.

First man is in need of soul rest or peace of mind and soul. Man is continually seeking for peace, but is looking for it in the wrong places.

Second Jesus has and is the only answer to that need. This is the claim that He makes as the Son of God. And there is no reason to doubt it. It is clear that men and women in our world are restless and do not have real peace. They are desperately reaching out for this peace and satisfaction and they do it in various ways. They have tried it in drugs and alcohol – promiscuous reckless sex- in the cults - in obsession with materialism - in perverse life styles in sensual activities and living in the fast lane. They fill their tank with these things and come up empty. No one can fill the inner spiritual emptiness with the sensual, physical excitement and material possessions. The restlessness within is a result of Godlessness. Some have said that there is a God shaped vacuum in our souls. This means that only God can fill this aching void. No matter what society has tried outside of God, it has not found the answer to the inner turmoil and aching emptiness in the human heart.

H.G. Wells said “the time has come for me to reorganize my life, my peace - I cry out. I cannot adjust my life to secure any fruitful peace. Here I am at sixty four, still seeking peace. It is a hopeless dream.” Wells was wrong, It

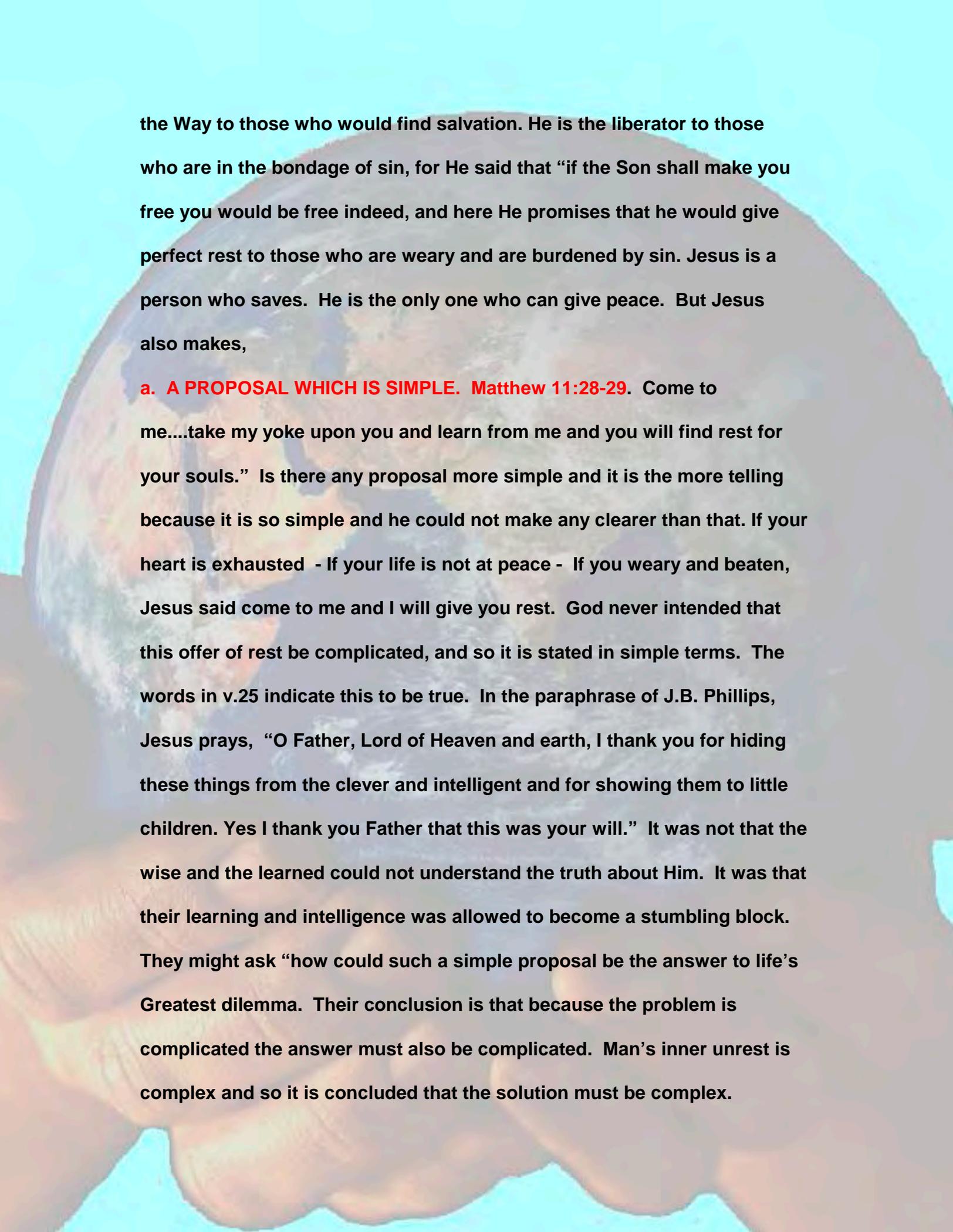


is not a hopeless dream because Jesus has promised it those who seek Him. That is why Jesus said very simply “come unto me, all you are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.” What Jesus virtually said, was that all your restlessness - all your inner weariness is a result of Godlessness. Your lack of peace in your heart is due to the lack of God in your life. And the answer is to get God into the center of your life. In His great invitation, Jesus emphasizes some vital truths. Firstly He points to,

1. THE SOURCE FROM WHICH THIS REST EMANATES. Matthew 11:28.

“Come to me....I will give you rest.” There is nothing vague about this invitation. It is clear. It is not an explanation. It is an invitation. It is not open for debate, because it is a declaration. It is not conjecture but confirmation. Jesus lays the cards on the table. If you want rest come to me. If you have not tried it don't simply dismiss it. What Jesus is saying here is that He is,

a.A PERSON WHO SAVES. Matthew 11:18. He does not invite men to learn a new philosophy or to try a new theory or even study a new theology. The invitation is to come to Him, in whom is vested power and authority to give rest and peace. This was a claim which only God could make. He made other astounding claims during His ministry. He said He was the Bread of Life to those who were hungry in spirit. He was the living waters to those who thirst in spirit. He is light to those who wander in darkness. He is the Good Shepherd to those who are lost in sin. He is



the Way to those who would find salvation. He is the liberator to those who are in the bondage of sin, for He said that “if the Son shall make you free you would be free indeed, and here He promises that he would give perfect rest to those who are weary and are burdened by sin. Jesus is a person who saves. He is the only one who can give peace. But Jesus also makes,

a. A PROPOSAL WHICH IS SIMPLE. Matthew 11:28-29. Come to me....take my yoke upon you and learn from me and you will find rest for your souls.” Is there any proposal more simple and it is the more telling because it is so simple and he could not make any clearer than that. If your heart is exhausted - If your life is not at peace - If you weary and beaten, Jesus said come to me and I will give you rest. God never intended that this offer of rest be complicated, and so it is stated in simple terms. The words in v.25 indicate this to be true. In the paraphrase of J.B. Phillips, Jesus prays, “O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, I thank you for hiding these things from the clever and intelligent and for showing them to little children. Yes I thank you Father that this was your will.” It was not that the wise and the learned could not understand the truth about Him. It was that their learning and intelligence was allowed to become a stumbling block. They might ask “how could such a simple proposal be the answer to life’s Greatest dilemma. Their conclusion is that because the problem is complicated the answer must also be complicated. Man’s inner unrest is complex and so it is concluded that the solution must be complex.

So while man expects complexity to life's answer to his soul's unrest, God deals in simplicity. Jesus said that a child responds to simplicity and this proposal is one which the children could understand and accept. The proposal is this. If you want rest for your weariness. If you want the burden of sin to be lifted, then come to me and I will give you rest. This a proposal which is simple. But Jesus also gives,

c. A PROMISE WHICH IS SURE. Matthew 11:28-29. Note the certainty with which Jesus makes this promise. "I **WILL** give you rest..... You **WILL** find rest for your souls." Now that is what Jesus promises. It is true that the fulfillment of any promise depends on three basic characteristics of the one who makes the promise. They are integrity, dependability, and ability or authority. Jesus possessed all of these qualities. And in verse 27, He makes an extremely significant statement. "All things have been committed to me." "**ALL THINGS**" includes everything and excludes nothing. Jesus here reveals the extent of His authority. This includes the right and authority to give rest to the weary heart, peace to the restless spirit and serenity to the worn out soul. He and He alone retains the authority to do that. His authority is the assurance of the fulfillment of His promise to do it. His pledge to give us rest is rooted in His authority. Jesus is **a person who saves**, he makes **a proposal which is simple** and gives **a promise which is sure**, for **He is the source from which the promise of rest emanates**. Secondly note,

2. THE SCOPE WHICH THIS REST ENCOMPASSES. Matthew 11:28.

What is the scope of this invitation? What are the limits of this promise?

Are there boundaries to it? Where do the parameters lie? The first truth that Jesus emphasizes here is that His offer of peace and rest is,

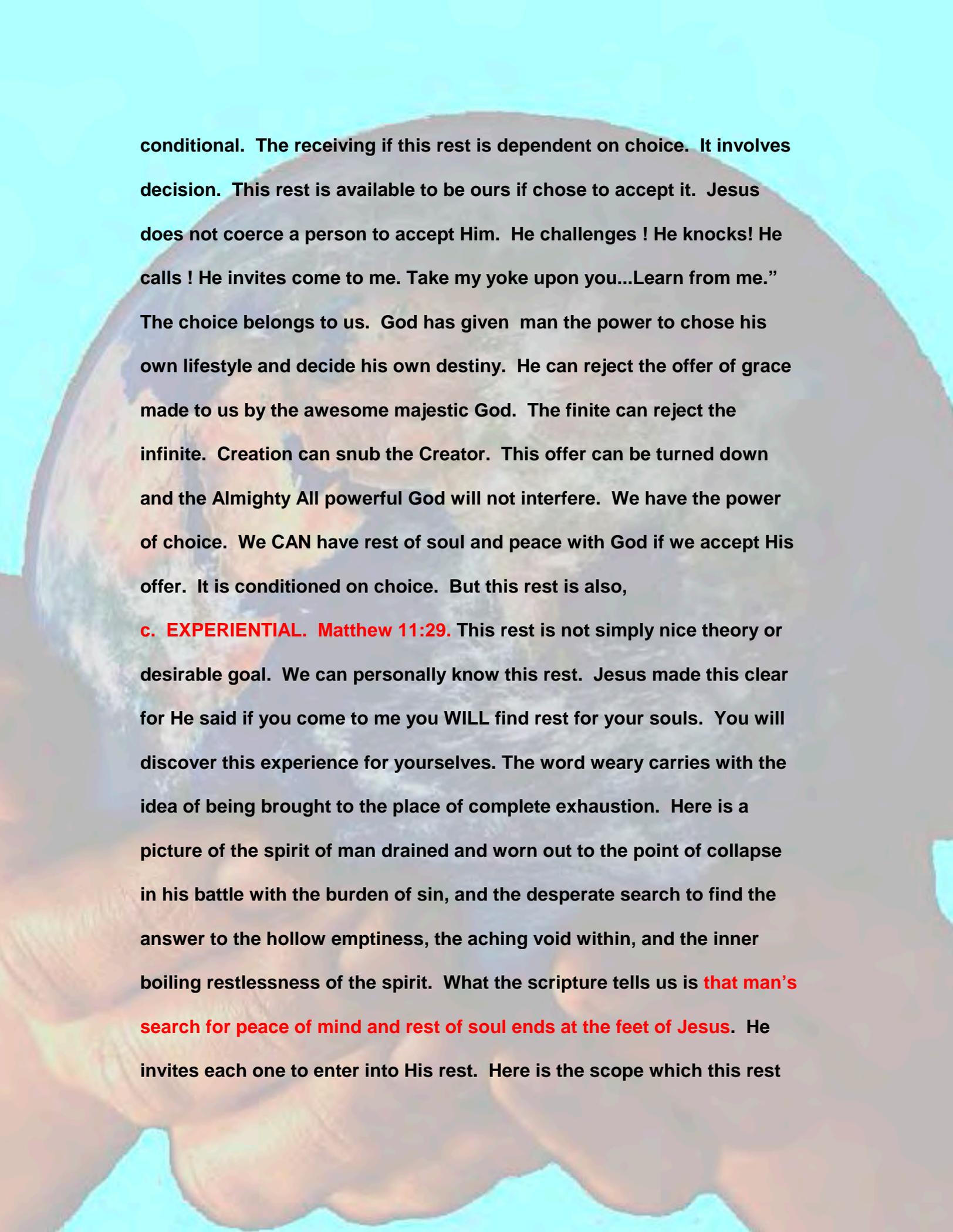
a. UNIVERSAL. Matthew 11:28. Jesus said “come unto me all you are weary and burdened.” The key word here is ALL. This invitation is not restricted to a select few, a select few that God has autocratically determined or decided should find this rest. Jesus is decisively clear on it. “All who are weary and burdened may come to me and find rest.” This great gospel that gives rest is not confined to an exclusive group of people. This promise is for every tribe-all nations-all classes-all colors-the rich and the poor- the privileged and the under privileged. The scriptures tell us that God so loved the world that whoever believes on His Son will have eternal life. John 3 : 16. and again “He was not willing 14:18 Come to me ALL of you who are weary and burdened” is the invitation of Jesus. This is a universal offer, that is why Charles Wesley wrote those amazing words of one of his great hymns,

**“outcasts of men, to you I call,
harlots and publicans and thieves.
He opens His arms to embrace you all.
Sinners alone His grace receive.
No need of Him the righteous have.”**

The word says “whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Rom. 10:13.This offer of rest is universal. It is also,

b. CONDITIONAL. Matthew 11:28. While this offer is for all it is also



conditional. The receiving of this rest is dependent on choice. It involves decision. This rest is available to be ours if we chose to accept it. Jesus does not coerce a person to accept Him. He challenges ! He knocks! He calls ! He invites come to me. Take my yoke upon you...Learn from me.”

The choice belongs to us. God has given man the power to choose his own lifestyle and decide his own destiny. He can reject the offer of grace made to us by the awesome majestic God. The finite can reject the infinite. Creation can snub the Creator. This offer can be turned down and the Almighty All powerful God will not interfere. We have the power of choice. We CAN have rest of soul and peace with God if we accept His offer. It is conditioned on choice. But this rest is also,

c. EXPERIENTIAL. Matthew 11:29. This rest is not simply nice theory or desirable goal. We can personally know this rest. Jesus made this clear for He said if you come to me you WILL find rest for your souls. You will discover this experience for yourselves. The word weary carries with the idea of being brought to the place of complete exhaustion. Here is a picture of the spirit of man drained and worn out to the point of collapse in his battle with the burden of sin, and the desperate search to find the answer to the hollow emptiness, the aching void within, and the inner boiling restlessness of the spirit. What the scripture tells us is **that man's search for peace of mind and rest of soul ends at the feet of Jesus.** He invites each one to enter into His rest. Here is the scope which this rest

encompasses. Finally would you note,

3. THE SECRET ON WHICH THIS REST IS ESTABLISHED. Matthew 11:28-

29. Jesus said “take my yoke upon you and learn from Me.” It is one thing to receive this rest, but it is an entirely different thing to sustain it. There is a doorway to experiencing this rest and man can enter into it. But there are foundations which ensure that we sustain this rest in our souls.

What is the secret on which this rest is established? There are two phrases which are striking and speak to the heart of this secret. – **“Take my yoke upon you.”** And **“learn from me”** Note first that there must be,

A. THE RECOGNITION OF A NEW SOVEREIGNTY IN OUR LIVES.

Matthew 11:28-29. **“Take my yoke upon you...”** What does this mean?

This involves accepting the Lordship of Jesus. It means

submitting and surrendering to the authority and Lordship of the Lord

Jesus Christ. It means yielding to His will and His way. This rest is not a

distant remote goal. The secret is a complete yielding to the sovereignty of Christ. This is the condition and the basis of receiving and sustaining

this rest in our souls. The blessings of this rest are always accompanied

by clear conditions. Jesus says that we are to be yoked together with

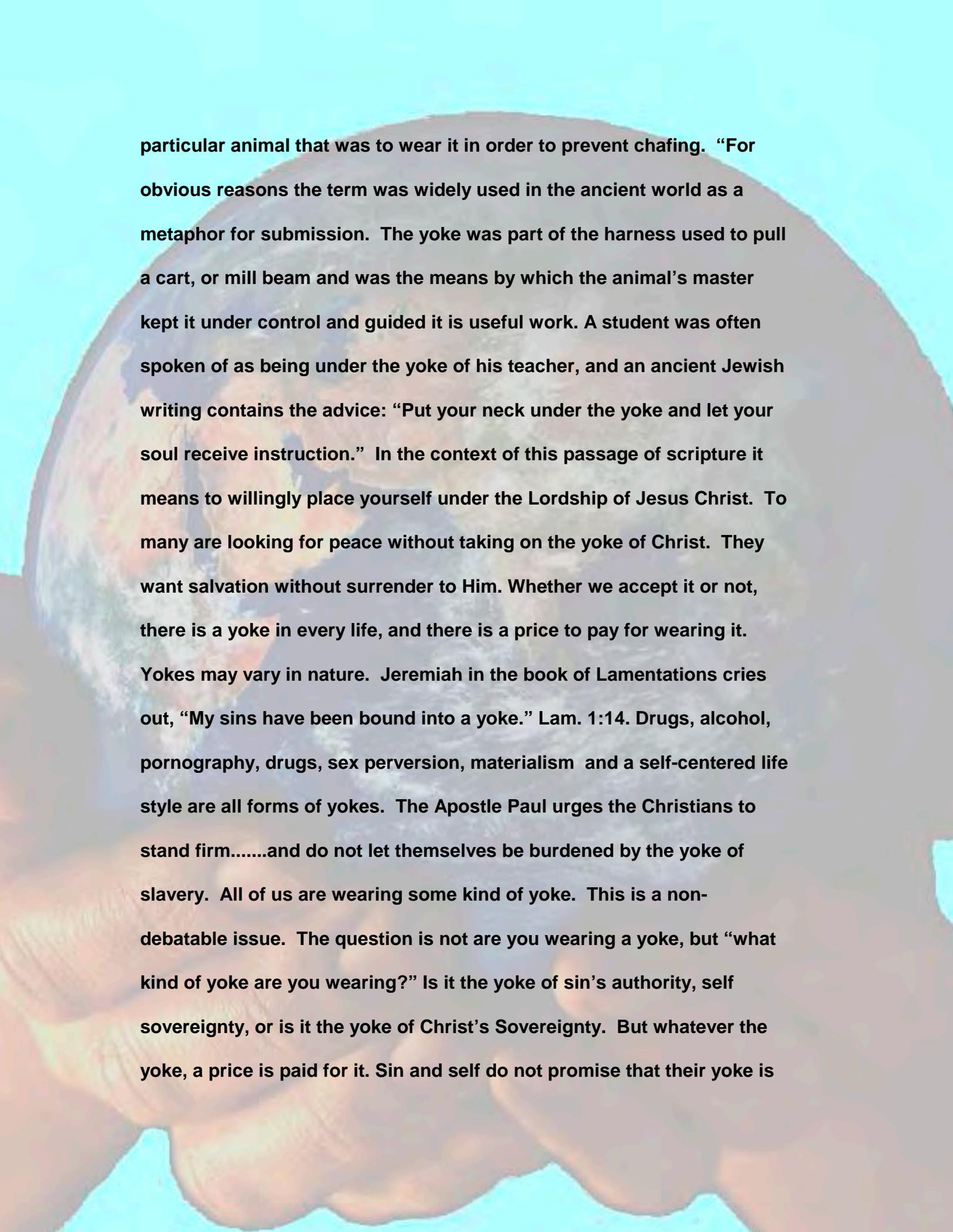
Him. It is impossible for Christ to exercise His authority and Lordship

over us in giving us rest and peace unless we are surrendered to Him.

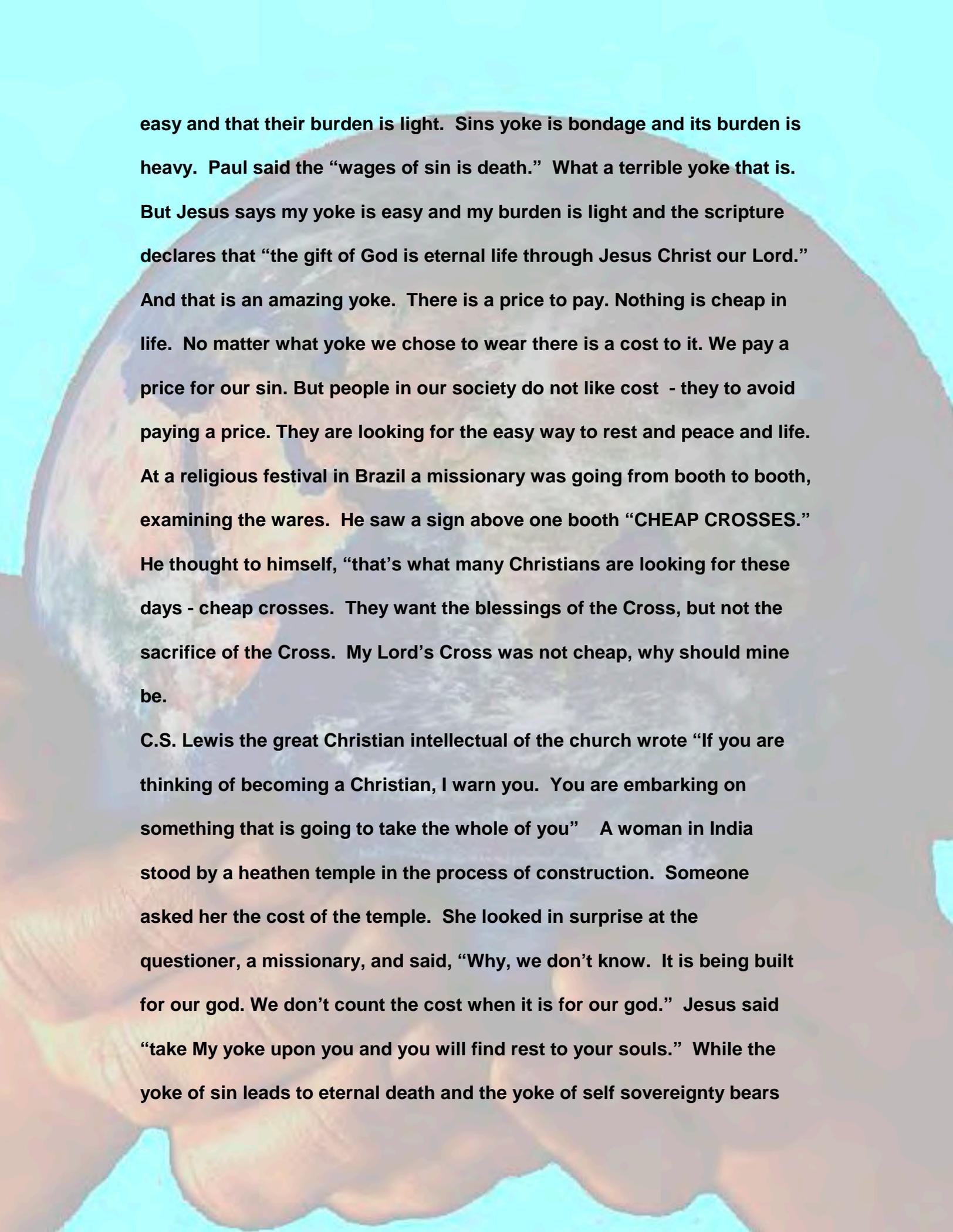
Any lack of peace in the Christian can be traced to a lack of surrender to

Him. That surrender is symbolized by a yoke. One has pointed out that a

yoke was made of wood, hand hewn to fit the neck shoulders of a



particular animal that was to wear it in order to prevent chafing. “For obvious reasons the term was widely used in the ancient world as a metaphor for submission. The yoke was part of the harness used to pull a cart, or mill beam and was the means by which the animal’s master kept it under control and guided it in useful work. A student was often spoken of as being under the yoke of his teacher, and an ancient Jewish writing contains the advice: “Put your neck under the yoke and let your soul receive instruction.” In the context of this passage of scripture it means to willingly place yourself under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. To many are looking for peace without taking on the yoke of Christ. They want salvation without surrender to Him. Whether we accept it or not, there is a yoke in every life, and there is a price to pay for wearing it. Yokes may vary in nature. Jeremiah in the book of Lamentations cries out, “My sins have been bound into a yoke.” Lam. 1:14. Drugs, alcohol, pornography, drugs, sex perversion, materialism and a self-centered life style are all forms of yokes. The Apostle Paul urges the Christians to stand firm.....and do not let themselves be burdened by the yoke of slavery. All of us are wearing some kind of yoke. This is a non-debatable issue. The question is not are you wearing a yoke, but “what kind of yoke are you wearing?” Is it the yoke of sin’s authority, self sovereignty, or is it the yoke of Christ’s Sovereignty. But whatever the yoke, a price is paid for it. Sin and self do not promise that their yoke is



easy and that their burden is light. Sins yoke is bondage and its burden is heavy. Paul said the “wages of sin is death.” What a terrible yoke that is. But Jesus says my yoke is easy and my burden is light and the scripture declares that “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And that is an amazing yoke. There is a price to pay. Nothing is cheap in life. No matter what yoke we chose to wear there is a cost to it. We pay a price for our sin. But people in our society do not like cost - they to avoid paying a price. They are looking for the easy way to rest and peace and life. At a religious festival in Brazil a missionary was going from booth to booth, examining the wares. He saw a sign above one booth “CHEAP CROSSES.” He thought to himself, “that’s what many Christians are looking for these days - cheap crosses. They want the blessings of the Cross, but not the sacrifice of the Cross. My Lord’s Cross was not cheap, why should mine be.

C.S. Lewis the great Christian intellectual of the church wrote “If you are thinking of becoming a Christian, I warn you. You are embarking on something that is going to take the whole of you” A woman in India stood by a heathen temple in the process of construction. Someone asked her the cost of the temple. She looked in surprise at the questioner, a missionary, and said, “Why, we don’t know. It is being built for our god. We don’t count the cost when it is for our god.” Jesus said “take My yoke upon you and you will find rest to your souls.” While the yoke of sin leads to eternal death and the yoke of self sovereignty bears

the fruit of misery, the yoke of Christ gives rest life and liberty to the souls. Furthermore note that Jesus said that His “yoke is easy and His burden is light” Matthew 11:30. The taking of His yoke upon us is the recognition of His Sovereignty in our lives, and in so doing we find rest to our souls. But the secret of this rest from the weariness of sin lies in a continuing,

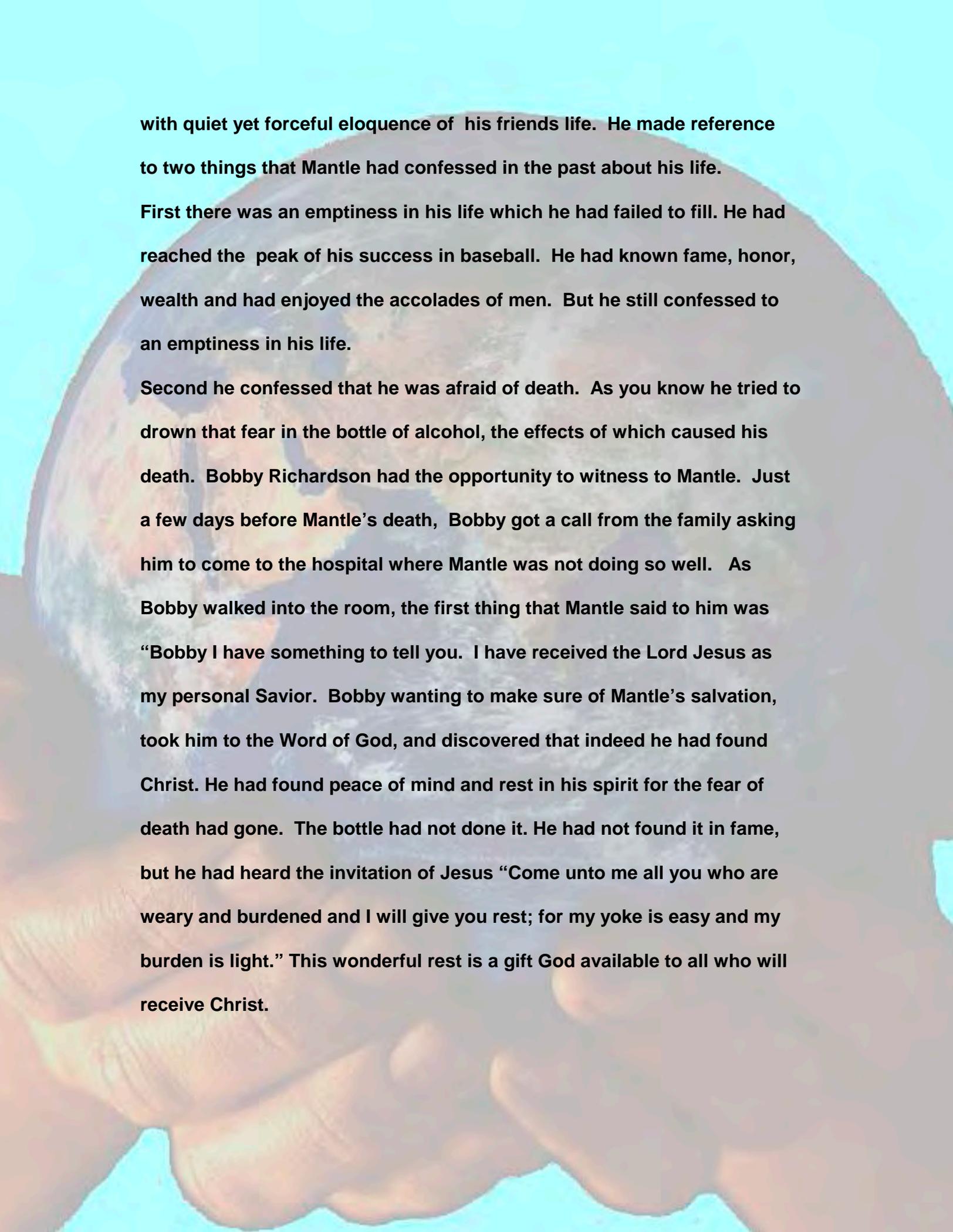
b. RESPONSE TO THIS NEW SURRENDER TO THE LORD JESUS

CHRIST. MATTHEW 11:28-30. “Take my yoke upon you **and learn from me.**” This yoke involves “going where He goes and where He leads and calls. In this portrayal of himself, Jesus is saying that He is a yoke fellow or partner working and walking together in partnership, but as **our teacher we are to submit ourselves to Him, learn His word, His will and His way.**

A yoke symbolizes obedience and Christian obedience includes learning from Christ. It means a daily response to the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Have you found rest to your souls and peace to your heart? May you think that it is the impossible dream. But Jesus says if you want peace and rest - “Come to Me.” I am the end of your search for heart rest. A number of years ago I watched part of the memorial service for that great baseball player Micky Mantle. Bobby Richardson another great player who is a born again Christian and was, friend of Mantle, spoke

A background image showing a close-up of a hand holding a globe of the Earth. The hand is positioned at the bottom, with fingers wrapped around the globe. The globe shows the continents and oceans. The overall image has a soft, slightly blurred appearance.

with quiet yet forceful eloquence of his friends life. He made reference to two things that Mantle had confessed in the past about his life.

First there was an emptiness in his life which he had failed to fill. He had reached the peak of his success in baseball. He had known fame, honor, wealth and had enjoyed the accolades of men. But he still confessed to an emptiness in his life.

Second he confessed that he was afraid of death. As you know he tried to drown that fear in the bottle of alcohol, the effects of which caused his death. Bobby Richardson had the opportunity to witness to Mantle. Just a few days before Mantle's death, Bobby got a call from the family asking him to come to the hospital where Mantle was not doing so well. As Bobby walked into the room, the first thing that Mantle said to him was "Bobby I have something to tell you. I have received the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior. Bobby wanting to make sure of Mantle's salvation, took him to the Word of God, and discovered that indeed he had found Christ. He had found peace of mind and rest in his spirit for the fear of death had gone. The bottle had not done it. He had not found it in fame, but he had heard the invitation of Jesus "Come unto me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." This wonderful rest is a gift God available to all who will receive Christ.