

The Restless Search For Rest

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[0 : 00] We all know the frustration of looking for something that you know you've put somewhere, but now you can't find it. Number one culprit, probably keys. Oh my goodness, and of course you always lose them when you've got to get to a meeting and you're late for the meeting and now you can't even get into your car.

Sometimes your wallet goes missing, very frustrating. Recently, I've learned that you've got to put your glasses somewhere proper, they go missing and then you're really stuck. And there's always that one sock you can never find.

For guys, it's that one item in their garage, oh it's so frustrating, you've got a job and now this thing, you can't find it. And your attention builds. Ladies are probably a little bit more organized, but I do know they get anxious when the guy is driving and they can't find the destination and would ask for directions.

But when we're looking for stuff that we can't find, there's that terrible feeling of anxiousness. It's rising levels of frustration, irritation, clenched teeth, clenched wrists.

And you can't rest until you find it. You can't get on with your day. You've got to move things, you look, you look, you're running around. Oh, and the relief and the relaxation when you get it.

[1 : 23] Normally you're like, oh, I knew I put it there. And you kick yourself. But oh, the relief, the release. You can enjoy life again. You can focus on getting things done instead of being stuck in a kind of a holding pattern.

You can go on with your life. Well, today Jesus says that this restlessness, this anxiety is what so many people experience because they're searching for God, but they're doing it in the wrong way.

They're not finding him. And there's a reason for that. But only if they come to Jesus can true rest be found. And so our first point is what it means to search for God or searching for God.

Searching for God. We think God is waiting for everyone to come to him to be found by him. So he just set his plan of action in place and he's just waiting, just waiting for people to come to him.

But our text here tells us he hides himself from some and shows himself to others. God chooses who will know him.

[2 : 30] That may be a surprise to many, but this is clearly what Jesus is saying about God. In fact, he praises God for us. Have a look at verse 25 in Matthew 11. At that time, Jesus said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants or to little children or to little ones.

The wise and the learned are those who think they are clever in their own mind. They know it all. People who are at the top of the social pecking order, so to speak.

They don't need to be told what to do or taught anything by anyone. They can work out God for themselves. They don't need God to tell them. They've got it all wrapped up. The little children or the little ones or the infants, they are those who are lowly, humble, who seem to know nothing, rather don't know, but they know that they need help to know.

It's a strange thing, don't you think? Why would God choose to do this? Why does God do this? Hide himself from the ones who think they know and show himself to the ones who think they don't know him.

Well, just imagine for a bit, imagine God only chose those who were clever enough to find him. Like, who would that be exactly?

[4 : 08] What exactly would that bar be, do you think? He is the Lord of heaven and earth. If you can only know him with cleverness and working things out by yourself, that's going to be a pretty high bar.

What qualifies you to know him on your own? How many degrees? How long must you study? What knowledge will you have to master? That doesn't sound like a fun relationship to be in.

You know, the world is full of religions like this, where the gods of those religions demand that the people who follow them know, have mastered true knowledge or mastered kind of secret knowledge.

The monks of the East and sort of Tibet and India and Japan, you know, they've got to train for years, from when they're young little kids. To master internal breathing, leave everything behind, focus on your inner chi, I think they call it.

For years. You've got to leave everything and spend years in a monastery giving everything up. And you're not sure if you're ever going to know enough. Imagine how frustrating that would be.

[5 : 23] I mean, thank goodness we don't have to be like that, because many here, many of us, have not yet, or have yet to master the art of not making a WhatsApp group call by mistake. But imagine Christianity was like that.

You have to go through these levels of knowledge, master the secret arts of this and that. Boy, and only the top of the top, the PhD level people, can get to know God.

And if they do, you would have sermon titles like this. And these are PhD papers, doctoral papers that Christians write. Things like, should come up, Creator Spirit, Spirit of Grace, Trinitarian Dimensions of a Caratological Nubatology.

That'll bring in the crowds. Or this one, A proposed prolegomenon for normative theological ethics, with a special emphasis on the uses didacticus of God's law.

Now, it's not that someone has to come and give you that lecture. You have to know enough to give that lecture. Who wrote it, what they said, what other people said. No thanks. So friends, I think we can be thankful that God doesn't show himself to people who are so clever.

[6 : 39] None of us would have a chance. Just think how hard you would have to work. You would never know if you're clever enough. You could never rest. You'd never know if you've got all the knowledge.

Or if someone cleverer than you would come along. Would God suddenly not want to know you? Many of us would give up. Many of us wouldn't even start. And this is the problem if we start with ourselves when trying to find God.

And friends, it's so good that the God of the Bible doesn't need you to have degrees or years of training in secret arts. All you need is Jesus.

And thankfully, Jesus chose fishermen and other normal people to know who he was and to know who God is. And so to know God and searching for God, the only way we can really get to know God is through Jesus.

And so that's our next point. It's only through Jesus that we get to know God. The true God of the Bible. The true God of the universe. Jesus is the only one who is able to fully and truly reveal God because of who he is.

[7 : 51] He's been handed all things. He's the only one who knows the Father and consequently the only one who can make the Father known. Have a look at verse 27.

Jesus says, All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. I mean, that is a crazy statement.

All things have been entrusted or given to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father. And no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses.

to reveal him. All things have been given to Jesus by his Father. Only the Son chooses. How can Jesus make such a breathtakingly bold claim about who God is and how he works?

Well, that's because Jesus is in a unique position as the Son of God. Between them, God the Father and God the Son, they share this special bond, if you can put it like that.

[9 : 08] There's this union, there's this unity of knowledge and awareness and being. Why does God allow only Jesus to reveal who he is?

Can't he use anyone else? Well, he's tried that already. We came across that in our Old Testament reading with Moses. The part of the problem is because of who God is.

He can't just show himself to anyone. He's infinite in power and glory and majesty. Jesus here describes him as the Lord of heaven and earth.

That kind of a being will have infinite power and majesty and glory. and that means he cannot be approached or seen by anyone without that knowledge killing them.

That's the lesson Moses had to learn in Exodus 33. He wanted to see God's glory but God said, no man can see me and live.

[10 : 11] I think friends we know that instinctively. A God that makes the heavens and the earth that makes the sun that's boiling us on a daily basis that's nothing to him. That's a little sparkle compared to the power and the glory that he has.

And that's why Jesus is so important. He's the one true connection point between God and man because he is both God and man and that comes out in this passage where he talks about God as his father and Jesus as his son and only they know each other fully.

Now many people don't like that there's one contact point between God and man this man Jesus Christ that's one of the stumbling blocks of Christianity but actually it makes sense.

In any emergency situation especially a search and rescue situation which by the way that's what God is doing through Jesus his whole point is to do a search and rescue for lost people but in any emergency situation you only want one contact point between the guy who knows everything and the people who've got to do stuff because that way you know that the information you're getting is accurate.

Some years ago my family has a farm in some years ago there was a huge fire coming over the Hrabot mountains and my brother me and my dad were fighting the fires and you needed the right information at the right time and so if they said if we said we need some water and they said okay go to this dam there's water there and you go to the dam and now there's no water there because you just some fireman walked past you or some guy just walked past you oh you can go there oh they tell you where the fire and you don't know what's going on it's dark it's not you need a walkie talkie and you need the central command and they can tell you what's going on then you know so the thing is you can't operate when there are many voices many claims to authority many claiming to speak for God Jesus speaks for God because of all the religions of the world only Jesus claims to be God himself that can speak to us on God's behalf and not kill us and not get himself killed no one else does that and so he's fully able to reveal everything we need to know about God and that makes him completely trustworthy later on in the

[12:50] New Testament Paul is reflecting on who Jesus is and how he can trust Jesus and that Jesus speaks to us about God he says this this is from Colossians chapter 1 he says the son is the image of the invisible God the firstborn over all creation for in him all things were created things in heaven and on earth visible and invisible whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities all things have been created through him and for him for God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and then through him to reconcile to himself all things whether things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through his blood shed on the cross amen now if you're a

Christian today and you're listening to this I want you to know you've been specially chosen by this being to know God that's what Jesus says in this passage have a look at verse 27 again all things have been committed to me by my father that's all the things that require salvation and judgment all the stuff that Colossians 1 is talking about no one knows the son except the father that means no human and no one knows the father except the son that means no human and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him if you're a Christian you've been specially chosen by Jesus to know God you've got this special insider knowledge and not just

God but the same way that Jesus knows God as our father this is the first time in the gospel that Jesus calls God directly father he's prayed the Lord's prayer he says our father and it's the first time that he says father talks to him directly but just think about that for a moment you've been specially chosen by Jesus to have secret insider knowledge of God as your father no one else has that well other Christians have that but if you're not a Christian you don't have that and so I think revel knowing that you've been handpicked by Jesus enjoy that to know this secret wisdom that no one else knows if they're not a Christian that's okay you don't have to have PhD degrees you don't have to have a big job you don't have to have nothing at all as I said Jesus chose some fishermen you can be a little old plum said housewife a granny and you are wiser and higher and have more knowledge than the professor of whatever at

UCT if they're not a Christian that's very cool if you're not yet a Christian this is why you need to come to Jesus and why you need to bend the knee Jesus contains the sum total of the knowledge of God he is the repository God has given all his knowledge of who he is to Jesus and he's the dispenser of the only true knowledge of God what that means is if you're not a Christian you're not you're not the container of all the wisdom of the world or the knowledge of God you just don't have it and this is what makes Jesus unique and above all trustworthy this is why you can come to him this is!

why you want! to! him because we know that he will give you rest from this restless search only he can do that and give you all the good things that God promises to those who humbly seek him and so and so and so the last point we can look at is finding this true rest finding this true rest only Jesus gives true soul depth rest that inner core that inner place that needs above all else to be at rest so that you can get on with the rest of your life you can function properly you are not in this holding pattern always anxious always looking always searching the hole for yourself it's not rest from doing things Jesus talks about a yoke and following him and learning from him but it's rest from the frustration of trying to make our own gods and engineer our own sense of peace instead of resting in the peace and the forgiveness and the good things that is already provided for you in

[18:13] Christ so have a look at the last few verses there verse 28 29 and 30 and Jesus says this come to me all of you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest take up my yoke and learn from me because I am lowly and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light John Piper calls this the sweetest invitation in the whole of the New Testament come to me and I will give you rest Jesus reveals the center of his heart here really he tells us a little bit about himself which he doesn't normally do that in the gospels

I am like this what is Jesus like this is probably the only place where he says this is what I'm like I am gentle and humble in heart what's amazing is that the one to whom everything has been given by the father Jesus got all things the Lord of heaven and earth has given Jesus all things we read in Colossians what kind of a being he really is and here he says he almost becomes vulnerable I'm gentle I'm lowly I'm humble and what he wants to do is give you rest for your souls this is the Jesus of the Bible this is the Jesus worth following not too many of us want to give rest to anyone else if we come to them I certainly know your bosses don't want to give you rest if you're in a family your mom and dad

I mean they do want you to rest but what they really want is for you to clean your room and tidy the dishes Jesus says I want to give you soul rest he wants people who are heavily burdened!

working! struggling! fighting! beaten! down! drowning! under stress because they're looking for God in the wrong way they think they're no better than God they haven't humbled themselves and with that comes all the stress the worry the anxiety the neuroses and he says come to me I'll take all of that and I'll give you rest so that's a good reason to come to Jesus in fact that's a very good reason so you can take all these things away that you're struggling with in your mind you can be free of all of these things if you come to Jesus so deep healing wow a healing that just stays and heals more and more and more over time come to him he's not going to burden you or over burden you he's going to help you in fact the whole point of

Jesus is to come to carry our burdens Read these verses from Isaiah 53 says this this describes who Jesus is going to be!

[21 : 47] surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering he took up he took our pain he bore our suffering he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities the punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all you can be free of all those things in your life that are driving you mad with worry by coming to Jesus that means doing business with him talking to him in prayer trusting that he will do what he says he will do give you rest and because we sin so often we must continually come to Jesus rest so you can do the work that you need to do again if you've got a long day of toilet if anyone's done any work outside on manual labor you'll know what

I mean you need that lunch break so rest means to stop working in order to be refreshed so you can continue doing the work that God has called you to do but to do it better than before being free from the things that were causing you to be weighed down that's what it means to take up the yoke that Jesus talks about taking up his yoke is getting on with life now that we are free from the mistakes of our past now to take up his yoke it sounds like Jesus giving us a burden it sounds like a heavy thing but it's not just so that you know a yoke is those things that they would put on cattle to help draw the wagon in the old day pictures you see someone like milkmaids that's the image that comes to my mind they carrying buckets it's very heavy to carry buckets so they put a wooden rafter and they hang the buckets yokes actually help you to carry the burden better

Jesus says he's got an easy yoke and the burden is light he doesn't have an uneasy difficult yoke and it's not heavy Jesus yoke fits well it's designed just for you don't know if you've ever bought a car or with seats that are molded around you you get the rich people do that so they fit so snugly oh they take a you actually sit and they make a foam thing and they put around you and you get the seat in your car or maybe you've had shoes made like one lovely expensive set of shoes that are molded around your feet or maybe you've had a suit or a backpack oh it's like wearing silk I'm but this thing is snug it's easy it's no problem to carry the load is heavy not light you know when your mom used to do the monthly grocery shopping when you were young and you would have to hoit those carrier bags into the car or carry them from the car to the house that's a heavy load

Jesus load is light he's like saying well it's like someone asking you to carry their groceries and you can run in the packets flapping in the wind that's an easy load to carry it's a load it's not full of groceries it's just a packet Jesus load Jesus yoke leaves you skipping with delight and ease how does he do this he takes the load from you at the cross he takes the weight of your sin and your shame and your mistakes and your worries and he nails it to the cross leaving you with no worries but to enjoy life to the full and yet so many Christians struggle with this I do none of us have rest all the time we want to have rest but we don't know how to live under the yoke of freedom that

Christ offers Jesus answer is to learn from him so in the middle there he says in verse 29 take up my yoke and learn from me there's a walking there's a pathway to go with Jesus the Greek word for learn is the same as the Greek word for disciple become a disciple become a follower become a learner of who Jesus is and what he does and what he says learn from his teaching but learn from the way he lives!

[26 : 55] as well how what is he like with God how did he speak to God how does he relate and what you'll see is like when he was stressed he would pray to God we're going to come across this later in the garden of Gethsemane didn't just try and pack it on on his own he cried out to God for help when he persecuted he trusted God fully and didn't respond out of fear or anger when he needed encouragement he kept his friends close again think about the garden of Gethsemane he said God boys I need you it's going to be a heavy night for me I need your help when he saw need he responded and gave them what they needed forgiveness restoration to community healing blessings that they could enjoy now you can obviously you need to go to Jesus yourself and learn from him speak to him ask him for this kind of rest ask to learn about him but I want to say that a good way to do this to learn from

Jesus is to do it in community especially with others who have come to Jesus and are still learning from him who have been freed who have got rest who have taken their burdens and given it to Jesus if you're struggling with giving your burdens probably one of the best things you can do is go to another Christian and say hey man I'm struggling with this thing you don't look like you're struggling how you do it and then they'll say no no I'm struggling but this has helped me but this is the attitude that we should all have our whole Christian lives we need to learn from Jesus but we also need to learn from others who have been helped by him so I want to say that there's this deep wisdom and healing to be had in the community that Jesus has revealed God to make sure you connect with people in the church in our home groups through the courses that we offer many people come to me and I can see that they've got problems and they're worried and they're concerned and they're not quite sure how to sort it out

I say come and speak to me and then I don't see them again could be that I'm scary then I say go speak to Nick and then we don't see them again then I say go speak to someone at church and they don't speak to someone at church then eventually they do and you know what happens I can see they've done that they don't have to it's like the light bulb has gone on they've received rest they've received help you might not be able to help directly but you've sat you've listened you've prayed but nine times out of ten if you've received help from Jesus you can certainly help someone else make sure you connect with Christians who have been helped by Jesus but above all make sure you're going to the source of life and truth make sure you're going to Jesus himself and make sure through him you're going to the God of the Bible the creator of heaven and earth there's a famous quote by St.

Augustine who was a famous theologian sure 1600 years ago lives 1600 years ago and it's a quote that is yet to be surpassed he says this you have made us for yourself oh Lord and our heart is restless until it rests in you won't you find rest in Jesus today let me pray for us Lord Jesus you are you have been given all things by the Lord of heaven and earth so there is nothing that you cannot give us that we do not need and if we need to ask for it you will do so Lord here you tell us who you are you're gentle you're lowly you're humble and you want to give us rest Lord help us to find rest in you to come to you to lay aside our burdens to lay aside our pride to humble ourselves and accept you as a little child and accept all the good things and the blessings that you offer we ask this in your name

Amen Amen