

Rhythms of Grace

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MAIN VERSES

[Matthew 11](#) • [Matthew 11:20-24](#) • [Matthew 11:25-30](#) • [Jeremiah 6:16](#) • [Jeremiah 6:17](#) • [1 Kings 10](#) • [Isaiah 1](#) • [Amos 1](#)

Shabbat shalom, everyone, and welcome to Founded in Truth Fellowship.

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home.

We're excited to once again enjoy this blessing of this day of rest, especially in reflecting on Yeshua, our King. Last week we spoke a little bit about the hope that the Apostle Paul lived out as Luke recorded it in the book of Acts. How despite having the excuse to be distracted by political turmoil around him, despite riots breaking out all around him and violence, despite people disagreeing with him to the point of running after him and trying to kill him, despite getting bit by a dang snake, despite being on a boat heading toward a crash course of destruction, he still found his focus on his faithfulness. In that moment where almost 300 other people were scared, doubting, had lost hope completely, here Paul sits in the middle of them all, demanding their focus as he breaks the bread and gives thanks to God — the Eucharistos, right? — giving the hope of his mission that he was on.

And as we discussed, despite the journey that Paul had been on — so many hills, so many valleys, so many fights, so many arguments, so many broken relationships, so many hard times — all of it was God's plan and God's will for Paul to be in the center of it. All of it. The toughest times that Paul went through were specifically moments in times and circumstances that God intended him to be in the middle of. Why? Because Paul was on a mission.

Sometimes We Forget Our Mission

Sometimes we forget our calling. It's easy, especially in this day and age. Sometimes we forget our mission. We forget where our focus should be. And not only do we lose focus, we slip in our faithfulness sometimes. Can we admit that? Sometimes our faithfulness slips as well. Sometimes we slip. The world wins when we focus on what it tells us to.

The mission we're on is bigger than the political climate — that happens every single four years, the same thing. The mission is bigger than whatever the hot buzz is on all of the news channels every couple of months. The mission is bigger than somehow reinforcing your identity through your opinions and people hearing them and responding to them. It's not about you. It's not about us. Relationships that we were placed in to cultivate a kingdom ethic are not worth destabilizing over your opinions on stuff other than the mission.

But it's hard, isn't it? It's hard. It's hard not to get excited or worked up or stressed out or anxious or depressed, maybe even, or sad or angry or even hateful when things make us uncomfortable, when things don't go as planned, when we don't feel like we're in control anymore. We can talk about how much we rely on God because he's in control, right? Oh, the Lord's in control. This is great. Whenever things are going the way we want them to, right? It's easy. Oh yeah, the Lord is in control. The Lord is in control because you're comfortable with the level of control you actually have over the situation, right? I'm guilty of that. Guilty of that.

And so today we're going to discuss the mission of expanding the grace of God's kingdom in our lives as well as in the world. But we're going to try to get a little nerdy while we do it by diving into the Bible.

Rest During Times of Chaos

So let's jump into Scripture first thing, because Yeshua says something about finding rest during times of chaos. And it's found in Matthew chapter 11. In [Matthew 11](#), Yeshua speaks about a type of rest that only he can offer. And I guess this is the actual misconnection point of the series, right? So let's go ahead and read this section, Matthew chapter 11, starting in verse 25. Here we go.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and 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.

It's a potent verse. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. So many times we love to just take that last section out, right? Yeshua will give us rest. And for us Torah folk, we love the "for my yoke is easy" part, right? Because this has some similar language

that's used for rabbinic halakha, or a rabbi's certain ways of keeping certain vague commandments in the Torah. It's considered the rabbi's yoke you put upon you.

But let's focus on this section that Matthew crafts for us and not just one verse, okay? So many times we miss a connection here. Matthew has intentionally made this connection between God hiding things from the wise and the intelligent, and Yeshua appealing instead to the weary to come to him for rest. And many times we look at this section and we forget about what's going on around it.

Setting the Context

So we're going to jump back a couple of verses before it, starting in verse 20. Let's just set the context. Yeah, this is powerful. Let's just set the context. Verse 20. And this is the context for why Yeshua is saying these words.

Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed because they did not repent. No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.

So Yeshua has been visiting towns and people have been rejecting him. And the context in this passage comes from Yeshua's rejections in the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. And he just finishes telling these towns that what happened to Sodom — all the fireballs coming down — what happened to Sodom is better than what will happen to them. Just completely bold, right? Almost audacious from the audience's point of view, I feel. And he was likely met with mockery by the more wise and arrogant people in those towns, from whom God had actually hidden his true wisdom.

Sometimes our pursuit of knowledge and structure and being able to argue against people we want to disagree with comes at a price of sacrificing the love that Yeshua offers to run through us, right? Sometimes we gladly place that on the altar.

Not One Translation That Rules Them All

And so I want to do something that I rarely do. You guys know I'm a fan of the NIV Bible. I love the ESV Bible. I really like the Christian Standard Bible — CSB — translations for a multitude of reasons. But anybody who studies the text frequently, Bible study, you know that there's not

one translation that rules them all, like Lord of the Rings. There's not one translation that's the end-all, be-all translation.

And so we're going to put a chart up here for you guys to look at, and I'm going to pull out a translation that I really enjoy. In this chart that you're looking at, you have many different translations. On the left side of the chart, you can see which translations have a more literal reading — a more literal word-for-word translation. And of course, when you go that route, like an interlinear Bible or something, you can see exactly which Greek or Hebrew words are being translated and why, but it's difficult to read. It's more difficult to read. Because you don't speak English Hebrew and Greek, and so on and so forth, you have a harder time understanding the possible thought process that's going on, or the context that's going on, or even the tone that's going on.

And so, as we move through the graph, you see on the far right side you have the more — I don't want to call it paraphrase, but more thought-for-thought. The translators are looking for a way to take the thought and intentionality of the text and translate that for you to understand, which is so important as well. And the reason why you would go for something on the far left is if you study maybe Hebrew poetry — it's very important that you see the word-for-word literal translation. But if you're wanting to read and understand the story and the narrative and the direction as it flows through, and the actual impact of the individual thoughts of the authors, you'd want to drift a little bit over to the middle or into the right. It's understandable. And so I just wanted to show that graph because it's just a really neat graph, right?

So I'm going to pull a translation that I really enjoy. And I used to mock this translation of the Bible. And the reason why I mocked it was because of my own ignorance in understanding why it was ever written. It was written by an amazing author who I have come to respect greatly. His name is Eugene Peterson. And he wrote a translation of the Bible that was paraphrased. You'll see it in the graph — it's all the way to the right, all the way past the JPS, to everything, just all the way to the right. And the translation is called The Message Bible.

Again, I'm really ashamed — I used to mock it, I used to make jokes about it, I used to think it was really stupid, until I actually asked the question: why did Dr. Peterson actually write this Bible? And the reason behind it is absolutely beautiful. But anyway, I don't want to go into all that. Yeah, I love the translation — one of many that I enjoy. Would not recommend it as a study Bible; neither would he.

So I wanted to read this section that Yeshua is speaking about here, about coming to find rest in him, from The Message translation by Eugene Peterson. Again, more paraphrased, thought-for-

thought, not literal. So starting in verse 25 through 26, here we go.

The Unforced Rhythms of Grace

"Yes, Father, that's the way you like to work." Jesus resumed talking to the people, but now tenderly. "The Father has given me all these things to do and say. This is a unique father-son operation coming out of father-son intimacies and knowledge. No one knows the Son the way the Father does, nor the Father the way the Son does. But I'm not keeping it to myself. I'm ready to go over it line by line with anyone willing to listen. Are you tired, worn out, burnt out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me. Watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitted on you. Keep company with me."

I found that so beautiful. It's the labor of grace from Yeshua that brings true rest. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. It's just one of the most beautiful things I think I've ever read in the context of Yeshua's words. And what does Peterson mean by this? Well, I think his intention is to show the smiling face of Yeshua, offering something that has never really been offered before — or if it has been offered before, it was so completely unattainable. He is offering a life that is unhindered by distractions so powerful that they completely reform your identity to the world whenever the wind blows. He's offering a connection with God so deep and so true that nothing else matters. He's offering the core of what the word shalom means. He's offering life eternal. And not just something that happens after you die. No, he's offering it to you now. You can be born again now into a world and a life where, although things may happen that seem disheartening or overwhelming — as if a fire breaks out — instead of screaming and allowing it to burn everything, you're at such a place of peace that you calmly take the fire blanket and just toss it over the fire, living in the unforced rhythm of grace within the kingdom of Yeshua.

Now, what's neat is it's unlikely that Yeshua was not pulling some reference from the Old Testament when he spoke these words. We know that. We know Matthew, as well as the rest of the Gospel account writers, constantly pull from the Hebrew Bible and the story of Israel — the story of the Old Testament — to give them this grand context of this person of Yeshua. And one of the proposed Old Testament connections is actually in Jeremiah chapter 6, starting at verse 16. And when we read it, we're going to find very similar words here. So turn with me to [Jeremiah 6](#), verse 16, and we're going to read it now. "This is what the Lord says: Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths and where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."

Stand at the crossroads and look for the ancient paths. An extremely ambiguous term, by the way. I mean, this could be talking about Torah. This could be talking about divine lady wisdom in Proverbs. Whatever this place is where you are to look for this thing, if you walk in it, you will find rest for your souls. It's like the exact phrase that Yeshua used, right? It's so neat. But what's the context? So it's really nice — we have this thing: stand at the crossroads and find rest in this ancient story, this ancient path to walk in. What's the context? Let's move on to the next verse, verse 17. "But you said, we will not listen. Therefore hear, you nations, you who are witnesses; observe what will happen to them. Hear, you earth: I am bringing disaster to this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words. They have rejected my law. What do I care about incense from Sheba or sweet calamus from distant lands? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable. Your sacrifices do not please me."

This is not a happy-go-lucky verse here in the context of [Jeremiah 6](#). This is God's condemnation for not fulfilling their mission to be a light to all nations as the Torah commanded. We always like to think of the watchmen on the walls as people who warn people that you need to keep the letter of the law, or we force ourselves onto the text to make it about politics or some secular nation — God forbid — watchmen on the wall. And typically we love to see these watchmen as warning people not to break the checklist of commandments. And I would put forth that that's not the context of the watchmen here. Israel is keeping the letter of the law. They just said that. They're practicing temple services. They're doing the sacrifices according to the Torah. They're doing everything right. They're doing the literal commandments of Torah. But what's missing? The mission of grace to all nations that they were commanded to go on — to be his image bearers to the world.

They Ignored the Entire Mission

That's what the entire Old Testament story is about. That's the story of Israel — how Israel failed. Israel failed despite hearing the voice of God at Mount Sinai and literally having possession of the tablets. They failed. They failed at their mission, and they became just like all the other nations under the shroud of their own religious beliefs. Solomon built the temple and did the Torah stuff in the temple. And it was perfect and it was grand and it was just absolutely amazing. Everybody went to the temple. They'd high-five everybody. Shabbat shalom. Yeah, we're doing this. This is great. They tithed their ten percent. They would not work on Shabbat. They wouldn't eat the pig. I mean, they're doing all of the Torah stuff — all while enslaving weaker nations around them and profiting off of warfare.

Solomon was an arms dealer, according to [1 Kings 10](#). Under the guise of being a hyper-religious, awesome ruler over Israel — and Israel was going along with it the whole time, thinking that they're the holiest, most righteous people ever — he brought in, it says in [1 Kings 10](#), 666 talents of silver annually. 666. Hint, hint. You want to know what John sees as the mark of the beast? What's described here in 1 Kings chapter 10: a nation that profits off of war, exploiting weaker nations through the means of force and violence for the ultimate goal of greed. That's what the mark of the beast looks like.

That's why [Isaiah 1](#) writes about Israel's ultra-religious temple services making God want to vomit. Because they ignored their entire mission. They ignored the entire mission that God gave them when he brought them out of slavery. And even in Amos it's mentioned — enslaving other people, using God's name and power to do it. But they believed they were keeping the checklist of Torah, and they were the biggest failures of all.

Replaying the Record of Jeremiah

So here, Matthew seems to be, I believe, drawing back on this context — the context of Israel rejecting God once again, in Jeremiah or in Matthew. And Jeremiah is pleading with them. He's saying, guys, you can find rest if you stop and look for the one who gives it. You can find rest from this world and from this life that you've created that has now enslaved you. You can find rest. Or God is going to call the very nations that you were commissioned to be a light to, to come upon you, to destroy your temple, to take you into exile. That's what [Jeremiah 7](#), the very next chapter — that's what it all talks about.

And in [Matthew 11](#), Yeshua's call to those who labor and are heavy burdened follows immediately after his complaint of what? That the people have rejected both John the Baptist and himself, in [Matthew 11:16-19](#), as well as his oracle of judgment against Chorazin and Bethsaida as being worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. Yeshua is literally replaying the record of Jeremiah — putting it on the record player and pointing it to this type of fulfillment that is happening right now in the cities with him. Do you see that? In Jeremiah, God said, I can give you rest. And the people thought they were too good. They're too wise. They're too intelligent. They want to do things their own way. Go back to the mission — we don't want to. Then there will be so much judgment that it's going to rain. I'm going to call the nations that you rejected to go to, on you, and they will take everything from you. It will be an awful judgment.

And here Yeshua is going and delivering the message — the message of the gospel. The kingdom of God is here, doing miracles, showing forth what new creation looks like. When

Isaiah talks about the coming kingdom of God and the new creation and the new heavens and the new earth, it's all wrapped up with these visions of peace, right? He's literally fulfilling the prophecies and showing flashbacks to the prophecies that Isaiah spoke about — when this messianic king will come, when this kingdom will engulf the earth, when new creation comes. The impact of what this future event will be can only be described as new creation. That's why John starts out — [John 1](#), we talk about this all the time, I love it — John was rewriting the creation account with Yeshua as its source. It's incredible.

And here Yeshua is calling back the same thing: Jeremiah. Guys, you're rejecting me just like Israel rejected God in Jeremiah. And judgment will come just like judgment came to Israel in Jeremiah. And if this is the case — again, I believe it is — then Yeshua's proclamation should be heard as an exclamation of thanksgiving for the Father's revealing the truth to Yeshua and his simple followers while hiding it from those who would reject him — the learned scribes and the wise Torah Pharisees — therefore bringing them under judgment.

When Yeshua speaks these words, again, it takes us back to [Jeremiah 6](#), where this offer is laid on the table to be engulfed with the divine grace. And if you refuse, it leads to absolute disaster. Elsewhere, in [Proverbs 1:20-30](#), we see the same type of language used about God's divine wisdom. When rejected, it leads to destruction.

Something Greater Than Wisdom Is Here

I have a quote here from Richard Hays, from his book **Echoes of Scripture in the Old Testament**, and I love his quote here. Here's what he says — that's the line for context there:

> "To embrace the radical teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, which is his Torah teaching, to imitate his gentleness and lowliness, and to embark on the way to the cross — the shape of such a life can hardly be explained fully by pointing to traditional Jewish understandings of the figure of wisdom. To paraphrase the point in characteristically Matthean fashion: something greater than wisdom is here. Jesus, who is gentle and lowly in heart, transforms and redefines what is meant by wisdom by virtue of the specifically narrated character of his teachings, his life, and his death and resurrection."

When Yeshua came teaching, his teaching was greater than anything that was ever taught before. He is the greater Moses. He is the greatest prophet. He is greater. And when he calls us to take on the yoke of his teaching, it's his teaching on how to live out Torah. This is what Israel was always supposed to look like — the Sermon on the Mount — when they lived out Torah. It

was radical. It was bold. It was life-changing. It was history-changing. It transformed the direction of the world, and it ticked a lot of people off.

What do we do when the world transforms around us into something so unfamiliar it shakes us to the core? What do we do when we look around at the world that we're so familiar with, and it has just evolved into something that shakes us, and we don't know what to do? What do we do when we can't help but get angry or sad or outraged or anxious? What do we do when we find ourselves suffocated by depression in such a strange world?

As cliché as it may be, it is also hardened through time and history by those who went before us: we endure. We endure through prayer. We endure through fellowship and through an immovable commitment to the mission that God has tasked us all to be on — the mission to deliver the proclamation and to announce his kingdom has come.

If You're Struggling, You're Human

I don't know where you're at today. If you're struggling with something, you're human. Congratulations. That's not a reason to stop focusing on the mission of the gospel. It's not a reason to stop focusing on the mission of the gospel message and the teachings of Yeshua — a new, amazing way to keep the Torah, as demonstrated through the life of Yeshua and as taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

And if you're struggling today, if you're struggling in areas of your life — guys, get help. There's no shame in that. Get counseling. Get therapy. Do what you need to do to conquer this battle, because this battle that you find yourself in is not the war. It's not the finish line for you. It may not be overtaken in a day or a week or in years, but fight, and do whatever you need to do to get through it, to conquer it, because God has taken you somewhere greater. God has taken you to a finish line that is only going to exalt his kingdom. And through this battle you find yourself in, you will be strengthened and immovable to proclaim the King of kings and the Lord of lords to the whole world.

Don't stop. Don't give up. Do what you need to do. Humble yourself. Drop the pride. Reach out. People want to help you. We want to help you. Do what you need to do. Find yourself in a vice? Do what you need to do to overcome it. Tell somebody. Work it out. This battle does not define your entire life. You can conquer this. Keep moving toward the finish line. Keep going.

I know there are many hurting during this time. It's a strange time to live in. This past year — golly — messed me up a little bit. So we start right now by praying for one another. And we make a plan to not be overtaken by such things, by not being distracted by such temporal things

in our life, but to navigate with wisdom, with prudence and intentionality, never losing focus on the One who calls our name. Join me in prayer.

Closing Prayer

Avinu Malkeinu — our Father, our King — Father, we thank you for this opportunity to once again audit our hearts in the face of Scripture, in the face of the words of our King, Yeshua. Father, if there are things in our life that we need to remove to make room for the rest that our King offers us, may we make that decision and declaration right now. Give us the strength and the wisdom to do those things.

Father, may we continue to be focused and faithful on the declaration of what our King is and who he is and what he offers — that we would walk to him, that we would be transformed by him, that we would be reborn by him into life everlasting. That the yoke he offers us, we would take, dropping whatever has been shackled to us in the past to the ground in this moment — whatever those things would be — that we would have the strength to drop it, symbolically unlocking the keys and hearing the thump as it falls to the floor, and taking on something we've never felt before: the yoke of Yeshua — a peace, a lightness, a grace that is all-consuming in every area of our life.

We thank you, Father, for the Spirit that beats within us — that it would continue to supercharge us to deliver the message of our King and to walk out the mission, not to be distracted by short-term battles, not to be distracted by short-term righteousness, but that we would be focused on running this race to the very end and proclaiming King Jesus. We thank you, Father. In the name of Yeshua we pray. Amen.

Shalom. I'm Matthew Vander Els, and I hope you enjoyed this message. Founded in Truth exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message impacted you, or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we invite you to take part in making sure the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's Word continues to reach others. To make sure this happens, you can donate through our online giving portal at foundedintruth.com/give or by texting any amount to 704-275-0752. Don't forget to like and subscribe for new content every single week. We thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing you.

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