

Christ: The Rhythm of Life

A Sermon on Christ's Rhythm of Life

Sermon The Person and Work of Christ Not stated

Matthew 11:28-30

Psalm 19:1

Today's meditation revolves around the theme, Jesus Christ: the rhythm of our lives. As I began to formulate my thoughts on an outline for this devotion, what came to my mind straight off were the "I am" assertions of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament we read that Moses heard God's name from the burning bush as "I AM." It is because He is not the great "I was," or the great "going to be," but the great "I AM," because God is unchanging. In fulfilment of the Old Testament, when we read the New Testament, we hear Jesus state, "I am the light of the world," "I am the true vine," "I am the bread of life," "I am the gate," "I am the good Shepherd," "I am the resurrection and the life," "I am the way, the truth, and the life." If I may sum up these statements of our Lord, it would mean that, if we let Him, Jesus will light up our lives; His door is always open for sinner and saint alike; as the Good Shepherd, He knows the name of each of His sheep and loves them all with the same love; He is the only Way, Truth and Life, and life truly begins when we receive Him; because He lives, we can live also. Without His Resurrection we have nothing. He conquered Satan, hell, death and the grave. Jesus never changes, but if we let Him, He can change us.

These seven statements of Jesus lead us on to the path of His eternal plan, revealed to us sufficiently to guide us in our present form of life. Therefore, a fusion of these seven assertions, I thought, would direct us to the rhythm of life He wants us to follow. It becomes two distinct but interconnected dimensions: one on the eternal plans of Jesus, and the second on how the rhythm set by Him should work in our lives.

Before we go there, we must have a clear understanding of what rhythm means. The Cambridge Dictionary defines rhythm as (a) a strong pattern of sounds, words, or musical notes that are used in music, poetry, and dancing; (b) a regular movement or pattern of movements; and (c) a regular pattern of change, especially one that happens in nature. In this context, nature includes the entire creation of God, together with the human race. Of the three definitions, I pick the third, defining rhythm as a regular pattern of change. Allow me to paraphrase it as "a regular pattern of inner change that should happen in all those who have accepted Jesus as their God and Saviour." The Apostle Paul knew well what the change of the inner self entails. Paul was the chief of sinners, but God changed him into the chief of the Apostles. Paul emphasised the need for perpetual introspection, with

the objective of bringing about continuous change, so as to be able to walk with Jesus. And if we are truly to experience our walk with Jesus, our lives must fall into the rhythm of Jesus.

We have no doubt that Jesus, as the Logos, pre-existed creation; the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God (John 1:1). Our God, Jesus, created everything that was created (John 1:3). If we just look around with an open heart and a meditative mind, we will know that our God is not a God of chaos, but a God of order and harmony: a God of rhythm. Look at the sky and the firmament, the earth, its vegetation, the creatures, the waters and the creatures in them, and the wonders they hold deep within, and look at the different seasons of the year and their impact on this earth and our lives. The rhythm of Jesus runs through all of that. Normally, we look around in a cursory manner and fail to see and experience this rhythm. Those who did perceive it, even partially, wrote poetry, made paintings, wrote books, and composed music, each experiencing the rhythm from a different perspective. Perhaps no one ever experienced its fullest manifestation, and no one could fall into that rhythm without missing a few beats now and again. For David, the realisation came one fine morning, after he must have spent a night in the wilderness tending his sheep, awake and observant, as Saul continued to chase him. He wrote in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." David was on the run, distressed, and worried, yet he found the rhythm of God in creation. Let me say this: to those with ears to hear, the chorus of praise to God is being sung constantly, without missing a beat.

To understand what it means to live our lives in the rhythm of Christ, we need to look briefly at how Jesus lived, though we know about His life only for a brief period of three years. That was, however, enough for God the Son to point us to the rhythm we should fall into. Jesus lived in the easy yoke He offers us too. Matthew reports Jesus, in chapter eleven, verses twenty-eight to thirty, as saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

A study of the Gospel accounts brings to light that Jesus did not push, press, or strain. He did not try to make things happen out of order, but lived in submission to the Father. He was never in a hurry. He did not worry. He was relaxed, and so He had time for people, and was hospitable towards all who sought His company. The question before us is: are we hospitable enough to all we come into contact with? Do we see people as an opportunity to serve, as Jesus did, or do we see them as hurdles in our path to salvation? Jesus composed the music of life and set a peaceful rhythm for it: never too fast, and never too slow, but harmonious and humble. If we have studied His life closely enough, it

should inspire all of us to be more relaxed, like Jesus. Along these lines, I sense Jesus guiding us towards a rhythm of life featuring a few spiritual disciplines that are important for us to practise in our changed lives, after we have come to know Him and accepted Him as our Lord and Saviour.

We will briefly look at three critical points. First, Jesus has given us a vision that we can learn how to live in His easy yoke and light burden, instead of trying too hard. By relying on His gracious presence with us, we can learn to be more relaxed in whatever we do. With absolute trust and faith in Him, we can forget our concerns and lead a life of peace. Second, the hurried, "me first" push has no place in this way of life. Just as Jesus demonstrated how to be a Servant King, irrespective of our social status, we need to knit together service to others, compassion for the needy, forgiveness to those who offend us, and doing good to those who hate us, and loving our neighbours as ourselves. We should learn more about how to walk and work with Jesus in His rhythm of grace, rather than in our straining and stressful ways. Third, it helps when we focus our best energies on furthering our intimacy with Jesus, knowing that abiding in Him is the source of our fruit-bearing. During this process, our secular responsibilities cannot assume a higher importance than these attributes He wants us to possess. When we achieve such a harmonious and rhythmic existence in humility and servanthood, in Christ, we are said to be walking with Jesus, and it is then we will know the presence of Jesus by our side, which will remain with us through eternity.

Let us pray: Lord and our God, Jesus Christ, in times of weakness and hour of need, Yours is the strength by which we carry on, the shoulder we rest our head upon. When our load is heavy and too much to bear, Yours are the arms stretched out to help us, the grace that we depend on. In times of weakness and hour of need, Your voice is heard: "Come... find rest." This is grace divine, the path we tread to wholeness of body and spirit, the rhythm that leads to You, and for which we offer our praise. In Your holy name.

Amen.

Benediction

Almighty God, Heavenly Father, who through Your Son Jesus Christ has liberated us from the bondage of sin and slavery, let Your praise be on our lips at all times. Help us to be thankful to You for the varied gifts You have bestowed upon us, to experience and share Your incomprehensible love, revealed through Jesus Christ our Lord. May the love of the Father, the tenderness of the Son, and the presence of the Spirit be with all of us. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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