Rock Valley Bible Church (www.rvbc.cc)

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July 6, 2003 by Steve Brandon

Pleasure in the Plan of Salvation

Matthew 11:25-30

1. God's Pleasure is to Hide and Reveal (verses 25-27).
2. Our Pleasure is to Come and Rest (verses 28-30).

This morning, we come to the very last section of Matthew, chapter 11. As we consider the passage before us this morning, I would like you to think about this question: Have you ever shared the gospel with someone and faced their rejection of the message that you brought to them? If you have at all been about speaking with others of the gospel of Christ, you will quickly discover that more often than not, people will not believe your message. I cannot begin to tell you the number of times that I have spoken with people about the gospel of Christ, who have heard it, and then rejected it. This rejection has come in various forms. Usually, there is simply an indifference to the words. They think, "Well, that's good for you, but not for me." Often, there are some intellectual responses to it, "Well, that's your opinion. That's your interpretation. My God is not like that." Or they may respond with some other excuse like that. On occasion, there has been rebuke and strong antagonism toward me.

This is the context of Jesus' words in this section. Matthew begins this section by alerting us to this fact as he wrote in verse 25, "At that time". As we discussed last week, Matthew was referring to the time at which Jesus was rejected by the people of Galilee. Jesus had done some remarkable miracles in this region, yet the people who had witnessed them had remained unconvinced, unbelieving, unsatisfied, and unrepentant to the words of Jesus. To use the words of John, "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). If you have been rejected at all when preaching the gospel to others, you know how discouraging this can be. Often, you can feel empty, alone, and abandoned. Remember when Elijah was discouraged? After his amazing success story on Mount Carmel, he was in a cave, alone, and depressed. He cried out to God, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away!" (1 Kings 19:

10). The LORDencouraged Elijah that there would be 7,000 in Israel, who have refused to bow their knees to Baal. Yet, we see that Jesus was not discouraged at all. Rather, Jesus breaks out into a prayer of adoration and praise. Matthew tells us:

> Matthew 11:25-30
> At that time Jesus answered and said, "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, 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 SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.

Jesus begins His response to His rejection by affirming that God reigns in heaven and that God reigns in earth. Nothing is out of God's sovereign control. When there is an opportunity for discouragement, it is always a wise thing to look to God. If you are reading through the Bible according to the plan we have presented, you would have read about Job this week. Job faced a lot of discouragement. He was discouraged with the loss of his family, his unfaithful wife, his health, and his friends. He did not know why he was so afflicted. Do you remember the solution to His problem? A proper view of God. Job 38-41 is filled with God’s boasting about Himself. He is the one who measured out the earth and created it exactly according to His specification (Job 38:5-11). He is the One who commands the morning to dawn each day (Job 38:12-15). He is the One who brings the rain and water to the earth to feed the vegetation on the earth (Job 38:25-30). He is the One who fixes the stars in their place (Job 38:31-33). He knows then the mountain goats give birth (Job 39:1). He lets the wild donkey go free (Job. 29:5). He knows all about the wild ox and the ostrich (Job 39:10-18). He gives the horse its strength (Job 39:19). He knows all about the soaring of the hawk (Job 39:19). Certainly, He is "Lord of heaven and earth" (verse 25). This means that He is in control of all things. This is how Job responds, "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2).

When you know that God is sovereign, you can praise Him in all circumstances. You can praise Him even when people reject the clear offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our text this morning breaks down nicely into two sections. The first section begins with verse 25 and ends with verse 27. The second section begins with verse 28 and ends with verse 30.

Here is my first point this morning, ...

1. God's Pleasure is to Hide and Reveal (verses 25-27).

This is as clear as a bell in the text before us. Jesus said, "You hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to babes" (verse 25). The meaning of this word translated "hid" is without dispute. It describes a willful act of concealing, so that something will not be discovered. It is used of the man who found the treasure "hidden in the field" (Matt. 13:44). It is used to describe the wicked slave who "hid [his] talent in the ground" (Matt. 25:25). It is used in Heb. 11:23 to describe how Moses "was hidden for three months by his parents."

Likewise, the meaning of the word translated, "revealed" is without dispute. It is the opposite of "hiding." Rather than covering something up, this word describes an opening and exposing for all to see. Jesus used this word in Matt. 10:26, when he said, "there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known." Paul uses this word to describe the day in which the "man of lawlessness is revealed" (2 Thess. 2:3, 6, 8). When the one restraining him is "taken out of the way, then the lawless one will be revealed."

These words ("hide" and "reveal") are opposites. In both of these instances, God is actively hiding or revealing. Both of these verbs are in the same tense (they are aorists, which is a simple past action). To those who are "wise and intelligent," God hides the truth. To those who are "babes," God reveals the truth. The generation of Jesus' day saw the same things. They heard the same teachings. Yet, their response was divided. Some believed in Jesus. Some rejected Jesus. God revealed to some that Jesus was the Messiah and that He was to be believed. God hid from the others this same fact.

When we were on vacation about a month ago, we went to an amusement park. In recent weeks, I have told you about our experience on the roller coasters. This morning, I want to tell you about a 3-D movie that we watched. We waited outside for a bit. When we walked in, we were given some yellow glasses that look like sunglasses. We were told to find a seat in the auditorium, buckle up, and put on the glasses, and wait for the movie to start. The 3-D glasses made the images on the screen "come alive." There were times that things were thrown at you and they

looked like they were coming right for you. Everybody ducked. There were times when things came right out and seemed to almost touch you. Everybody backed way back in their seat. There were times when you seemed to be flying, as the chair was moving and as the things you passed went whipping by you. If you did not wear the 3-D glasses (like one of my scared children did not), you saw the image on the screen and your chair bounced around quite a bit, but the movie never jumped out at you. You would not feel compelled to duck at the flying objects.

In some ways, this 3-D movie was like the revelation that God has given us of Himself. Everybody in the world knows about the glory of God, for creation itself declares it to every creature. There are others that have had the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus' coming to earth and dying on the cross for the sins of His people. Some know all about this, but have never responded to the gospel. Sure, they have grown up in church. Sure, they can repeat the catechism questions and answers. Sure, they have gone through their AWANA programs. But, somehow, the gospel has yet to make an impact in their life. Some know about the gospel of Christ, and it has come alive to them. The reality of sins forgiven and righteousness given is very real to them. What makes the difference? In the movie, the 3-D glasses made all the difference. God gives 3-D glasses to the "babes", but withholds them from the "wise and intelligent."

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not about who is the smartest to figure it all out. The good news of the gospel is that God reveals Himself to those who would never be able to figure it out themselves. Just as there was no hope of the 3-D movie coming to life unless you have the glasses, there is also no hope of the gospel coming to life for you unless God reveals it to you.

If anybody can figure something out, surely it is the wise and the intelligent. Man has done some great things in this world. We have built massive sky-scrapers. We have built an information system that allows you to pick up a telephone and speak to anyone in the world. We have put people on the moon. But, **the wise and intelligent have never figured out the gospel of Jesus Christ.** To those who search for wisdom, the gospel is foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23). Jesus said that God, "hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to babes" (verse 25). The "babes" are those who can do nothing for themselves. The "babes" are those who do not have the greatest thinking capacity. The "babes" are those who see and know their sin. They say with Paul, "nothing good dwells in me" (Rom. 7: 18). They know that they need a Savior. They are dependent. They are humble. But those who reject Jesus are far from these things. They think they have it all

figured out, and they think they do not need Jesus. God hid the truth, and God revealed the truth. Look at what Jesus said in verse 26, "Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight."

I have worded my first point very carefully this morning. I said, "God's Pleasure is to Hide and Reveal." It pleases God to hide the truth from those who esteem themselves as "wise and intelligent." It also pleases God to reveal the truth to those who are "babes." It is no secret that those in the world who are the smartest and most intelligent do not see the "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 4). Professors at prestigious universities are known for their antagonism to the gospel. The majority of the greatest thinkers down through the centuries never saw the truth. Rousseau, Voltaire, Albert Einstein, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin are all examples of this. It is also no secret that the church has been filled with those whom the society considers as simple-minded and foolish folk, people who need their religion as a crutch to help them get by. As we sit here today, we are not a society of intelligent ones who figured it all out! Rather, we are a community of "babes" who have realized that we desperately need a Savior. God has revealed to us that Jesus is the only one able to save us from our sin. Paul writes, "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God" (1 Cor. 1:26-29). We have embraced Him and have found Him to be all satisfying and sufficient to meet our needs.

When the gospel is preached, God will hide the truth from some and reveal it to others. **Such a plan pleases God.**

Do you remember last week when I spoke about Tyre and Sidon? If Jesus would have gone there, they would have repented (verse 21). So, why didn't Jesus go? Our text this morning sheds light on the answer. It pleased God to hide the truth from those wicked people.

Now, some people hate this thought about God. Somehow they think that God is unfair in these things. But when time ends, there will be no grounds for accusation against God that He was unjust. Sinful people may accuse God of this today, but when the facts become apparent, and the truth is known, God will be vindicated by all. To those who question God today, I simply ask, "does not the potter have a

right over the clay, to make form the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?" (Rom. 9:21). The answer is, "Of course he does." So also it is with God; He can do with us as He will. Paul writes that, "What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory" (Rom. 9:22-23). We are often so into our individual rights that we forget that God is God, and He will do as He pleases.

Jesus continues this theme in verse 27. He said, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal him." Jesus says that the Father has given Him everything. In this context, He is probably talking about "all knowledge of Him." Because that is what Jesus is speaking about. "No one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son." Certainly, however, we know that Jesus has all authority. He told us in the great commission, "All authority as been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). But here, Jesus says that He and God have the most intimate of relationships with each other. In fact, it is almost exclusive. The Father knows the Son. And the Son knows the Father. Nobody knows the Father, except the Son. Nobody knows the Son, except the Father. However, it is not totally exclusive. The Son can reveal the Father to whomever He wills to reveal Him. Again, we see God's pleasure in this. Returning to my former illustration, we see that the Son is the one who holds the 3-D glasses in His hands. People can come to the theatre and watch the Jesus movie, but without the glasses, it will be flat and lifeless. But, when Jesus wills to give the 3-D glasses to you (and place them on your face), you can watch the same movie, and be filled with life-giving power.

I think now that we are in a position to really understand then, why Jesus can say in verse 25, "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," even in the midst of great rejection in His ministry. It is because **those who reject the gospel are not out of the sovereign power of God.** If God delights to reveal Himself to someone, then that person will see Jesus in all His glory and beauty and majesty. That person will fall to His feet and worship Him. That person will willingly follow the Lord of glory. Theologians call this, "Irresistible Grace" and there are many examples of it in the scripture. Matthew is also a good example. He was a greedy extortioner. Manassah, the most wicked of kings, was saved by God's grace. The thief who was crucified alongside of Jesus was also saved by God's grace. Paul was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent aggressor. He was the

"foremost" of all sinners, and his salvation is an example of God's grace for all who would believe in Jesus for eternal life (1 Tim. 1:16).

If God so delights to hide Himself to someone, then the opposite occurs. That person will not see Jesus for anything other than another great teacher who walked the earth. There are many religious professors at universities who are in this boat. They study God. They read. But they are blind to the truth. The salvation of a soul is entirely wrapped up in the sovereign pleasure of God. Jesus said it this way, "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

This past Friday (July 4th), several of us were going to meet at Baumann Park for a picnic, followed by the fireworks. As our family contemplated going, we listened to the weather reports. All we heard was how a great storm was going to go through Rockford in the early evening. We looked at the internet and discovered that a big storm was going to hit at 5pm. We were going to wait for the storm. About 5:30pm, we received a call from a member of our church, who was at the park already. He called to inquire where we were. We said, "We are waiting for the storm to pass over." As he looked in the sky, he saw nothing but daylight. He said, "What storm?" Apparently the forecasters were wrong. The wind and storm didn't come in. We were at the park by 6:30pm, and enjoyed a wonderful picnic and fireworks display. It was later that morning that the real storm came. And boy did it come! As of Saturday afternoon, there were 55,000 customers who didn't have power in the Rockford area alone! We don't know where (and when) the wind blows. But God does. And it blows exactly where He pleases to have it blow. The storm that ripped through Rockford last Saturday morning was no accident. It was under the sovereign control of God. So also is the salvation of souls. God will save the most unlikely of people at His own pleasure. This is something to treasure in your hearts, especially in your evangelism to others. It isn't something to be despised. It is something we can rejoice in!

Charles Spurgeon said it well when he said, "I do not come into this pulpit hoping that perhaps somebody will of his own free will return to Christ. My hope lies in another quarter. I hope that my Master will lay hold of some of them and say, ‘You are mine, and you shall be mine. I claim you for myself.’ My hope arises from the freeness of grace, and not from the freedom of the will."

For those of you who have experienced the freeness of His grace, your salvation is a glorious thing! That God, in His grace, would delight to open my eyes to the

truth of the gospel, when my sin sought the very opposite is a glorious thing. He is to be praised! The reason that God so delights in this is to show off His mercy. "But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which He loves us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, **in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**" (Eph. 2:4-7).

My children are into attracting attention to themselves by the things that they can do. Whether on our play set, whether in the swimming pool, whether on their bikes, whether on a pogo stick, or whether on a scooter, they love to say, "Daddy, look at me." This is what God says with His mercy. He says, "Look at Me! Look at how merciful I have been to wicked, rebellious sinners!" God endures with patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy (Rom. 9). We praise God for His glorious grace and kindness to us.

Some make this claim that such a doctrine destroys evangelism, because, they say, "you can't offer Jesus and His forgiveness freely, because God will only save His elect. Since you don't know the way that the wind is blowing, and whose eyes are being opened, you can't offer the gospel to anybody. You don't know those who God is hiding the truth from. Neither do you don't know those who God is revealing the truth to. Furthermore, God will make known His truth to His elect, whether you tell them or not. So, there is no reason to evangelize if you believe these things." But those who say these things make a leap of logic that the Scripture nowhere makes. Consider Jesus' own statements. Right after He said these things, He gives one of the most tender, all-inclusive of gospel invitations found anywhere in the Bible. We discuss this in our second point this morning...

2. Our Pleasure is to Come and Rest (verses 28-30).

Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, 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 SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

There are three invitations in this text. Let's look at them:

1. Come (verse 28)
Notice those whom Jesus invites. He does not invite the "wise" or the "intelligent." Neither does He invite the "babes." He doesn't use those categories. Rather, He invites those who are "weary and heavy-laden." It is as though saying, "All those who need salvation, come to me." Those who are "weary" are "weary" because of their labors. The word pictures those who have labored to the point of fatigue. The footnote in the New American Standard Bible says, "wor work to exhaustion." The picture Jesus gives is of the one who has put in a hard day of labor and has come home absolutely exhausted, strong enough only to prop himself up on the couch to get some much needed rest. I'm reminded of my dear, pregnant wife. Yesterday, the storm knocked out our power and left us with no air conditioning. My wife, she had no energy and was very weary. Those who are "heavy-laden" are those who have been bearing a weight upon their shoulders. John Bunyan has done a great service for us here in describing Christian with a big load on his back, picturing all of us before we come to Jesus.

The weight that is referred to in verse 28, is obviously the weight of the conviction of sin upon a soul. Jesus is not calling ditch diggers to take a vacation. Rather, He is calling those who are burdened because of their sin to find rest in Him. Concerning his unrepentant sin, David cried, "Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me" (Ps. 32:4). He was heavy-laden due to unforgiven and unconfessed sin.

Jesus is also calling those who have found their religious activities to be too much for them to bear. When Jesus cursed the hypocritical Pharisees, He told how they "tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men’s shoulders" (Matt. 23:4). There is a burden and a weariness in religion. Sadly, there are many "Christian" churches that lay up burden upon burden upon your shoulders. They say that you have to attend church every Sunday. You have to give 10% of you income to the church. You have to be at prayer meeting. You have to read through the Bible every year. You cannot swear. You cannot go to movies. You cannot drink alcohol. You should boycott all companies that give benefits to homosexual partners. Ladies, you must wear dresses to church. Men, you cannot wear jeans to church. Ladies, you must have long hair. Men, you must have short hair. You can pierce your ears, but not your tongue. The list goes on and on. It can include infant feeding methods, schooling choices, dating practices, and Sabbath restrictions. Often, the thought is that if you do not measure up to the standard of the particular church you are going to, then you simply are not religious enough for them. They say, perhaps you are

not a Christian. Or, perhaps you have lost your salvation, because you have not been good enough for Jesus to accept you any longer. To these people, Jesus says, "Come to Me."

All of these things can cloud out the main thing. I have heard it said that Vince Lombardi, the legendary Green Bay Packers coach, would start every season with a team meeting. At that meeting, there would be veterans, who had played in the NFL for 15 years. At that meeting, there would be rookies as well, who were fresh out of college. At that meeting, he would hold a football high above his head so that each player could see it. With all eyes on him, he simply said: "Gentlemen, this is a football." Blocking, tackling, and running are good for football players. But, if they forget that football is all about putting the pigskin in the end zone, they will lose.

This morning, as your pastor, I am lifting up Jesus Christ to all you, whether you are a young Christian, or have walked with Jesus for 50 years. I am telling you, "Christianity is finding rest in Jesus." Church attendance is good. Bible reading is good. Righteous living is good. But, if you forget that Christianity is all about finding rest in Jesus, you have lost in the game of life. Elsewhere, Jesus used different metaphors to describe this union with Jesus. He told His disciples to "abide in Me" (John 15:4). Jesus often told people to "believe in Me" (John 3:16; 11:26). Jesus prayed to the Father, "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). One of many Biblical metaphors describes union with Christ!

Paul said, "that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Phil. 3:8, 9). Here, Jesus said, "Come to Me ... and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). If you are weary of your religiously righteous law keeping, Jesus says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Even for those who have little Biblical understanding, Jesus' words here are easily understood. We all understand rest. Every night, we place our head on our pillow and rest. In terms of salvation, we can easily understand how Jesus calls us to get off the treadmill of works-based righteousness, and rest in our righteousness of the cross of Christ. He wants us to find rest in Him and in His work.

For those who have great Biblical knowledge, Jesus' words here are found to be rich in meaning. The "rest" metaphor saturates all of Biblical revelation. The Jews

celebrated a weekly Sabbath rest, in which no work was done. This weekly rest anticipated our greater rest in Jesus. After wandering for 40 years in the wilderness, entering the land was viewed as a "rest" (Joshua 1:13), a time of enjoying God's blessings. This theme is picked up in Psalm 95, which clearly demonstrates of a great rest to come. The writer to the Hebrews spends two chapters showing how "there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). This theme is even picked up in the book of Revelation, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord form now on! ... that they rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them" (Rev. 14:13).

Perhaps the closest allusion to Jesus' words here are found in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, when he spoke of the blessing that would come upon Judah in the days of the New Covenant. Listen to Jeremiah 31:25, "For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes." This is what we find in Jesus: satisfaction and refreshment. He has come to instigate the New Covenant. The one who comes to Jesus will find great pleasure in Him.

Now, some might be inclined to stop here at verse 28. Just find your rest in Jesus. There is nothing more. It does not matter how you live, because you are forgiven. But Jesus does not stop here. Let's look at His second invitation...

2. Take (verse 29).
In verse 29 He says, "Take My yoke upon you." A yoke is a symbol of service. Yokes are for animals who will serve you by pulling heavy loads (e.g. carts or plows or sleds). Doesn't it seems strange that Jesus would free us from our heavy loads and weary labor only to constrain us once again under His yoke? Jesus helps to clarify this confusion in verse 30, when He said, "My yoke is easy, and My load is light." You need to have some restraints. D. A. Carson said it well, "If Jesus is not offering the yoke of the law, neither is he offering freedom from all constraints" (Commentary, p. 278).

In our quest to liberate Iraq, it is not with the intent to free them from all restraints. Rather, we want to see them be governed by a democratic government, which they will find easy to follow. This is what Jesus is saying. When you come to Him, you are freed from this over-bearing weight of your own sin, and your legalistic attempts to be good enough for God to be satisfied with you. Now, you are free to obey Jesus Christ. His yoke is different than the yoke you used to bear. It is not overbearing and condemning. 1 John 5:3 says it best, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."

There is a difference in obeying an earthly father who is harsh, condemning, extracting, and unloving, than there is an earthly father who is kind, compassionate, helpful, and loving. The one is served with a vengeful spirit. "He tells me to take out the garbage, well, why does not he do it himself, if he thinks himself to be so great." The other is served with willing enthusiasm. "I'll take out the garbage, because I know that he wants me to. I'll put a smile on his face and show my love for him." For one, taking out the garbage is a chore and a drudgery. For the other, taking out the garbage is a joy.

When you see a commandment in the Bible, how do you approach it? Do you look upon it as drudgery or a joy? "All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). And sons of God will willingly follow their heavenly Father. The yoke of Jesus is light, because we are told to do what we want to do anyway. Jesus gives one last instruction for those who will come to Him.

3. Learn (verse 29).
Jesus' third invitation is given with these words, "learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls" (verse 29). Jesus calls His followers to be learners. Jesus calls His followers to be disciples. Jesus calls His followers to look at Jesus and find Him gentle and humble, and to imitate Him in every respect. This is why we read our Bibles. This is why we gather together. This is why we have Men's Equippers and Ladies Bible Studies. This is why we pray. We are learners of Jesus, who want to know Him and love Him and obey Him in every respect.

I have worded my second point very carefully, "Our Pleasure is to Come and Rest." The one who comes, takes, and learns from Jesus will find great pleasure in Him. Jesus does not call us to a terrible life. He calls us to a blessed life. You simply need to take hold of it, grasp it, and cling to it. Have you? Is Jesus your joy and satisfaction? Do you continually come to Him with all of your burdens and all of your cares? We are to "cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). Do you willingly take the yoke of Christ and submit to what He tells you? Do you eagerly learn from Jesus? If you do, you will have joy in this life and in the life to come.

I close with a story of B. M. Palmer, who was a pastor in Savannah, Georgia in the 1840's, during a time of great revival. There was a young man attending his church who complained to him of what he was hearing. He said, "You preachers are the most contradictory men in the world; you say, and you unsay, just as it pleases you, without the least pretension to consistency. Why you said in your sermon that

sinners were perfectly helpless in themselves -- utterly unable to repent or believe and then turned round and said that they would all be damned if they did not." Palmer judged that it was best to reply, "in an off-hand sort of way." So, while continuing his writing with his pen on a sheet of paper, he said, "Well, ... there is no use in our quarreling over this matter; either you can or you cannot. If you can, all I have to say is that I hope you will just go and do it." After a moment's silence, the man replied, "I have been trying my best for three whole days and cannot." "Ah," responded Palmer, raising his eyes and putting down his pen, "that puts a different face upon it; we will go then and tell the difficulty straight to God." Palmer said, "Here was a soul in the most desperate extremity, which must believe or perish, and hopelessly unable of itself, to do it; that, consequently it was just the case for divine interposition; and pleading most earnestly for the fulfillment of the divine promise. Upon rising I offered not one single word of comfort or advice. ... So I left my friend in his powerlessness in the hands of God, as the only helper. In a short time he came through the struggle, rejoicing in the hope of eternal life" (Found in Iain Murray's excellent book, Revival and Revivalism, pp. 373-4).

My sermon title this morning is "Pleasure in the Plan of Salvation." (1) God takes His pleasure in hiding and revealing (verses 25-27). (2) We take our pleasure in coming and resting in Jesus (verses 28-30). May your soul find rest in Him.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on July 06, 2003 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.