

Challenge

Dec 2006 - Jan 2007

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER
PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

Matthew 11:28-30 — COME TO JESUS

As we rapidly come towards Christmas yet again, it seems to me that as the Scriptures tell us time is moving oh so fast. Come the end of the year I think that probably most people are expressing how tired and weary they feel and how that makes life somewhat more difficult in coping with the day to day requirements.

In this passage of Matthew chapter 11, I'd really like to tie it into the whole idea of Christmas because the whole purpose of the Saviour in the manger was to be able to allow for the opportunity for people ultimately to come to Jesus once He'd gone through His death, burial and resurrection.

Now the whole purpose of coming to Jesus was the idea that in Him was certain gifts or presents if you will as a natural outcome of what happens when we know, love Him and serve Him. Now when you look at these verses we need to understand there is the rest of salvation which is then followed by the rest of service. As Jesus was sharing in various towns in His area, His great concern was that people weren't responding to what was happening and what He was doing. Now times really haven't changed much and I think often with Christmas on our doorstep we get things rather sadly confused.

By this I mean that with all the commercialism of Christmas, the advertising and what seems to be the endless stream of brochures in our mailbox to buy this and that and something else, we lose sight of the main reason for the season. So in sharing with the disciples about how to deal with the needs of their day to day life and walk, He says to them 'Come unto Me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.' It's interesting that when we talk about coming to Jesus often we get distracted from that. Somehow or other when it comes to a personal walk of salvation we get confused with whether it is something that is attained or something that is received, or we get confused with the whole idea of investigation verses revelation. I've written stories over the years where people have investigated and investigated but ultimately come into a personal relationship with the Lord as a result of God's revelation of Himself. It's all a bit like Isaiah Chapter 6 where he saw the LORD high and lifted up and all of a sudden he saw himself as he truly was.

It's interesting that Jesus says, "Come unto Me all you who are weary and heavy laden." The word weary there means absolutely exhausted or totally disillusioned. I think that this is something that is happening in our society today, where people have become exhausted by pursuing the things of the world, by pursuing things that really don't bring satisfaction or fulfillment. The end result of this of course has been that we have many people who become so dreadfully disillusioned.

But then there are those who when they read this; 'Come unto Jesus all you who are weary and heavy laden' will come to anything and everything but Jesus. We can come to people who we think can answer our problems, and they may come in the form of a counsellor or they may come in the form of a friend. Or they may come in the form of maybe an occult leader or cult leader. They may also come in the form of people who are involved in the New Age or people who are involved in witchcraft and the like. People can also get involved or come to plans and start setting all sorts of goals for their lives, thinking that if they have certain goals and achieve them that this will bring the rest that they so desperately want. But sadly for many the end result is exhaustion and disillusionment.

And secondly Jesus calls us to cast off the burden, that is the burden of our own spiritual bankruptcy. I know that when it comes to this whole idea of walking with Jesus, of coming into a personal relationship with Jesus that there are many people who are carrying burdens that God never meant them to carry. You know Christmas is all about being delivered from all the various burdens that we as human beings seem to load up on ourselves and they come in different forms and in different degrees. For instance there's the burden of guilt. There are many people who are living with the guilt of what they've done in the past, unable to accept forgiveness and often sadly unable to forgive themselves. They seem unable to recognise that there is a God who is more willing to forgive them than they are willing to confess.

And then there are those who are involved in the burden of religion, that is, trying to save themselves, trying to make themselves acceptable before a holy God, trying to find peace and joy and contentment in

(Please turn over)

something that is of a human derivation. But what people have got to realise is that joy and contentment and peace is in a person and that person is Jesus.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



Praise

1. Continue to praise the Lord for the way in which He has been encouraging us with gifts throughout each month. It is a real delight to see that people are really encouraged and excited about what is happening with the Challenge newspaper.
2. Praise the Lord for the encouraging extra orders for our Christmas edition of Challenge. Lots of churches are really keen to be using the paper for their Christmas outreach and also at their carol services for which we are enormously grateful. Please pray that God will bless this distribution and many will experience the true meaning of Christmas.
3. Praise the Lord for the encouraging ongoing distribution of the paper in Africa. We have just heard news of the work that is going on in Kenya with Peacemakers Fellowship International who have now planted their 14th church in twelve months.
4. Also we want to praise the Lord for the work that is going on in Argentina with Will Herridon and Word of Life. We are hoping and praying that once we have finished the year's trial in the city of Cordova that we can spread to other parts of Argentina, finances allowing. We are also seeing encouraging new doors opening up in the US and we hope to have our first edition in the US in February of 2007 and also our first edition into Malawi in February of 2007.
5. We do praise God for the faithful team that He has given to us here at Challenge. Many of them have worked for 20 years plus in getting out the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ. We praise God for their faithfulness and their commitment and passion in getting out the gospel. We also praise God for the faithful group of volunteers who come each month to wrap the Challenge and I know who pray earnestly for each paper that goes out.

Prayer

1. Please pray for the effectiveness of our Christmas editions of the papers as they go out around the world. Christmas is a time when people can be more open to the gospel. Pray that many will respond to God's wonderful gift of His Son.
2. Please continue to pray for the negotiations that are going on with various countries regarding getting Challenge distributed there. Pray for Carl Carmody who is in Africa at this moment and will be negotiating with a committee in Malawi regarding the first edition to go in February 2007. Also please pray for discussions in their early stages with other ministry organisations in Nigeria and Egypt.
3. Please pray for Australian Christian farmers, some of whom have been financial supporters of Challenge outreach projects. Please pray for God's sustaining of these folk, and His leading in their lives.
4. Please pray for an editor to free up Carl Carmody for promotional duties. We have been looking for an editor for some time now and we are really looking for God's person to take on this ministry role. The whole desire of bringing in a replacement editor is to lift the bar in terms of excellence and presentation of the paper.

May we all here at Challenge wish you our readers a very blessed and safe Christmas season.



Special Request: We are still collecting books to send to African Pastors.

If you have any good quality books on Christian Living, Commentaries, Biographies, etc., that you are no longer using, please contact us here at Challenge.

Challenge Literature Fellowship

PO Box 978, Cloverdale 6985 — Phone (08) 9453 3311 — Fax (08) 9453 3006

Webpage: www.clf.org.au — Email: challenge@clf.org.au