

# THE KINGDOM-DRIVEN LIFE #10

## The Book of Matthew

### Kingdom Rest

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”  
Matthew 11:28-30 NLT

#### I. Review-The Sermon on the Mount

##### A. The Beatitudes

1. We have covered the eight beatitudes of Jesus which introduce the sermon, and learned that the first beatitude is the cornerstone of the entire sermon.
2. Each heart-quality here is the opposite of the pre-kingdom heart of man:

**The disciple is poor in spirit; the world is full of pride.  
The disciple mourns his sinful condition; the world seeks pleasure.  
The disciple is meek (humble, gentle), while the world is arrogant.  
The disciple is hungry for righteousness; the world seeks to have need of nothing.  
The disciple is merciful; the world is cruel and judgmental.  
The disciple is pure in heart, the world coddles corrupt imaginations.  
The disciple is a peacemaker; the world is retaliatory.  
The disciple endures persecution; the world conforms to itself to avoid criticism.**

##### B. Jesus Promised Us “Rest for Our Souls”

1. To be “poor in spirit” and “meek” is the key to the kingdom-driven life.
2. What “heavy burdens” might these qualities remove?

##### C. Switching Burdens

***“burden”=refers to a load carried; work done to the point of exhaustion***

1. Jesus offers us a light burden for our heavy one; an easy yoke instead of a difficult one.
2. Today, we want to suggest how being meek and poor in spirit delivers us from heavy yokes that are altogether internal ones, yokes and burdens of our hearts!

**Rest for our souls does not come from something we do;  
it comes from what we cease to do as we learn the “meekness” of Jesus.**

3. Kingdom rest requires release from these three burdens:

- Pride
- Pretense
- Pursuit of Possessions

## II. Can You Take a Yoke?

### A. The Yoke of Pride

1. We are burdened to the point of exhaustion by human pride—a love of “self”!
2. There is a legitimate self-love. We are to love our neighbor as our “self”; this means we are to care about “others” as much as we care about ourselves.
3. But pride is *self-love*, so ingrained in us we can have it and not know it!
4. How do I know when there is pride in my heart?

- When there is a fierce effort to protect myself from every slight or offense
- When I am always working to shield myself from the bad opinions of others (friends or enemies)
- When I am tormented by what others think of me
- When I feel compelled to challenge every word spoken against me
- When I cringe from every criticism
- When I am easily offended
- When I can't sleep because I was passed over for promotion or when someone else was preferred or recognized instead of me

5. I might go to church and sing a hymn thanking God for saving a “wretch” like me or dying for a “worm such as I”; then I get angry and resentful when someone calls me a wretch or a worm. Where's my consistency?
6. The meekness of Jesus did not require the approval of others!
7. Taking on the meekness of Jesus can deliver me from pride and love of self so that only what God thinks of me matters!

### B. The Yoke of Pretense

1. Pretense is the first cousin of pride.
2. This is the burden of appearance, of doctoring my image to create a good impression to others.
3. This burden is terrible; it's a fear of being found out for what we really are; and it eats away at our hearts like a rat.
4. This is the burden of artificiality, and it plagues American culture.
5. This is the powerful dark agent of the heart that allows us to be manipulated by the world of advertising, playing continually to the desire to be what we are not.

The heart of the world is breaking under this load of pride and pretense. There is no release from our burden apart from the meekness of Christ....He offers the rest of meekness, the blessed relief that comes when we accept ourselves for what we are and cease to pretend.

A. W. Tozer

### C. The Yoke of Possessions

1. We can further quote Tozer from his classic book, *The Pursuit of God* with an excerpt from a classic chapter:

#### “The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing”

Before the Lord God made man upon the earth He first prepared for him by creating a world of useful and pleasant things for his sustenance and delight. In the Genesis account of the creation these are called simply ‘things.’ They were made for man’s uses, but they were meant always to be external to the man and subservient to him. In the deep heart of the man was a shrine where none but God was worthy to come. Within him was God; without, a thousand gifts which God had showered upon him.

But sin has introduced complications and has made those very gifts of God a potential source of ruin to the soul.

Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and ‘things’ were allowed to enter. Within the human heart ‘things’ have taken over. Men have now by nature no peace within their hearts, for God is crowned there no longer, but there in the moral dusk stubborn and aggressive usurpers fight among themselves for first place on the throne.

This is not a mere metaphor, but an accurate analysis of our real spiritual trouble. There is within the human heart a tough fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess. It covets ‘things’ with a deep and fierce passion. The pronouns ‘my’ and ‘mine’ look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die. Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God’s gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution.

Our Lord referred to this tyranny of things when He said to His disciples, *‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.’* (Matt. 16:24-25).

Breaking this truth into fragments for our better understanding, it would seem that there is within each of us an enemy which we tolerate at our peril. Jesus called it ‘life’ and ‘self,’ or as we would say, the self-life. Its chief characteristic is its possessiveness: the words ‘gain’ and ‘profit’ suggest this. To allow this enemy to live is in the end to lose everything. To repudiate it and give up all for Christ’s sake is to lose nothing at last, but to preserve everything unto life eternal. And possibly also a hint is given here as to the only effective way to destroy this foe: it is by the Cross: ‘Let him take up his cross and follow me.’

The way to deeper knowledge of God is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things. The blessed ones who possess the Kingdom are they who have repudiated every external thing and have rooted from their hearts all sense of possessing. They are ‘poor in spirit.’ They have reached an inward state paralleling the outward circumstances of the common beggar in the streets of Jerusalem; that is what the word ‘poor’ as Christ used it actually means. These blessed poor are no longer slaves to the tyranny of things. They have broken the yoke of the oppressor; and this they have done not by fighting but by surrendering. Though free from all sense of possessing, they yet possess all things. ‘Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’

2. Again, only the Holy Spirit can reveal the presence of this heavy burden we’ve carried so long that we are only aware of its *weight*, not its *cause*!

***Personal Testimony: Recently, the economy crisis in America has had an impact upon us all. As the bad news flies, I found myself weighed down with incredible burdens of worry and anxiety. Then, providentially, a researcher sent me the chapter from Tozer’s book, which I had read as a young Christian several decades ago. In a flash, I realized the real trouble! Everything I worried about was rooted in “my” and “mine”...the fear of loss or of***

*a setback regarding “things”! I’ve been on my knees about this ever since. While far from perfect, I have experienced a sweet rest and sense of victory not experienced in years.  
Pastor Ray’s Journal, October, 2008*

3. How much weight does our soul carry over “things”?
4. If being “poor in spirit” means that in our hearts we really know we “possess nothing”, what rest and peace might come?
5. If everything belongs to God and I’m just a steward, how much freedom does it bring?

### **III. The Classic Story of the Father of Our Faith**

- God promised Abraham a son when Abraham was 75 years old. He waited another 25 years; then Isaac was born.

Abraham was old when Isaac was born, old enough indeed to have been his grandfather, and the child became at once the delight and idol of his heart. From that moment when he first stooped to take the tiny form awkwardly in his arms, he was an eager love slave of his son. God went out of His way to comment on the strength of this affection. And it is not hard to understand. The baby represented everything sacred to his father's heart: the promises of God, the covenants, the hopes of the years and the long messianic dream. As he watched him grow from babyhood to young manhood, the heart of the old man was knit closer and closer with the life of his son, till at last the relationship bordered upon the perilous. It was then that God stepped in to save both father and son from the consequences of an unclesed love.

*‘Take now thy son,’ said God to Abraham, ‘thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.’ (Gen 22:2)*

*Tozer, **The Pursuit of God***

- God spared Isaac at the point of death and restored him to his father.
- Afterward, Abraham had everything he’d had before-- his possessions, his wife, and his son Isaac, but now, everything was different!

I have said that Abraham possessed nothing. Yet was not this poor man rich? Everything he had owned before was still his to enjoy: sheep, camels, herds, and goods of every sort. He had also his wife and his friends, and best of all he had his son Isaac safe by his side. He had everything, but he possessed nothing. There is the spiritual secret. There is the sweet theology of the heart which can be learned only in the school of renunciation. The books on systematic theology overlook this, but the wise will understand.

After that bitter and blessed experience I think the words ‘my’ and ‘mine’ never had again the same meaning for Abraham. The sense of possession which they connote was gone from his heart. things had been cast out forever. They had now become external to the man. His inner heart was free from them. The world said, ‘Abraham is rich,’ but the aged patriarch only smiled. He could not explain it to them, but he knew that he owned nothing, that his real treasures were inward and eternal.

*Excerpt from **The Pursuit of God***

#### IV. Conclusion

- The Kingdom-Driven life is deliverance from pride, pretense and pursuit of possessions.
- When the revelation of being “poor in spirit” and walking in the “meekness” of Christ dawns on us, the righteousness, peace and joy of Kingdom living is not far behind.
- The Beatitudes speak of the “blessed” life; happy, content, fulfilled, having a sense of divine favor.
- This does not come from doing; it comes when we stop doing the things that are killing us!
- When we actually live this life, fulfillment comes, and we are “salt” and “light” to a hurting world!

**You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.**  
**Matthew 5:14-16 NLT**