

Chapter 18. TEACHABLENESS.

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." – Matthew 11:29

The first virtue of a pupil is submissiveness and willingness to be taught. What does this imply? A consciousness of his own ignorance, a readiness to give up his own way of thinking or doing, to look at things from the teacher's perspective, and a quiet confidence that the master knows and will show him how to learn to know too. The meek and lowly spirit listens carefully to understand what the teacher's will is and is quick to obey it. If this is the attitude of the pupil, then it will be teacher's fault if he does not learn.

Why then is it that, with Christ as our Teacher, there is so much failure and so little real growth in spiritual knowledge? So much hearing and reading of the Bible, so much profession of faith in it as our only rule of life, and yet such a lack of the manifestation of its spirit and its power? So much honest, earnest application of the Word in the inner room and the Bible study group, but so little of the joy and strength God's Word could give?

This question is of the utmost importance. There must be some reason why there are so many disciples of Jesus who honestly think they desire to know and do His will, and who yet, by their own confession and the evidence of those around them, are not displaying the Word of life as a light in the world should do. If the answer can be found to this question, their lives may be changed.

Our text suggests the answer: *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."* Many have taken Christ as a Saviour **but not as a Teacher**. They have put their trust in Him as the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep; yet they know little of the reality of Him daily shepherding His flock, calling everyone by name, or of hearing His voice and following Him alone. They know little of what it is to follow the Lamb; to receive from Him, before everything, the lamb nature, and to seek to be like Him, meek and lowly in heart. It was their three-year course in His school that fitted Christ's disciples for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the fulfilment of all the wonderful promises He had given them. **It is under the personal teaching of our Lord Jesus,**

and through that submission of the meek and lowly heart, that daily waits for and receives that teaching, that we can truly find rest for our souls. All the weariness and burden of strain and failure and disappointment will give way to that divine peace, which knows that everything is being cared for by Christ Himself.

The taking of Christ's yoke and learning from Him - His meekness and lowliness of heart, and with that, the teachableness that refuses to know or do anything in its own wisdom, is to be the attitude of our whole life, every day, and all day. But it is especially in the morning hour that this is to be cultivated, and deliverance from self and all its energy is to be sought. It is there, while occupied with the words of God and of Christ and the Holy Spirit, that we need to daily realise that these words only profit as they lead to, and are opened up by, the personal teaching of Christ. It is there that we need to daily experience that it is only when the living Lord Jesus **Himself, in whom all the fulness dwells**, and who contains all our life and salvation, **comes near, and takes charge of us**, that His teaching can be received. And it is here that we must definitely ask and cultivate the teachableness that takes up His yoke and learns of Him. Once again, teachableness is everything. If it is true that the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the Spirit of Christ Jesus "*shall teach you all things*", and if His whole life and work in us is a divine teaching, then it is also equally true that our whole life must be divine teachableness. It is only in this way that our daily fellowship with God's Word, and our daily life, can be what our Lord Jesus can make it to be.

Unlearning is often the most important part of learning. Unlearning wrong impressions, prejudices and prepossessions are major obstacles hindering learning. Until these have been removed, the teacher labours in vain. The knowledge he communicates touches only the surface. Deep beneath the surface the pupil is guided by that which has already become a second nature to him. The first work of the teacher is to expose, to make the pupil see and remove these hindrances.

There can be no true and faithful learning of Christ where we are not ready to unlearn. Our heredity, our education, our cultural tradition, shaped our thoughts about religion and God's Word, and it often becomes a greater hindrance because we are so assured that they are indeed the truth. To learn of Christ needs a willingness to subject every truth we believe to His inspection for criticism and correction.

Humility is the root virtue of the Christian life. This law is absolute in God's Kingdom – *"He that humbles himself shall be exalted."* Our disappointment in striving for higher degrees of grace, faith, spiritual knowledge, love for souls and power to bless, is all owing to this. We have not accepted the humility of Christ as the beginning and the perfection of His salvation. *"God gives grace to the humble"* has a far wider and deeper application than we think.

Submission is one form of humility. In the morning watch we place ourselves as learners in Christ's school. Let submission, let humility be the distinguishing mark of the learner, and, if we feel how little we have of it, let us listen to the voice that says, *"Take my yoke upon you,"* and, for that this implies – *"learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart. And you shall find rest for your souls."*

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, my Master and Teacher, I bow before You. I submit myself before You. I am willing to let go of all my own wisdom, my own understanding, my own knowledge of the application of the truths of your Word. Teach me, Lord. Expose all the obstacles and hindrances in my heart. Correct me and guide me in your ways. Give me a meek and humble heart. Amen.