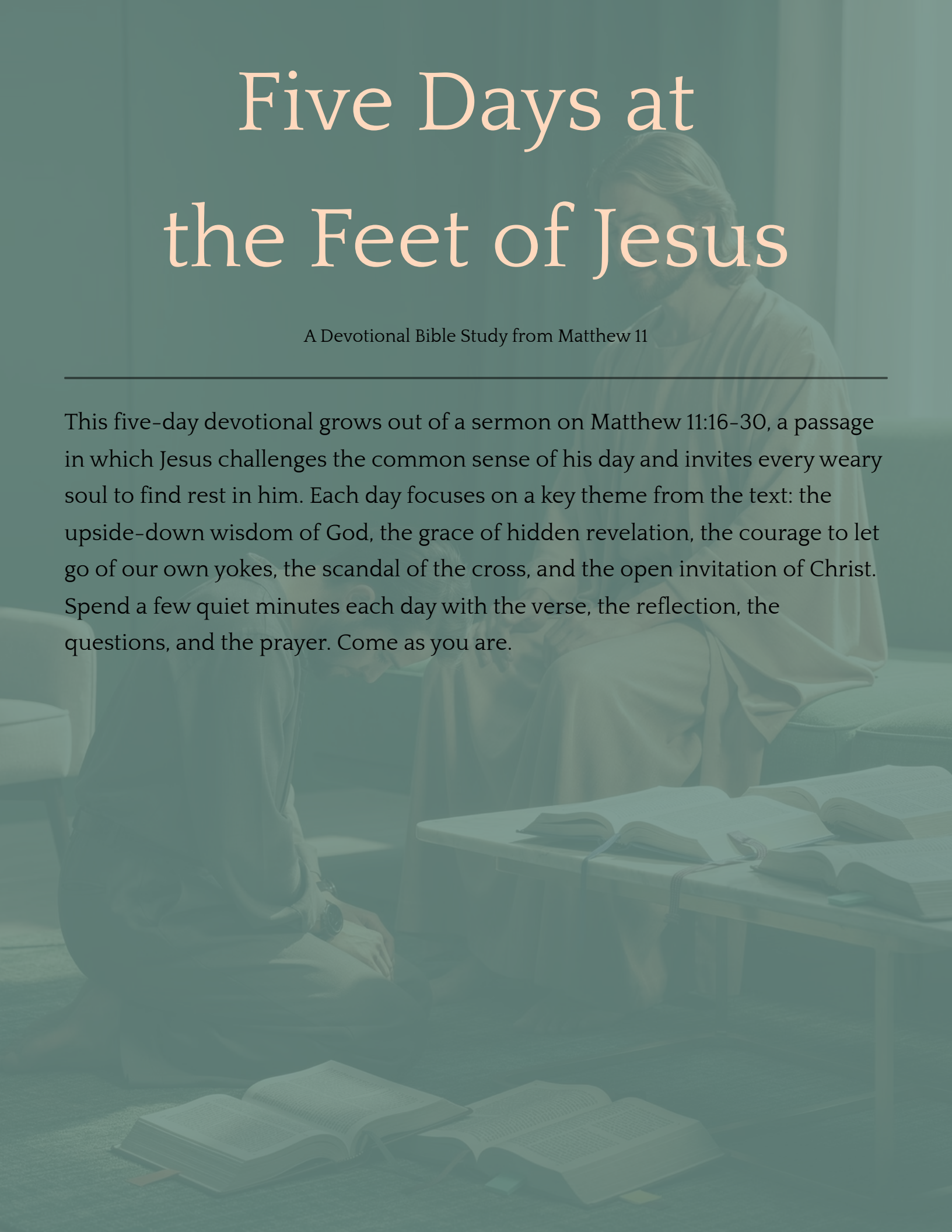


Five Days at the Feet of Jesus

A Devotional Bible Study from Matthew 11

This five-day devotional grows out of a sermon on Matthew 11:16–30, a passage in which Jesus challenges the common sense of his day and invites every weary soul to find rest in him. Each day focuses on a key theme from the text: the upside-down wisdom of God, the grace of hidden revelation, the courage to let go of our own yokes, the scandal of the cross, and the open invitation of Christ. Spend a few quiet minutes each day with the verse, the reflection, the questions, and the prayer. Come as you are.



The Upside-Down Wisdom of God

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants." — Matthew 11:25

Devotional

We live in a world that prizes credentials. We trust the expert, the person with the most degrees and the longest résumé. There is nothing wrong with learning and education. God gave us minds to use. But Jesus points to something important: the wisdom of God does not always travel the expected roads or arrive in the packaging we anticipate.

John the Baptist came from the wilderness, eating locusts and wild honey and wearing camel hair. Jesus came eating and visiting with the wrong crowd. Neither fit the religious expectations of the day, so the wise and intelligent dismissed them. They had already decided what God should look like, and their assumptions became the very barrier between them and the living God standing right in front of them.

The word Jesus uses, "infants," is striking. Infants depend entirely on another. Jesus is not celebrating ignorance but dependence, openness, and the humility to admit we do not know everything. The kingdom of God is not hidden as a punishment. It is simply missed by those unwilling to look for it in unexpected places.

Today, consider where your assumptions about how God should work might be keeping you from seeing how God actually is working.

Reflection Questions

1. Where in your life have you expected God to show up in a certain way, only to be surprised by how he actually arrived?
2. What does it mean to you personally to approach faith with the openness of an infant rather than the confidence of an expert?
3. Is there an area of your spiritual life where pride in your own understanding might be limiting what God can do?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, Lord of heaven and earth, forgive me for the times I have decided in advance what you should look like and how you should work. Open my eyes to the ways you are moving that I have been too proud or too busy to notice. Give me the humility of a child who trusts completely in your goodness. Reveal yourself to me today in the places I least expect. In the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

The Burden We Were Never Meant to Carry

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." -- Matthew 11:28

Devotional

There is a particular kind of exhaustion that has nothing to do with sleep. It comes from carrying too much for too long, from believing that the weight of your life, your family, your failures, and your future all rest on your shoulders. Many of us live under that invisible burden every day. We have carried it so long that we have almost forgotten what it feels like to set it down.

The culture around us rarely helps. We are told that success comes from working harder and pushing through, that security comes from control, and that happiness comes from achieving enough, earning enough, becoming enough. These messages are simply the common sense of a world that has forgotten it was made to depend on something greater than itself. So we strain, and we strive, and we come to church still bent under the weight of everything we are trying to hold together on our own.

And then Jesus speaks. He does not tell us to work harder or hand us another task. He simply says, "Come." That single word is one of the most radical invitations in Scripture. It assumes that we are weary and that the burden is real. It does not minimize what we are carrying. It simply offers us somewhere to bring it: to Jesus, the one who is gentle and humble in heart.

You were not designed to carry your life alone. Today, bring your exhaustion to the one who already knows about it.

Reflection Questions

1. What is the heaviest burden you are carrying right now, and have you brought it to Jesus in prayer?
2. In what ways does the culture around you tell you that rest is something you have to earn?
3. How does it feel to hear Jesus say "Come" to you, exactly as you are, without conditions?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I am more tired than I sometimes allow myself to admit. I carry worries about things I cannot control, regrets about things I cannot change, and fears about things that have not yet happened. I hear you saying "Come," and I choose today to take you up on that invitation. I bring my weariness to you. I bring my full self to you. Receive me, gentle Savior, and give me the rest you have promised. Amen.

Whose Yoke Are You Wearing?

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." -- Matthew 11:29-30

Devotional

A yoke is a working tool placed across the necks and shoulders of animals so they can share a load together. Nobody takes on a yoke just to stand in a field. A yoke is for labor, for movement, for pulling something forward. So when Jesus describes rest by telling us to take on a yoke, it sounds like a contradiction. But the contradiction disappears when we understand something essential: a yoke is never worn alone.

When Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you," he is not assigning us more work. He is inviting us into a shared journey. He is already in the yoke beside us, and when we are joined to him, the weight changes entirely. The heavier end of the burden belongs to him. We do not walk through life as solo performers trying to hold everything together. We walk yoked to a Savior who is gentle and humble in heart.

But here is the uncomfortable truth: nearly all of us are already yoked to something. Some are yoked to careers, defined by what they produce and achieve. Others are yoked to anxiety, financial pressures, guilt, or the approval of others. These yokes are real and they are heavy. And unlike the yoke of Christ, they do not lead anywhere that satisfies the deepest longing of the human soul.

The question is not whether you will wear a yoke. The question is whose yoke you will choose to wear today.

Reflection Questions

1. What yoke, other than Christ's, are you currently wearing? What has it cost you?
2. What would it look like practically to walk yoked to Jesus in your daily routine this week?
3. How does knowing that Jesus carries the heavier end change how you approach a current challenge?

Prayer

Jesus, I confess that I have yoked myself to things that cannot hold me. I have trusted in my own strength, my own plans, and my own sense of control, and I have worn myself down in the process. Today I ask you to help me release the yokes that are draining me. I want to walk with you. I want to learn from your gentleness and your humility. Thank you for carrying the weight I cannot carry. Lead me forward, side by side with you. Amen.

The Foolishness That Saves

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." -- 1 Corinthians 1:18

Devotional

The Apostle Paul had a word for the cross: foolishness. To the Greek mind, a crucified savior was absurd. To the Jewish mind, a man cursed by hanging on a tree could not be the promised Messiah. By every standard of earthly wisdom, the cross made no sense. A king does not die like a criminal. A god does not suffer. Power does not look like surrender. And yet that is precisely what God used to change everything.

We can trace a consistent thread through Scripture: God has a habit of working through what the world considers weak or insignificant. He chose a younger son over an elder, a shepherd boy to be a king, a virgin in a small town to bear the Savior of the world, and a cross to be the instrument of redemption. The wisdom of God has never looked quite like what we expected. It is a declaration that God's ways are not our ways, and God's thoughts are not our thoughts.

This matters for the way we read our own lives. When our circumstances feel foolish, when the path forward seems uncertain, when forgiveness or humility seems impractical, we are in very good company. We stand in a long line of people who discovered that what looks like a dead end is sometimes where God does his most extraordinary work. The cross is the permanent proof of that truth.

The wisdom of God will not always make sense to the world. That is all right. It does not have to.

Reflection Questions

1. When has following Jesus required you to do something that seemed foolish or countercultural to those around you?
2. Where in your life right now is God possibly working through something that looks weak or insufficient?
3. How does the cross reframe your understanding of what success and power actually look like?

Prayer

Lord God, thank you for the scandal of the cross. Thank you that you did not save us in a way that made sense to the world, but in a way that made your love unmistakably clear. Forgive me for the times I have been embarrassed by the gospel or tempted to soften it so it sounds more reasonable. Give me the courage to trust your wisdom over my own and remind me that what looked like defeat became the greatest victory the universe has ever known. Amen.

The One-Word Invitation

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." -- Matthew 11:28

Devotional

We return today to where we began because some invitations are worth hearing more than once. "Come." It may be the simplest word in the Gospel. It carries no prerequisites and lists no qualifications. It does not say come when you have it together, or after you have resolved your doubts, or once you've had a better week. It simply says, come. All of you. As you are. Right now.

The invitation of Jesus is not extended to people who have earned a seat at the table. It is extended to the weary and the burdened, which means it is extended to you. You can come with your accomplishments, certainly. But you can also come with your failures, your grief, your worst moments, and the things you have never told anyone. Jesus already knows, and he has already made room.

And week after week, this is what the church gets to be: a community of people who share one another's burdens, gather around the same table, and remember that none of us is on a solo journey. We are fed by the body and blood of Christ and reminded that the one who was and is and is to come is not a harsh taskmaster. He is gentle and humble in heart, and he is offering you exactly what you most need.

You do not have to figure everything out before you come. You do not have to be stronger, smarter, or more certain. There is a still, small voice, and it says one word: come. That is enough. That has always been enough. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Questions

1. What would change in your daily life if you genuinely believed that Jesus's invitation to come was meant personally for you, exactly as you are?
2. How can you be a part of a community that helps others hear and respond to this invitation?
3. As you close this five-day study, what is one thing you want to carry differently because of what you have reflected on this week?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for this week of reflection. Thank you that your invitation never expires and never gets taken back. I come to you now, with whatever I am carrying, trusting that you are exactly who you say you are: gentle, humble, and ready to give rest to my weary soul. Help me to walk this week yoked to you, attentive to your wisdom, and open to the surprising ways your grace shows up. And when I forget, remind me again of that one word. Come. In your holy name. Amen.