

Rod Thompson: Good morning, everyone, happy Sabbath. Whether you are here in the sanctuary with us, whether you're watching at home at--in the local area, across the nation, or around the world, we want to thank you for coming to the Granite Bay Hilltop Church "Sabbath School Study Hour." I'm Pastor Rod Thompson. I'm going to be leading that study today, and I thank you for tuning in with us. Before we get started we will have a special music, and I also want to point you to our free offer this morning. It is titled "Christ's Human Nature," and you can get that free offer by calling 866-788-3966 and ask for free offer number 703. You can also get that if you go to your phone and you text "SH017" to number 40544. Again, that is "Christ's Human Nature." That's our free offer for today. But now let's listen to our special music.

♪♪♪♪♪ Viola and Piano Instrumental

Rod: I want to invite you to open up your Bibles to John chapter 3, John chapter 3. I want to say a special hello to Bob and Nancy from Fremont. Thank you for joining us here this morning. They're usually watching online. Thank you for all of you that have joined us online as well. We've got a lot to talk about this morning, so let's get right to it. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Loving Father, Lord, we've opened up the Word of life because there we find You. And, Lord, we are seeking wisdom and skill and understanding; but more importantly, Lord, we are asking You to reveal to us what You would have us do, and we ask it all in Jesus's name, amen. I want to start by reading to you something from the book "Child Guidance" page 267. Listen to this. "When you find your work hard, when you complain of difficulties and trials; when you say that you have no strength to withstand temptation, that you cannot overcome impatience, and that the Christian life is uphill work, you can be sure that you are not bearing the yoke of Christ. You are bearing the yoke of another master."

I remember as a boy growing up in the Lutheran Church. And outwardly I was doing everything right, but inwardly I was far from God. And consequently at the age of 16 going to church three days a week with my mother, I said to her finally, "Why do we have to go to church three days a week? Isn't one enough?" You see, brothers and sisters, I just didn't understand at the time and I didn't have--I hadn't had that born-again experience that Jesus talks to Nicodemus about in John chapter 3. You've got your Bibles opened there. Look with me, John chapter 3. Starting in verse 1 the Bible says, "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God were with him.'" And I love the way Jesus just gets right to the point. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you that you must be born again.'"

When Adam and Eve sinned against God, they lost that Spirit nature. They no longer had the Spirit of God in them; and as a consequence to that, as their children are being born, they are born with only a human nature, a carnal nature. They do not have the Spirit of God, and therefore Jesus says you must be born again. When He is talking to Nicodemus, there He says you must be born again. You must be born a second time, and it's very interesting how Nicodemus responds to Him.

You know, many times Jesus was speaking to the people, He was speaking to them spiritually, but they were thinking literally. In John chapter 4 Jesus was speaking to the woman at the well, and He said to her, "If you knew who it was who was speaking to, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water." Remember that? And how did she respond to Him? She essentially said, "You don't

even have anything to draw water with. How are You going to give me water?" She was thinking physically, she was thinking literally, but Jesus was speaking spiritually. You remember in John chapter 2 that Jesus said that, "If you destroy this temple, in three days I will raise it up again." And you'll remember the Pharisees said to Him, "It's taken 46 years to build this temple. How are You going to redo it in three days?" They were thinking physically, they were thinking literally, but He was speaking spiritually. He was speaking of His body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. He was alluding to His resurrection.

And then you go to John chapter 6 and Jesus said something that really got people stirred up. He said, "You must eat My flesh and drink My blood." And the people were looking at that--they were listening to that and they were thinking literally, and you can imagine they were thinking to themselves, "This guy is cannibalistic." But He wasn't speaking literally, He was speaking spiritually. And then Jesus is talking to Nicodemus here in John chapter 3 and He says, "You must be born again." And, again, Nicodemus is thinking literally and he says, "How can a man enter into his mother's womb and be born a second time?"

Now, friends, it is so easy for us today, after the fact, to look back with hindsight, to look at John chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 4, chapter 6; to look at these things that Jesus said and look at them and understand that these are spiritual things. But I--you know, I wonder do we think of the people of Israel, "What is wrong with them? Why didn't they get it?" But, you know, I'm going to suggest to you that we have the same problem even today, that we sometimes take things literally as well. We are starting a brand new Sabbath study, new quarterly called "Rest in Christ." And today our topic is "Come to Me."

We're in lesson number 5 of 13, and that--those words, come to me--that title comes to us from something that Jesus said in Matthew chapter 11. I want you to turn there with me. Matthew chapter 11, and let's take a look at it. Matthew chapter 11. Now, if your Bible is like mine--you know, all the Bibles that we have today are broken up into the books of the Bible, the chapters, the verses. But there are some Bibles like mine--I love this little Bible for preaching because it has the verses along the left edge and I can find them quickly, but it also has titles over certain sections. Like, if you look at John chapter 11, verse 1, it's-- the title over it is "John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus." You can look at the next 19 verses, and that is where that story is. You go to verse 20 and it says, "Woe to the Impenitent Cities," and He talks about those cities. And then in verse 25 it has a title over it: "Jesus Gives True Rest."

Now, that's what we're studying this quarter, "Rest in Christ," and so Jesus giving true rest is something we want to take a look at, right? So look with me, verse 25. The Bible says, "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have given these things from the wise--kept these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and the one--or those whom the Son wills to reveal Him.'" And then He says those words. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And that's where we get the title of our message today: "Come to Me."

Brothers and sisters, isn't it comforting to know that our God is approachable? He says, "Come to Me." He invites us into a relationship. Aren't you glad that we don't have to jump through a bunch of hoops, we don't have to perform a bunch of ritualistic activities to come to God? And God is very particular. God says that He has a certain way that He would like us to come to Him, and I want you to notice it. So turn with me to 1 Timothy chapter 2, 1 Timothy chapter 2. And the apostle Paul is speaking to Timothy, he's speaking to us; and notice what it says starting in verse 1. Paul says, "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who

are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth. For there is," what's that next word? "There is one God and there is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ who gave Himself as a ransom for all."

Here we see that Paul is telling us that we have a mediator. But, brothers and sisters, mediators can be very helpful. Mediators are there in order to bring two parties together. They are there to help them to work out their differences, and it says there that Jesus Christ is our mediator. He is the one that can bring us to and connect us with God the Father. In John chapter 14, verse 6 Jesus said, "I am the truth, the way, and the life; and no one comes to the Father except through Me." It is very narrow. It is very particular. God says, "This is how you can come to Me. You must come through My Son Jesus Christ." In the Gospel of John Jesus said, "I am the door. I am the way in to the presence of the Father." And Jesus is desiring to restore us to a relationship with God so that we can have a living connection with Him. And in John 15, verse 5 Jesus says that, "Without Me you can do nothing." We need that mediator, Jesus Christ, to bring us to the Father. In Matthew 19, verse 26 then He says, "But with God all things are possible," amen?

In other words, if you come to Jesus, He will connect you with the Father. If you repent of your sins, surrender your life to Him, ask Him to come in and be your Lord and Savior, forgive you of your sins, He then writes His law in your mind and in your heart. And, brothers and sisters, if God writes His law in your mind and in your heart, are you going to want to keep it? Absolutely you will because He has put it there. He has put that desire in your heart, but more than that, He is also--the Holy Spirit comes, takes up residence on the inside of you, and now He begins to clean you up from the inside out, now He changes your heart, now He gives you desires.

Now He gives you the power to not only repent to be forgiven of your sins, but now He's going to give you the power to live a righteous life; and you do that by keeping the commandments of God. It's very unfortunate that there are many Christian people today that want to say the law of God has been done away with, but rather God is giving us the power to keep that law and not to do away with it and now you begin to exhibit fruit. There should be evidence of a changed life. Good works don't save us. We know that, don't we? But they are evidence of a transformation that has happened. James said, "Faith without works is dead." You show me your faith; I'll show you mine by what I do, amen? And so we must have that born-again experience. And when we do, we start exhibiting that fruit of the Spirit; and Galatians chapter 5, verse 22 tells us what that is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Now you have the Spirit of God working in you and through you to transform you in--more and more into the character of Christ. And here's the thing, friends. It is not you doing the work; it is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is not you trying harder to be a better person. I've talked to people, and I've been talking about spiritual things and I've had people say to me, "I just got to try harder, pastor." And my answer to them is, "You have missed the message." Because it's not about you trying harder, it's about you surrendering your life to Christ and allowing Him to do in you what you can't do in yourself. And I want you to notice there that He says, "Come to Me."

Praise God He has already invited us, amen? We don't have to seek for Him, we don't have to get cleaned up, we don't have to change, but He accepts us just as we are. But He loves you too much to leave you the way that you are. He's going to begin to clean you up. And He says, "Come to Me." But I want you to notice that that is not a physical coming that He is inviting us to. We can't go up into heaven and go to the city of God and knock on the gates and say, "Here I am. Jesus told me to come to Him, and I'm here. Let me in." We can't do that, can we? But rather He is inviting us to come to Him spiritually. He says essentially, "Come to Me in the manner prescribed by God." And that's coming to Him spiritually.

God is spirit, and we must worship in spirit and in truth. John chapter 14, verse 1 Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go there to prepare a place for you. And if I go there, I will come again. I will receive you unto Myself, that where I am there you may be also."

There will come a day where we will be physically with Jesus, but for now He is inviting us to come to Him in a spiritual sense. Matthew chapter 11, verse 28 Jesus said, "Come to Me." And then He adds to it, "All you who are heavy laden." Brothers and sisters, are you heavy laden? Are you weighed down with the burdens of the things of this life? There are a lot of burdens in this life, aren't there? In Genesis chapter 3, verse 19 when Adam and Eve sinned, God said to Adam, He said to him, "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread." In other words, "It's going to be harder for you. Life is going to be difficult. Where there used to be richness and vibrancy in the soil, now there is going to come weeds and burrs and troubles, thistles that are going to choke it out." And so it is natural for us when Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who are heavy laden," to think of that in a literal sense, that we are heavy laden; that we have heavy loads, heartaches, trouble on every side. But I'm going to suggest to you that it's more than that. He's talking about those who have more than just physical burdens, but He's talking about those who have been heavy-laden.

Now, let me show this to you. Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 23, Matthew chapter 23. And I want you to notice what Jesus is saying here to the Pharisees. Matthew chapter 23, look with me in verse 13. Jesus says, "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for you devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation." Verse 15, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." Go down to verse 23. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, and mercy, and faith. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisees, first cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, that the outside of them may be clean also."

And He continues on with more woes. But Jesus is simply saying to the Pharisees, "You are putting all of these burdens on the people. You weigh them down with your rules and your legalities, and you're making it impossible for people to come to God. And when they do try to come to God, then you pull them away from the truth. You pull them back into your forms and your rituals. You look good on the outside, but you are corrupt on the inside. You're far from God." And so Jesus is saying to us, "Come to Me, all of you who are trying to earn your salvation, all of you who are weighted down with trying to do good in your own power. Come to Me, you who are heavy laden," and then He adds to it, "and I will give you rest." Now, here again we have the opportunity to look at what He's saying and think of this in a physical sense, that He's offering us physical rest. And certainly as Seventh-day Adventists we understand that at the creation of the world even before there was sin God knew that we were going to need one day a week for physical rest, and the Bible does talk about physical rest.

If you go to Deuteronomy chapter 12, verse 10 it says, "But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God has given you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about." Here we see that God is offering a physical rest. There's another verse like it in 1 Kings chapter 5, verse 4 that says, "But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side. There is neither adversary nor evil occurrence." So, again, we see there is this element of a physical rest, but I'm going to suggest to you that God is offering us more than physical rest. He's offering us spiritual rest. Exodus

chapter 33, verse 14 says, "And He said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'" Here we see that God is offering us a spiritual rest. And, friends, when you are in the presence of God, it is rest for your soul, amen? Jeremiah chapter 6, verse 16 says this: "Thus says the Lord, 'Stand in the ways and see and ask for the old paths where the good way is and walk in it, then you will find rest for your soul.'"

So as we are walking in Christ, as we are living a godly life, He will give us rest. Now, if we are going to understand what Jesus is saying here in Matthew chapter 11, verse 28 where He says, "Come to Me, all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," we really need to put it in the proper context, and in order to do that we've got to go back and see what He was talking about before that. So turn with me back to Matthew chapter 9, Matthew chapter 9, and notice what the Bible says starting in verse 9. Matthew 9, verse 9, "As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and He said to him, 'Follow Me.' So he arose and followed Him." Here we see that--this is the beginning of Jesus's ministry, and He is seeking and searching out and inviting people to be His disciples. And He invites Matthew. Then verse 10 says, "Now it happened as Jesus sat at the table in the house that behold many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'"

Now here we see Matthew is invited to become a disciple of Christ. He invites Jesus to his house for lunch or dinner, and then he also invites others. Brothers and sisters, when you come to Christ, you should not be able to help yourself, but invite others to come to Jesus, amen? And so he invites them. And then the Pharisees see this and they say to each other--or say to the disciples, "Why is your master hanging out with the wrong kind of people." Right? He's hanging out with sinners. You know, there's a very similar story in Luke chapter 7. Jesus once again is at another Pharisee's house and He's eating, and there is a woman who comes in who's a prostitute and she is weeping. She is washing His feet with her tears; wiping His feet, drying it with her hair, and putting perfume on Him. And the Pharisee whose house this was, he's thinking to himself, "If this man were truly a prophet, He would know what kind of woman that is."

And so they're looking at Him in a physical sense and they're thinking that He is hanging out with the wrong kind of people, and Jesus rebukes those Pharisees. He essentially ask them the question, "Who loves more; one who's forgiven much, or one who's forgiven little?" And, of course, they answer correctly. They say the one who has been forgiven much. And I can imagine in my mind Jesus sitting there going, "Hey, this is it, this is what it looks like. This is a woman who has been forgiven much." But Jesus goes on from there in chapter 11, verse 20 through 24 and He is now rebuking the cities that He has been through and done many miracles and the people there have not believed in Him and that He is the Messiah. And so He's rebuking him--rebuking the people, He's rebuking the cities; and you can imagine that tensions are sort of running high. And then Jesus is going to make His point, and He--and the lesson hits its crescendo and He says in chapter 11, verse 27, "All things have been given unto Me." And you can imagine at that point the Pharisees in turmoil within themselves thinking, "Who does this guy think He is that all things have been given Him?"

And then Jesus does something that only Jesus can do. Jesus not only ramps that up and gets them really going, but now He's going to step into the middle of it; and now He says to the people that are there, in thinking about all of these people that haven't believed, that have been weighed down by the teachings of the Pharisees. And Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Brothers and sisters, we understand, don't we, that Jesus's ability to give us rest is based on His divinity and His oneness with the Father. His rest for us is based not on our righteousness, but on His own. And He offers spiritual rest. Stop trying to get yourself to heaven through your rituals, your ceremonies, and through the traditions of the church. He is essentially saying to us, "Believe in Me and I

will get you there. I will do the heavy lifting. If you surrender your heart to Me, I will clean you up from the inside out. I will give you the power to overcome sin." And Jesus doesn't stop there, though.

Look with me Matthew 11, verse 28 again. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But then He continues on, verse 29, "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; for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." I want you to notice there in verse 28 Jesus says, "Come to Me." Notice He doesn't say, "I suggest that you come to Me." But rather it is a command. "Come to Me," He says. It's an imperative. It is important. It is essential. It is urgent. It's vital. It's crucial. It's critical. We must come to Him. In other words, Jesus is saying coming to Him is a precondition to finding rest. Did you catch that? And then He adds two more essentials. He not only says, "Come to Me," but then He says, "Take My yoke upon you." And then He says, "And learn from Me."

Did you catch that? Three things that are essential. And again, we can look at taking His yoke upon us and we can look at that in a physical sense. And there are people that do and they think, "Oh, man, Jesus is calling us to a life of bondage." Notice in Galatians chapter 5, verse 1 the apostle Paul says to the Galatians, he's saying to us, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again in a yoke of bondage." And there are people that look at that verse and they say Jesus came to fulfill the law, and to fulfill the law means that He has done away with the law. And therefore if you try to keep the law, you're putting yourself under bondage.

But, brothers and sisters, that is a slaughtering of the text. That is not what Jesus is saying there. He's not speaking physically. He's speaking spiritually here, and He is essentially saying to us, "I want you to come alongside of Me and unite yourself in My purposes." Now the spiritual yoke, if we look at it in a spiritual sense, is a tool that God can use. If we think about the physical, we think about in days of old where they had an ox and they put a yoke between two of them, and the idea was that two of them could do twice as much as one by itself. And if we think of that in a spiritual sense, Jesus is saying, "Come alongside of Me, unite yourself in purpose with Me, and I will do the heavy lifting. I will do the work for you, in you, through you that you cannot do yourselves." And now instead of carrying that burden of trying to get to heaven, that burden of overcoming sin in our own power, now with Christ in you now it's easier. And so He says, "You must come to Me." And then He says, "Take My yoke upon you." And then He says, "Learn from Me." And, brothers and sisters, when we spend time with Jesus, when we study the Word of God and we start doing the things that Jesus did through the power of God, now we become His disciples, now we become His students.

Now, I don't want to get ahead of myself and I don't have a lot of time left, but we are heading to a place--and I think it's going to be in lesson number 11 where we're going to look at this a lot deeper, but I just want to lay a foundation today. So turn with me in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 3. Hebrews--we're going to look at Hebrews 3 and 4, and quickly I'm going to try and lay the foundation for that.

You'll remember that God was going to bring the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and you'll remember that God made essentially two promises to them. "I'm going to give you a land flowing with milk and honey, and I'm going to give you rest." But you'll remember what happened. The children of Israel came out of Egypt. God took them to the borders of Canaan, the Promised Land, and Moses sent 12 spies into the land. But you'll remember that ten of them came back with an evil report and they basically said, "There are giants in the land, are fortified cities. They're bigger than we are. We're like grasshoppers in their sight. They--if we go up against them, they are going to destroy us, they're going to kill us, they're going to kill our children." Because they were looking to do it in their own power.

They had forgotten that God had promised them that He would drive out their enemies before them. And there were only two spies that gave a faithful report: Joshua and Caleb. And notice what it says in

Hebrews chapter 3 starting in verse 16. "For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that He would not--they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Now, if we put our spiritual glasses on and we look at this, we see, we know, don't we, that the children of Israel that came out of Egyptian bondage were not able to enter into the Promised Land. They were not able to get in there physically and they were not able to have physical rest, and we can see that from that passage there. But I want you to notice that 40 years later that their children did go into the Promised Land, didn't they? And God did give them physical rest. So what we see here is that that promise of God was not just for that generation that came out of Egypt, but it was for all successive generations as well--as well. It should be evident to us that entrance into the literal Israel or Canaan is only one aspect of the promise that God had made. He's promised us more than an earthly Canaan. He's promised us a heavenly Canaan. He's offered us more than physical rest. He's offering us spiritual rest. Because here's the thing. God desired that once He had the children of Israel established in the Promised Land, He purposed to qualify them as a nation to be His chosen messengers of salvation to the world; and yet centuries later in the time of David, they had still not entered into that aspect of rest that God had promised, not a spiritual rest. In fact, they never entered into it.

Look with me in Hebrews chapter 4 and I'll show that to you. Hebrews chapter 4, look with me, starting in verse 6. "Since therefore it remains that some must enter it--" What is the it there? That is that promised spiritual rest, right? Let me say it again. "Since therefore it remains that some must enter into that spiritual rest, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter in because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, 'Today,' after such a long time, as it has been said: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.' For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest," that's God's rest, "has himself also ceased from his works as God did Himself."

Here we see that even though Joshua later--40 years later did bring the children of Israel into the Promised Land and he did give them physical rest, that wasn't God's rest. That wasn't the rest that God desired, and they were not able to enter into that rest because of disobedience. But, brothers and sisters, today you and I can enter into that rest, amen? We can enter into God's rest as we surrender our heart to Him, as we allow Him to do those things in us that we can't do in ourselves.

And that's why as a 16-year-old boy going to church three days a week with my mother I said to her, "Why do we have to go three days, isn't one enough?" Because I was trying to do it in my own power. To me it was work. It was a burden, right? But years later when I gave my heart to the Lord, I've had that born-again experience, now I want to be in church three days a week, now it's not a burden to me, now I want to go to prayer meeting every Wednesday night, now I want to go to Sabbath school. I want to be in the worship service. I want to be involved in the activities of the church because God is doing the work, and for me it's not a burden. It's a joy. It's a peace. It's what God wants for us, to enter into that spiritual rest that He has offered to us.

So I want to finish with where we started a little while ago. Listen to these words in "Child Guidance" page 267. "When you find your work hard, when you complain of difficulties and trials; when you say that you have no strength to withstand temptation, that you cannot overcome impatience, and that the Christian life is uphill work, you can be sure that you are not bearing the yoke of Christ. You're bearing the yoke of another master." You're trying to do it in your own power. And so Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who are heavy laden. All you who are weighed down with trying to do it in your own power, you

can't do it. But come to Me and surrender your life to Me. Allow Me to do those things in you that you can't do and I will give you rest." And now the Christian life rather than being a burden, rather than it being about a bunch of rules, now it's about a relationship, now it's a joy. He promises, "I'm not only going to give you life, I'm going to give you an abundant life. I'm going to take away all those things that ensnare you, all of those things that pull you away, and I am going to give you rest."

Brothers and sisters, do you want that kind of rest; to be able to rest in Jesus, to have joy and peace and thanksgiving? Amen, well, I want to close with reminding you of our free offer today. It is "Christ's Human Nature." This little book is offered to you free if you dial 866-788-3966. That's 1-866-Study-More, and ask for offer number 703. If you're outside of North America, you can go to study.aftv.org or you can use your cell phone and you can text the code "SH," Sabbath Hour or Study Hour, "017" to the number 40544. And that, again, is "Christ's Human Nature."

Do you want to have that kind of rest? Do you want to have that kind of peace and joy and enter into God's rest? If you do, I want you to pray with me now. Oh, loving Father, such a joy and a privilege to be the children of God. But, Lord, in our carnal nature we often have the tendency to try and get to heaven our own way; but You are inviting us to come to You, You're inviting us to take Your yoke which is easy and light, You're inviting us to learn from You and to do things Your way. Lord, everyone who arrives in heaven is going to get there with their freewill still intact. We freely surrender ourselves to You and ask You to do those things in us that we cannot do in ourselves. Thank You for beginning a good work in each of us. Lord, we pray You'd bring it to completion. And we ask it in Jesus's name. Amen.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want, and most important, to share it with others.

Male: I grew up in a church-going family. I mean, we were at every meeting. I sang in four of the choirs there, I directed three. Very involved, very active. It almost seemed like busy work sometimes, you know? I went to Sunday school, I knew about God, I knew about Jesus. But I didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. My senior year in high school I got the news that my father had been murdered. Now, I played it off well. No one really saw that I was struggling with it. It just really felt like there was a hole that needed to be filled and I tried to fill it with drugs, with alcohol, with partying. After college, I just stopped going to church altogether.

One day, on a Sunday, because I didn't feel like going to church with my mom, I thought, you know, "I should get a little bit of Word." She had the satellite system hooked up and I'm flipping through channels. And then the logo pops across, "Amazing Facts Presents." I've listened to a lot of different ministers but this was the first time that he's actually saying something where I had to grab my Bible and actually pick it up and I've never heard this before. Let me look through and find this. I went through all the Storacles, I went through all the study guides and I just couldn't get enough. And then the Sabbath came up and he's going through the appeal and I'm just going, "Lord, I hear You. I have to go to church." So I show up. It was funny, I didn't feel like I was going to be judged, anything judgmental, anything. And I walked in the door, and I just felt at home. But there's still a problem. I'm still partying. I was still going out to the bars. At this time, I was selling cocaine to pay my rent.

Sixteen days later, I find myself in a life or death situation. I had just come back from a liquor store and I grabbed a bottle of vodka. And there I am, high off cocaine, with my Bible in hand, trying to do a Bible study. And I heard an audible voice, "Just look at yourself." And I did, and I was, like, "What am I doing?"

And I got on my knees and I said, "Lord, if You do not take this away from me now, I'm going to kill myself." I was going to continue this lifestyle and I was going to end up overdosing, having a heart attack, whatever it was. "You have to take this away, all of it." And that day, He lift it all up and away from me. It was all gone. When God does something in your life, He does it complete.
Announcer: "Amazing Facts" change lives.

Male: I'd have to say that I had a wonderful childhood growing up. I went to a private school up until the seventh grade, till junior high. I believe it was at that point in junior high that my life began to change. Going from a Christian education into a public school was a big difference. There was a lot of secular influence, peer pressure. And for me it was the music. I started listening to heavy metal music. Every concert that would come to town, I was there. That had a profound effect on me. I started using marijuana, probably at the age of 14. I started drinking, using a lot of cocaine, and that led to methamphetamine, and that completely changed my life. I dropped out of high school my sophomore year and went to work. I would get off of work, and we'd go into the bar until two o'clock in the morning. I'd get back up at five and I'd go back through it again six, seven days a week.

At the age of 20, I lost my dad to a heart attack. I didn't know how to handle the loss, so I tried to mask my pain with alcohol and drugs. I got three DUI's in one year. I was arrested, and they gave me a year in the county jail. And the moment I got out, I went back to doing the same thing, hanging with the same people, the same crowd. I was involved in a hit-and-run motorcycle accident, and I was charged with a felony DUI. Even though at the time of the accident, I was not under the influence, I still had methamphetamine in my system.

At my sentencing day, I left the courtroom, and I didn't come back, and that left me with a felony warrant. And I'd fallen asleep at a park, and I woke up to a park ranger knocking on my window. I knew I was wanted, and I knew that I was not going to just turn myself in. I turned to him and I'd made the comment, "Not today," and I took off. I led five different agencies on about a 35-minute chase, and I realized at that point that I wasn't going to get away and that this was going to end up either me killing somebody or myself. And so, I made a decision to pull over. At that point, everything that I had, I lost.

I was sentenced to two years in state prison and it was there that God got a hold of me and it was through Amazing Facts Ministries. I remember listening on my radio Pastor Doug Batchelor. I wanted to get to know the Bible. I wanted to know God. And so, my Aunt Marilyn sent me the Amazing Fact study guides, and it was there that my relationship with Christ began. I had called home and I knew my mother wasn't doing well, but I didn't realize that she had cancer. She had about a 30% chance of making it through her surgery. She had told the doctors that she was not going to have chemo, and she was not going to have radiation, that if her God was going to save her, then He would save her.

I remember hanging up the phone to what I thought was my last conversation with my mom. I turned around, I got down on my knees, and I prayed to God. I said, "God, if you're there, please save my mother, and wherever You lead me in life, whatever You want me to do, I am Yours." And I had a feeling of such peace that I knew that my mother was going to be okay and that my life was going to change. There are no words that I can adequately express to Amazing Facts and to Pastor Doug to say thank you. To all those people who support the ministry, I am a product of your support. My life has changed because of this ministry, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.