

January 24, 2010/Matthew 11:25-30 (ESV¹)

Mat 11:25 At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children;

as the "then" in verse 20, the "at that time" here tells us that this is Jesus' response to what is going on, His rejection by the Jews, especially the Jewish religious leadership, the ones who consider themselves "wise and understanding" ... if these had lived up to their reputations and their own thinking about themselves, they would have understood "these things," namely the truth about who He is and what He is doing ... but the Father has purposely hidden these things from them ...

Isa 29:14 therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."

spiritual understanding does not depend upon human capability or status ... it is the gift of God ... it is His sovereign work ... and He chooses to bestow it on the humble ... the Father reveals the truth about Jesus to those who do not think themselves wise or deserving ... Jesus is not making some romantic mushy statement about the natural goodness/innocence of kids ... nor is He commending purposeful stupidity and indolence ... He is rather saying that it is the Father's sovereign choice to grant salvation to the spiritually humble ... Ryle: "One thing, at all events, stands out in Scripture, as a great practical truth to be held in everlasting remembrance: those from whom the Gospel is hidden are generally 'the wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight;' those to whom the Gospel is revealed are generally humble, simple-minded, and willing to learn." ...

is that really so hard to fathom? ... God is completely out of our class, our Maker and Sustainer, so far beyond us in every dimension that our deluded little notions of our own grandeur are silly on the face of them ... if a person insists on beginning from those silly notions, ought we be surprised that the person fails to find the truth? ... as Pastor Gary has recently preached, it is the fear of the LORD that is the beginning of wisdom, and stubborn human arrogance is the very antithesis of that ...

the parallel passage in Luke says

Luk 10:21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

Jesus rejoiced in this ... it is good, it is fitting, it is right, that God opposed the proud and arrogant and shows mercy to the humble ... how could He abide rebellion in His presence? ... it brought Jesus joy and should bring His people joy that God graciously chooses to give salvation to the humble ...

Mat 11:26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

Jesus now makes a sweeping breathtaking claim to divinity and oneness with the Father ...

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Mat 11:27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

there are 4 stunning claims here:

- 1) at the express will of His Father, He, Jesus, is in command of the Universe,
 - 2) the only One who fully knows Jesus is the Father,
 - 3) the only One who fully knows the Father is Jesus, and
 - 4) the only way that an ordinary person will know the Father is through the work of Jesus
- ... those are just chocked full of stuff that is central to the way things are and absolutely contrary to the thinking of most humans ...

all things have been handed over to me by my Father ... it's not "the" Father in this instance, it's "my" Father ... in this matter Jesus is speaking in his unique role as the second person of the Trinity, not as one of us ... and He says something that is either true or insane ... by the will of His Father, He's in command of ALL THINGS ... He's here in full harmony with the Father, with the full authority of the Father, to act on behalf of the Father ... the C.S. Lewis possibilities of liar, lunatic, or Lord come in focus here ... these are the only ones available to describe One who says this ...

no one "knows" ... the Greek means to know exactly, completely, through and through ... it indicates intimate relationship ... the exclusive communion of the Father and the Son is the essence of their relationship ... and there is none other who has this kind of relationship with the Father ... on both sides of this, there is the mystery of God and His gracious revelation ... those there and people today think that they have Jesus figured out ... our silly moderns think they can get to "the real" Jesus by making Him one like us ... even ones of good will have trouble holding simultaneously His great divinity and humanity ... who really knows who Jesus is? ... only the Father, but Jesus has just said that the Father has graciously chosen to reveal the truth about Him to the humble of heart ... on the other side of it, Jesus plainly claims that on He truly knows the Father ... again, this is either completely true or outrageous ... and if it is true, then you and I are in a totally different class as regards our knowledge of the Father ... EXCEPT, Jesus says, by the purposeful revelation of the Son! ... how is it that a mere mortal can come to God, have any true relationship with or know in any real sense the One true and living God? ... ONLY by the mediation of the Son! ... not by good works, not by meditation, not by appeal to any made up religious mumbo-jumbo ... ONLY by the gracious work of Jesus to reveal Him ...

together, these 3 verses say plainly that salvation and knowledge of God is only for the humble of heart, at the pleasure and revelation of the Father and Son, who are perfectly one in purpose and intimate relationship ... this is the Christian Gospel ... this is the absolutely exclusive claim of Jesus ... this is what makes Christ both so loved and so despised in this world ... the humble of heart to whom He's been revealed and to whom he reveals the Father rejoice in Him and His salvation ... those stiff of neck and full of pride hate the real presentation of who He says He is ... there really is no middle ground ...

this One who says He is the only One who first hand knows the Father now issues an invitation ... Ryle: "The last three verses of this chapter ... are indeed most precious. They meet the trembling sinner who asks, 'Will Christ reveal His Father's love to such an one as me?' with the most gracious encouragement." ...

Mat 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Come! ... who is it that Jesus invites? ... it's not ones who feel themselves up to the job of approaching God in their own righteousness and worthiness, but rather ALL those who are worn down with the burden of sin and sorrow that comes to us as children of Adam ... it refers to ALL those who are weary from having carried a heavy load ... Calvin phrases it as " ... those who are overwhelmed by their sins, who are filled with alarm at the wrath of God, and are ready to sink under so weighty a burden ... let our miseries drive us to seek Christ ..." ... if we really don't see how undone we are in our sin, there is really no humility in us ... but if ANYONE will come to Him in misery of sin, He promises rest of conscience, rest of heart ... real rest, built on pardon of sin and peace with God ... He promises to make things right ... it is relief ... not an opportunity to kick back and take it easy, but rather the mercy that we so desperately need ... in fact

Mat 11:29 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.

the Jews spoke of obedience to the Law as taking on the yoke of the Law ... yokes worn by human beings are fashioned to make the carrying of a load easier than without the yoke ... Jesus invites us to come and take His yoke and learn "from" or learn "about" Him ... Jesus is gentle and meek, and in learning to imitate Him, to come humbly to the Father, there is rest from the impossible misery of trying to present ourselves to God in our own merits ...

Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

the yoke is not one of obedience to external commandments, but rather one of grateful loyalty to a gentle savior ... Jesus' yoke is not "easy" because it is not demanding, but because it is an invitation to discipleship/relationship with Him who is gentle and lowly of heart ... it is a yoke of love, not a yoke of duty ... Ryle: "No doubt there is a cross to be carried, if we follow Christ; no doubt there are trials to be endured, and battles to be fought: but the comforts of the Gospel far outweigh the cross." ... Green: "It is the response of the liberated, not the duty of the obligated." ...