

The Yoke's on You Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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."

Sometimes we confuse being busy with working for God. We forget that not only did Jesus say go and preach, he also said come and rest. Once a great revival was taking place after Jesus had sent out the twelve disciples. People were repenting, demons were driven out, and sick people were anointed with oil and were healed. People were coming from all over the place and Jesus and the disciples did not even take time to eat. It's interesting that Jesus did not extend the revival for two weeks, instead He told the disciples, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

Too many people pay a heavy price with their families, their health, and their well being in search of some goal. When they obtain it, they realize the price is too high. I once had a man tell me, that when his marriage started to interfere with his devotion to his job, he knew he needed to get out of the marriage.

How do we become so sick, that things, and power, and money mean more to us than those who deserve our love and affection?

Jesus had more energy than we could dream of having, yet Jesus was smart enough to realize that He needed to take some time to rest. He would often go to the hills alone to meet God and be refreshed. His rest didn't always come from lying in a bed. That's only part of what we need. His rest came from and a regular fresh encounter God. Jesus wants us to know that He has rest stops planned for our lives.

Jesus said, "Come to Me". If we desire rest, we can't come to the first thing that looks like a solution. The destination of our movement has to be toward Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us to fix our eyes upon Jesus and put away any sin and anything else that would cause us to look somewhere else. Jesus is the only true place for us to find rest, because everything else is going to pass away.

Jesus goes on to qualify who is eligible to come to him. He says, "Come to me all who are

weary and burdened". Jesus's invitation is only extended to those who realize that they need help. Have you ever tried to help a little child get dressed only to be told by the child, "Stop! Let me do it by myself."

You go ahead and let the child do it. 5 minutes later you see shoes on the wrong feet, buttons uneven, tag showing, and hair that looks wild. That's what we look like to God without Jesus--a mess.

Jesus did not come to help people who could do it all themselves. Notice that Jesus does not put a limit on what kind of burdens we need to have, or how large the burden has to be. All that's needed is a recognition of burden, a heartache, or a pain.

They come in all forms. Husband or wives that won't do right. Children in trouble with school or the law. Burdens of loneliness. Burdens of taking care of sick relatives. Burdens for the church. Burdens of disappointment, of rejection, of death, of addictions. Burdens of not knowing which way to turn next.

Life can be very hard and difficult. But these are the very burdens that Jesus wants us to bring to Him, so that He can share the load and give us strength to overcome. Jesus is always on the lookout for hurting people. People who are bold enough to admit—"Lord I need some help. I cannot carry these problems alone."

Jesus goes on to say, "I will give." Notice that Jesus did not say, I might, or I'll probably, or I'll think about it. No, Jesus said, "I will give you rest." He could not have been any more clear. Jesus said "I will give you rest". Jesus is offering refreshment of soul, peace for the mind and strength for the body. People are looking everywhere for that thing that's going to give them genuine satisfaction that lasts. It's not found in being young again, it's not found in having and hoarding money, it's not found in being popular, and it's certainly not found in any sin that the devil sends our way. The prophet Isaiah prophesied, "God will keep in perfect peace, those whose mind are stayed on Him."

God asks us, "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and why do you work so hard for that which does not satisfy." We think, "If I just got that car, that dress, that house, that gadget, that ring, that boyfriend, that girlfriend, that raise, then I'll really be happy." You get it and you discover, you're still the same old you, but now it's

something else that you have just got to have.

Our society feeds on our lust for more, and the advertisers tell us this is what we must have. Everything is new and improved. Does that mean last year's product was really lousy and worthless? It is all a delusion. Ask a poor person what he wants, and he may say , a million dollars. Ask most millionaires what they want, and they'll probably say a few more million. God tells us in Isaiah, "You who are thirsty, come and drink, you who have no money, come by milk and wine without cost and without money."

We don't need money to receive God's peace and rest. We couldn't buy it if we had the money, because God will only give it away. God delights in doing good for His people. God didn't put Adam and Eve in a desert and say, if you don't make me mad, I'll give you something better. No He put them in a garden where they had everything they needed and then some, as a gift. God can give us rest wherever we are.

Jesus goes on to say, "Take my yoke." Everybody has some kind of a yoke. A yoke is what the ox was hooked up to for service in the field and to help guide the animal. For us our yokes are those things which determine where we choose to serve and how much of a load we're willing to carry. Our yoke is determined either by Christ or by ourselves. If we are our masters, then be sure to know that Satan is going to be our guide.

Jesus does not trust us to be in charge of our lives. He knows that we are going to put in things that will lead to our own destruction regardless of how well intentioned we may be. Sometimes, we do not want to voluntarily take the yoke of Jesus. We would prefer for him to grab us, tie us down, and force it around us to make us do his will.

Jesus is not going to force his yoke on us. He's not going to make us do right. He's not going to force us to take His rest. The only thing that will put on Jesus's yoke is love for Him, the only thing that will keep it on is love for Him, and the only way to be glad it's on is to have love for Him. Jesus said it like this, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments, if you don't you won't." Jesus's yoke is there for us to take. Whether we will take it and let Him call the shots is completely left up to us.

Jesus says, "Take my yoke and learn from me." How many of us can say we make the most of our opportunities to learn from Christ? Our tragedy

is that we don't make learning the word of God a high priority in our lives.

One of the ways to learn from Jesus is to take His yoke through surrendering our desires for ourselves to the will of God. How is it that we fight the devil? We don't do it by calling him names and rebuking Him in the name of Jesus. James says the only way to fight the devil successfully is by submitting to the will of God. We constantly ask, "Lord, how does Jesus wants me to respond in this situation."

Jesus goes on to say, "For I am gentle and lowly in heart." Our God is not like Pharaoh, trying to squeeze every drop of blood out of us. God does not carry a whip saying "shape up or ship out." When we give Jesus the chance, we quickly discover that nobody loves us like Jesus does. Jesus will be gentle with us as He lightens our burdens. Jesus listens to us, Jesus encourages us, and Jesus shares our sorrows.

Jesus says, "for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light". A lot of people don't believe these words of Jesus. "No way is being a Christian easy. Look at all the things I'm giving up. There are so many rules to follow." People who talk like this are under the delusion that once you die that's it. To understand the Christian message, you must view life from the perspective of eternity. Jesus asks us to wear his yoke on earth for 13, 30, 70 or 120 years at the most. What happens in that very short time determines where and how we will spend eternity.

How many of us would be willing to work full time for \$50 a week for 3 years? If I said at the end of the 3 year period, you will receive a 3 million dollar bonus for your faithfulness, how many of you would be willing to do it?

There final view of Jesus's burden and his yoke is that it is light and easy. Troubles are going to come in this world whether we live in a mansion or in a card board box underneath a bridge. Life is going to have its problems. Hard times will come and are coming. It is better to have Jesus to walk with us, that for us to try to walk it alone. If you know Jesus as Lord and Savior, you can say with confidence, "The Lord is my Shepherd, yeah though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me." The Lord wants to be your Shepherd this morning. Are you willing to come to Him to find His rest?

Jesus says: "I invite you to call upon me and my strong hands to carry every burden of your life.

Your hands alone cannot carry your burdens, but mine can and mine do. These hands – though they are the rough hands of a simple carpenter – will always be hands that invite. They are hands that say forever, “Bring it to me. “Come to me. I will give you rest.”

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July 9, 2017
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