

Matthew 11:25-30

### The Yoke That Gives You Rest

I hope your Fourth of July weekend was a time to rest and unload many burdens. This morning on this Christian Sabbath Day is certainly a time to turn to the LORD and give Him our burdens. Then we hear Jesus inviting us to take His yoke. Just what I need is to trade my burdens for a yoke. This morning we will explore Jesus' invitation and the promises attached to this invitation.

The first invitation: "Come to Me all who labor and are carrying heavy burdens."

What burdens are you carrying? Whatever it is, Jesus wants it. He is ready to take it upon Himself for you and give peace and rest. The rest is the promise.

What are your burdens? I share you some of mine. Perhaps you might relate. For me I want to be the perfect pastor. OK, I am not perfect. I want to be a very good pastor. To preach a sermon that hits a home run every week that speaks to your heart and strengthens your faith. If I walk into a crisis in your life I to have the right word to speak that will make everything spiritually for you. I Want teach God's Word in way that makes it come alive for you. I want to fix your problems...and I cannot! I fall short. I struggle to manage time well and I am not the best pastor.

Jesus says, "You have put an awfully big burden upon yourself. I've got this. It is my Word. I will work with you through it and give you the Holy Spirit and grace to work through it. Remember this, they are my children, I know their struggles and their troubles and their challenges. Let me carry the burden for you. I can and will. I am God. You are not. Rest....

I want to be the best spouse and dad. I want to provide my family everything they need. I want to keep them all from harm and danger and evil that invades our world. If they have a problem, I want to fix it for them. I want to perfectly demonstrate the love of the Heavenly Father...but I fail. I fall short. I grow afraid. Other things get in the way.

Jesus says, "You have put an awfully heavy burden upon yourself. I got this one too. Remember that members of your family are my children too. I know their troubles. I know their struggles. I love them too, better than you can love them. I am God. You are not. Rest.

Yes, I hear you Jesus. But I am reminded how much I fail at these vocations. I am reminded how much I fail as a Christian. Just like St. Paul, a writer of much of the inspired Word of God in the New Testament, I struggle to do the right thing. I end up doing the things I should not be doing. I know I should be a certain way, but instead I end up being the opposite. When I end up doing the right thing, I find my motives are not right. When I do the right thing and experience success my pride ruins it. Like Paul, I do not understand what is going on here.

Then Jesus says, "I got this one too! Especially this one. I want the burdens of your sins. I want all of them. I already have taken all of them on the cross for you. I have taken all your failures, all your short comings, all your impure motives, all your thoughts, all your inabilities. I forgive you. You are baptized. You are my child. I am God. Rest.

Does some of this ring true for you? There is certainly no shortage of burdens. While we all have our various callings, we always want to do our best. But when our lives and our roles become stressful and burdensome and painful, remember that is not why God give them to us. When you feel I got this alone, and I can fix all the problems, I can take over, it is up to me...I am not God.

Did you pick up Jesus' tone? He does not scold. He does not wag His divine finger at us and tells us to shape up and work harder and do better. That would lay even a greater burden on every one of us. It could crush us. Instead Jesus shows a better way.

Jesus points to himself. "Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Think of the times that you have tried carrying heavy packages and someone takes them and carries them for you. How good is That! Jesus says I got this. I am God. Rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest from my souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus wants to trade burdens with you. He wants to take your heavy burdens, your crushing burdens, including your guilt and give you His yoke, which lighter and easy and well fitting. Just what we all need. Just what I need. Just the kind of God we all need. How good is that?

The second invitation: Take My Yoke upon you. The yoke of try to please and be perfect is too much for you. It is too much for me. Jesus grew up in a carpenter's house and help Joseph his earthly father to the shop. I am sure Jesus was familiar with yokes and how to make them. For oxen, 'one size fits all' yokes do not work. Each yoke is made to fit each individual animal. Jesus the divine carpenter who knows your troubles and your burden designs and makes a well-fitting yoke for each of you. Jesus' yoke is easy. Jesus does much of the pulling. It is more pleasant. It is freedom. It is joy-filled. That is Jesus' promise with the invitation to "Take my Yoke."

The third invitation: Learn from me. Do not learn in Satan's school. He will lead you into false belief. Learn from Jesus.

What do we learn from Jesus? We learn who He is. We learn that we have a God full of steadfast love and mercy. We learn that He is gentle, we learn that he is humble. We learn that Jesus is forgiving and kind. We learn that He is a serving and burden lifting God. He takes your sins and gives you righteousness. He gives you freedom from guilt. God taking your hell and gives you paradise.

Look at the cross and see Jesus. You do not know the Father except by Jesus. Jesus a manger. Jesus in touching and healing lepers. Jesus taking children in His arms and blessing them. Jesus welcoming sinners and all kinds of outcasts. Jesus on a donkey. Jesus arrested. Jesus on Trial. Jesus on the cross. Jesus dead and laid in tomb. And Jesus victorious over death. He is risen. That is the kind of God you have.

God risen from the dead. God giving peace. God baptizing. God forgiving. God feeling. God providing. God Lift burdens. God victorious. God coming again. And is the one who gives you

His Yoke. And it a Yoke that lifts you up. That is good. It gives rest and best of all it gives you rest forever.

Think of all the people who did just that. Sinners and tax collectors. Parents with dying children. Parents with demon possessed children. None turned away. Jesus' Yoke is easy and light and is there for all.

Now it is for you. Struggling workers, conflicted parents, imperfect spouses, for those who morn, for the bitter, those who feel used up and kicked to the side. Yes, and even for pastors who fall short. For the anxious and burdened, the troubled and fearing. For you! Come and rest and so you can leave here today and rejoice.

To set you free. To set you free to live in Christ.

