

## INTRODUCTION

*<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)*

1. This petition comes in the context of Jesus talking about God the Father revealing Himself through the Son (*Matthew 11:25-27, Luke 11:21-22*)

*<sup>25</sup> 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; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> 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. (Matthew 11:25-27)*

## I. THE OFFER OF REST FROM WORKING UNDER THE HEAVY LOAD

*<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28, emphasis added)*

- A. Everyone does work or labor in life in some form or fashion, and whether great or small, we get tired or weary. This call of “Come to me...” from Jesus is for everyone.
- B. The Greek word translated “heavy laden” (*phortizō*), is a verb in the Perfect Tense (meaning it has already been done) and the Passive Voice, meaning that it has been done to us. This is to say that there is a heavy burden or load that those who work have been subjected to.

*<sup>8</sup> Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. <sup>10</sup> Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” <sup>11</sup> Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. (Exodus 1:8-11, emphasis added)*

- C. Jesus then promises that He will give rest those who are working under this heavy load if they come to Him. The word used for “rest” (*anapauō*) is also translated as refreshing, as in a renewing of strength (*1 Cor. 16:8; 2 Cor. 7:13; Philemon 1:7, 20*).

## II. LEARNING A NEW WAY TO WORK

*<sup>29</sup> 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 (Matthew 11:28, emphasis added)*

- A. This call from Jesus to come to Him is not a call to cease from working, but rather, to receive better equipment for the work that He is calling us to. We are being called to work in Jesus! Work is not a result of sin, but hard and toilsome work and death under the burden of the curse of sin is. Jesus came to break the curse and set us free from the power of sin and death by His grace so that we can do good work by the grace of God.

*<sup>17</sup> Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; With hard labor you shall eat from it all the days of your life." (Genesis 3:17, NASB, emphasis added)*

*<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:8-10)*

- B. Jesus wants to reveal to us, via a holy apprenticeship, what it looks like to work as God intended us to in the very beginning. Remember that this calling and promise comes in the context of the Father revealing who He is to us through Jesus (*Matt. 11:25-27, Luke 11:21-22*). To receive and believe the revelation of who God is and His love in Christ Jesus, is to receive the yoke of Jesus.

*<sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." <sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?... (John 14:8-9)*

*<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." (John 6:25-29, emphasis added)*

- C. Jesus did not come to lay more burdens on us that we can't lift. He came to show us God's meekness, gentleness, humility, and great love towards us. It is in this revelation of God's character and great love that we are empowered to walk in the same and do the works that He has called us to.

*<sup>12</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)*

- D. This kind of rest and refreshing is of the soul, a spiritual and mental refreshing and renewal. The enemy of our souls does not want us to find this rest and refreshing in Jesus, but would rather that we continue under the "business as usual" of the heavy burden so that we pose no threat to his kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> *Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’”...<sup>4</sup> But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.”...<sup>9</sup> Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.” (Exodus 5:1, 4, 9, emphasis added)*

### III. THE PLEASURE AND GRACE OF WORKING GOD’S WAY

<sup>30</sup> *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:30, emphasis added)*

- A. The yoke of Jesus’ teaching shows us who God is, and His love makes working in Him delightful, pleasurable, good. This is how work was designed for mankind from the very beginning before we fell into sin.

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden [which in Hebrew means pleasure, or delight] to work it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15, emphasis added)*

- B. When we work with a yoke of love that comes from God, the work is easy.

<sup>15</sup> *Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?”...<sup>18</sup> Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.”...<sup>20</sup> So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. (Genesis 29:15, 18, 20)*

- C. The burden we bear in Christ is not one that weighs us down or holds us back. Instead, His burden empowers us with greater strength to exert greater work than if we didn’t have it on us. The love and grace of God strengthen us and urge us into the work that He has for us.

<sup>10</sup> *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10, emphasis added)*

<sup>14</sup> *For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again... <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 20, emphasis added)*

## CONCLUSION

What heavy burdens are you carrying as you work in this life? Come and surrender your heavy burdens to God and take up the easy yoke of Jesus.

1. **Burden:** Pride, Easy Yoke: Humility
  - *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Prov. 16:18)*
  - *Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:4)*
2. **Burden:** Anxiety/Fear, Easy Yoke: Love of God
  - *It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil...(Ps. 127:2)*
  - *The fear of man lays a snare... (Prov. 29:25)*
3. **Burden:** Addiction, Easy Yoke: Satisfaction in God
  - *<sup>20</sup> Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, <sup>21</sup> for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags. (Prov. 23:20-21)*
  - *<sup>2</sup> So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. <sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. <sup>5</sup> My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, (Psalm 63:2-3, 5)*
4. **Burden:** Depression, Easy Yoke: Prophetic vision of God's good plans for your life
  - *Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint (or perish) ... (Prov. 29:18)*
  - *I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)*
5. **Burden:** Trauma, Easy Yoke: God's Healing/Restoration
  - *...a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (Prov. 17:22)*
  - *A man's spirit will endure sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear? (Prov. 18:14)*
  - *<sup>18</sup> The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. <sup>19</sup> Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. (Ps. 34:18-19)*
  - *He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Ps. 147:3)*
6. **Burden:** Bitterness/Anger/Unforgiveness, Easy Yoke: Forgiveness/Reconciliation
  - *...“root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled (Hebrews 12:15)*
  - *for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:20)*
  - *But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:15, NIV)*
  - *<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)*