

Taking the Light Burden
Matthew 11:25-30
The Laurel Center
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Main Idea: Jesus promises a lighter yoke and lighter burden.

Introduction

Life is hard. It is hard even in the best circumstances. Finding a way to navigate life takes much of our time. But those who follow Jesus have later burden because Jesus makes life easy. It is not easy in the sense that there are no trials but easy in the sense that Jesus walks with us through our trials. He helps us in them. And in today's passage Jesus promises that he will make these burdens light.

Matthew 11:25–30

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; **26** yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. **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. **28** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **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. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

I. Jesus controls everything in creation (vv. 25 – 27).

A God reveals himself to the childlike..

- 1 Jesus begins a prayer right after speaking woes to unrepentant cities to the father thanking him for revealing his teachings to the childlike and not to those who think themselves wise.
- 2 Paul says something similar in 1 Corinthians 1 about the wise and philosophers of this age not understanding the cross while the believer understands the cross properly.
- 3 The better translation care is childlike instead of children. Childlike is the way that we must come to Jesus and believe in him with faith. He has said this himself.
- 4 It is the children to understand things better than adults. To children the world is simple while adults tend to new wants the world and make it more, complicated.

- 5 For that reason the childlike nature seems to accept Jesus for who he is better than the adult. A child trusts easily the word and action of another. There is no complicated what has happened.
- 6 Childlike faith is most important to understand God and his son Jesus. A childlike faith is more except of even the most paradoxical statements that Jesus makes.
- 7 Jesus actually says that it was God's pleasure or goodwill to do this very thing. God purposefully made it so that a childlike faith is required for himself and his son to be revealed.
- 8 In these first couple of verses God's sovereignty is highlighted and it is understood that his gracious sovereign will is the reason humans can even begin to understand them.

B God gives authority to his Son.

- 1 Verse 27 highlights the relationship between Jesus and the father. They have a very close, tight that relationship that no one can understand except them.
- 2 Yet at the same time Jesus can reveal the father to those whom he chooses to reveal him. Only those who believe in Jesus can begin to understand the relationship between father and son.
- 3 Not only is there a special relationship revealed to those who are childlike in their faith but God the father has given all of authority of all creation to his son Jesus.
- 4 This means that Jesus is in control of all of creation. Those who trust in him no that he is the Lord of creation. Earlier in the passage, in verse 25, Jesus has already called his father the Lord of heaven and earth.
- 5 This means that since the father who is Lord of heaven and earth has given over authority to his son Jesus that Jesus now is Lord of heaven and earth. It is most likely the to share this title from now on.
- 6 Indeed it is most likely that from the creation of the world they have shared this title but it is just now that Jesus mentions it to the human beings around him.
- 7 This means that Jesus is in control of everything that happens in creation. When we trust in him we are trusting that he holds all things in the palm of his hand and is the Lord of history and creation.
- 8 This means that Jesus is Lord, in charge of all things, especially of our hearts and our wills. We can trust in him to do exactly what is needed because he has the ability and authority to do it.

II. Jesus calls us to enter into his rest (vv. 28 – 30).

A Jesus promises rest for the weary.

- 1 Based on this new understanding that Jesus has authority over heaven and earth, Jesus then calls on humans with free will to come to him and to take his yoke upon them.
- 2 There is a structure here of a plea or command followed by a description and completed in a promise. Jesus calls everyone to come to him. This is the command or plea.
- 3 Next we find the description, “All who labor and are heavy laden.” God has ordained work from the beginning of the world. Work is not evil in and of itself.
- 4 Adam was commissioned to work in the garden and take care of it. So work happened before the fall of humanity and the curse on human labor. God cursed it by making it harder to accomplish the same goal that Adam could achieve before the fall.
- 5 Sin has caused work to be laborious and hard. But here Jesus is not appealing to everyone who works but rather those who work overly hard. This is understood by an extra his “Have laden.”
- 6 Some commentators suggest that this refers specifically to the Pharisees and their hard rules that add to the law of Moses. They had created a fence around the Torah laws that was supposed to make it easy to not violate God’s laws.
- 7 But learning the extra man-made laws was increasingly hard. They were hard on all of their disciples and made contradictory rules that made it even harder on the people who converted to Pharisaism.
- 8 This is much like following the world system today. It is a complicated web of rules that are contradictory and paradoxical. Trying to live by them is probably just as hard as it was to live by the Pharisees’ rules back then.
- 9 Next we find the first promise of Jesus that he will give them rest. The subject of rest in the Bible always relates not to less work but to relief in the work. It also has direct references to God resting on the seventh day of creation, and the Sabbath itself.
- 10 Resting in Jesus means that life is not as hard and work is not as hard as the curse has made it to be. Rest in Jesus is a spiritual rest, a safe haven or sanctuary from the rigors of this world in general.

B Jesus’ yoke is easy and burden light.

- 1 Next, Jesus presents his second appeal when he says, “Take my yoke upon you.” He also describes it as learning from him. Learning from Jesus becomes the primary function of his disciples.

- 2 Disciples learn from Jesus by his example and his teachings and then demonstrate that same example by emulating him in the world today in teaching others his principles.
- 3 We must explain the idea of a teachers yoke to fully understand Jesus' appeal to us. Every teacher had a yoke, or a principal of learning from the Scriptures and following under that banner.
- 4 They called it a yoke because of the agricultural term used for a yoke that bound to oxen together to work together in a field. This yoke was a piece of wood with leather straps that would be wrapped around the neck of each ox.
- 5 The yoke forced the oxen to work together at the same speed rather than one going ahead of the other. The yoke bound a Rabbi to his disciple so that both of them would track the same vein at the same time with the same speed.
- 6 Rabbis as teachers knew a lot more than their disciples and could easily overwhelm them with too much information or too many commands. A yoke bound both in that the Rabbi would teach at the disciples level was a disciple would learn from the Rabbi.
- 7 To take Jesus' yoke upon yourself is to follow his simple teachings and example. Now Jesus' yoke is easier than the world's in the Pharisees' but it is still difficult to do what Jesus did and follow his teachings completely.
- 8 But his teachings and example lead to success in life. This success is not like the success the world seeks but is a success in pleasing God and living for Jesus. Jesus' teachings and example lead to an easier life because they teach us from the designer himself to live in the world the way he designed it to be best experienced.
- 9 Next, we have the description of Jesus himself and why his yoke is easy. It tells us that he is gentle and lowly in heart. Jesus does not treat us harshly like the world does. He walks with us and is gentle to us, much the good Shepherd of Psalm 23.
- 10 Finally, we have the promise that Jesus will help them find rest for their souls. This further clarifies that rest does not mean ceasing from work altogether, rather a rest for the soul itself.
- 11 Our souls go through so much when we live in the world, accosted on every side by the cares of this life in the worries that we have as we are burdened by the expectations of others and the world itself.
- 12 Jesus offers us rest for our souls so that they cannot find sanctuary in his easy yoke and light burden as compared to the heavy burden of the world. Rest

for our souls means that we can live in the world without the abrasions the world brings to our inner being.

13 Jesus then clarifies and his yoke is easy and his burden is light. His yoke is easy compared to that of the Pharisees of his day and also of the world today. He offers a simplistic overarching teaching of the Scriptures, his yoke.

14 Jesus' burden is light because he takes our sins upon himself and all he asks is that we surrender to him and obey him. When we make him the Lord of our hearts he does not place an overwhelming amount of rules upon us.

Conclusion

Jesus criticized the cities and the Pharisees for their tough yokes and hypocrisy. Then he praises God because God reveals himself to those who have a childlike faith unencumbered by the complications adults usually placed on situations. Adults tend to think way too much about even the smallest things. Children are readily accepting of the world and things as they stand. Children respond with faith instead of logic. Jesus promises that we will have rest for our souls in him when we follow him. It doesn't mean that we won't have trials or have to work. It means that our souls are protected from the abrasions and attacks of the world on our souls. It means that we are free to have sanctuary in Jesus despite the roughness of this world. Jesus promises us in easier yoke and a lighter load.