

Wednesdays in the Word
Digging Deeper
April 22, 2020
Matthew 11:28-30
"Swapping Burdens"

Matthew 11:28-30 King James Version

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Let's begin today by looking first to the Greek.

Labor (kopaio) to feel fatigued from hard work
Heavy Laden (phortidzo) fully loaded up
Rest (anapauro) repose or refreshment
Yoke (zugos) to join under a coupling beam
Learn (manthano) increase one's knowledge
Meek (praos) gentle or humble
Lowly (tapeinos) humiliated or of low degree
Heart (kardia) thoughts and feelings
Rest (anapausis) cessation of motion
Soul (psuche) a breathing spirit
Easy (chrestos) pleasantly useful
Burden (phortion) a carried load
Light (elaphros) light in weight

May I take license to rewrite our text with the Greek orientation of words?

Come unto me, all ye that feel fatigued from hard work and are fully loaded up, and I will refresh you. Join up with me and increase your knowledge of me; for I am gentle and humble in my thoughts and feelings: and ye shall cease all effort in your own spirit. For joining up with me is pleasantly useful and my carried load is light in weight.

The hard work, fatigue and full loads we carry are first of all a burden we wrongly feel we must carry alone. Consider the plight of Elijah. 1 Kings 19:8-18. Whether standing for God, caring for elders or raising children, or stressing over a job or a lack of one. Bearing the burden of feeding a family or overloaded with responsibility. Trying to please others or serve difficult people. Dealing with poverty or lacking necessities. Loneliness, fear, anxiety or loss. Someone referred to much of these as First World problems because we are Americans. Thank God for that! In the Third World, folks lack food, water, clothing, shelter and access to health care. Not to make light of your troubles, for to each of us our burden is perhaps more than we can carry. In the text above Jesus may even have been alluding to another type of burden. That of working

for religion. Feeling we must perform before others in a way that will look as if we are serious about our faith or worse, believing we need to please God by our religious observance.

Matthew 23:23-24.

Our Gracious Saviour understands us. He knows that whether or not our troubles are real or imagined; whether we amplify them in our fears or simply feel alone in our labors, He has a sensible answer. It would be wonderful if He simply removed or repaired our problems. It would even be nice if He offered workable solutions. What He actually does is something quite different. A team of oxen when they plow are sharing the load. There is a constant balance of effort as the burden shifts. One always compliments the other. When a new or inexperienced partner joins the team, the well trained one will increase his efforts and control the load as conditions vary. The burden of the newer member is lightened and more bearable. He will also learn by doing with his mentor at his side. This will give him confidence and fellowship in his efforts. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10. Always know that Jesus, through His indwelling Spirit is constantly at our side. In verse 29 of today's text we see that Jesus has no dominating agenda in this yoking. He seeks to train His understudy in gentleness and humility. He trains His charge that there is a job to do and we must apply ourselves to performing it. He implies in all this that our Christ Like attitude during trials will best support our efforts when we are steadfast in Godly perseverance. As hard as life gets we can learn to work steadily and without backing down. We learn who our Teammate truly is and how we can follow His example. Our souls find rest in Him.

We would love more help from others when the going gets tough. Someone to care and come alongside when we struggle. Jesus does this as no one else can. Picture two oxen in your mind, tied together in a yoke and plowing. The stronger helps the weaker but does the weaker help the stronger? As the Lord trains us and assists in carrying our burden is there a way that we can help carry His? What is the burden of Jesus Christ? In carrying His cross He was facing His sacrificial death for our sin. Hebrews 12:2-3. He tells us to pick up our cross and follow Him. Matthew 16:24-25. Notice in that, the other centeredness. He calls on us to be a living sacrifice. Romans 12:1. Jesus wants us to put ourselves aside and swing our concern to others. The first 'Other' we need to prioritize is Christ Himself. What is His greatest burden? Us! Our salvation! Matthew 18:11 and 2 Peter 3:9. And once He saves us His greatest burden moves on to our neighbor. Can this be said?... The burden of Jesus Christ is to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10) and by yoking together with Him we take on that burden with Him. We share His load! We get under that yoke of labor and help our Saviour to do His job! Does He really need us? No! He wants us! In His perfect plan He has arranged to make us useful in the salvation of others. Mathew 4:19-20. His yoke is easy and His burden is light because just like that new young ox we can barely help Him. Honestly we mainly get in His way. But because He is God Almighty He does all the work, giving us rest from our work and a full partnership in sharing in His mighty calling.

Here is the plain answer. Our problems are real. He's big enough to fully control all our circumstances and concerns. We are helpless. He simply wants us to release control to Him and put ourselves aside. 1 Peter 5:7. He therefore wants us to concern ourselves with His 'problem'. Help carry His load by putting all your effort into the love and salvation of others. Matthew 6:33. The field is white unto harvest. John 4:35-36. May we rejoice with Christ as

people get saved. Our load is light because He fully equips us and expects us to perform. Ephesians 4:11-13. Trust God with your life as He entrusts His work to you. God Bless!