

TRAVELLING LIGHT



PART ONE

Learning the Unforced Rhythms of Grace

MATTHEW 11:25-30



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Learning the Unforced Rhythms of Grace

By Pastor David Fields

“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.” – Matthew 11:28-30

What Jesus is telling us in the passage is not that we will have no burdens. There is no such thing as “no-burdens.” But there is such a thing as the wrong ones. And Jesus shows us a different way. His way. The way of travelling light.

1. Travelling light means coming to a Person

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

Not to a philosophy of life. Not to a political vision. Not to a program, or a “five-easy-steps-to-freedom” self-help project. The invitation is to a person – *The Person*.

This is a deeply personal journey of experiencing Jesus for all he is.

2. Travelling light means we must notice *which burdens we have been carrying*

“Come to me, *all you who are weary and burdened...*”

The other thing to note is that in the Greek language there are not just active and passive voice as in English, but three “voices”:

Active voice: “I wash”

Passive voice: “I am washed”

Middle voice: “I wash myself”

This word “burdened” – it’s in the *middle* voice:

“Come to me all who have overburdened themselves.”

“For the most part, excessive weariness is our own doing.” – Darrell Johnson

3. Travelling Light means letting Jesus be our ultimate source of rest

“Come to me all who are weary and heavy burdened *and I will give you rest.*”

This does not mean Jesus will take away all the hard things you need to do in life. Jesus did many, many hard things. But how? Because he rested in the Father's love for him. He was able to trust that his Father would help him with everything he was called to do. He knew he was never alone. And that same assurance of God's gracious presence is given to every person who gives our "yes" to Jesus.

4. Travel Light means communion with the Living God through Jesus, in the power of the Spirit.

"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."

A yoke was a tool that was used in the ancient world, and in many places today as well. There are both animal "yokes" and human ones. A yoke is used to hook oxen or horses together, so they pull a plow or a cart. The human yoke was a way to balance a load and make it easier to carry.

The irony: A "yoke" is intended to help you do even more work!

The question is never: "Will I wear a yoke?" It is always: "Which yoke will I wear?" The question is never: "Will I be a disciple – a follower?" It is always: "Whose disciple will I be?" "Who is giving me direction about what life is all about and how to live?"

You and I are wearing a yoke. And Jesus is telling us that, unless it's his yoke, his way of life, we are wearing the wrong one. Why am I burdened? I've taken something on myself – a way of defining myself, a way of trying to prove I'm 'a somebody' – and it's killing me.



What is Jesus' yoke?

The passage doesn't start at verse 28, but at verse 25 – where Jesus is in prayer, communion with the Father and the Spirit. Jesus has been in a season of ministry that is hard – full of criticism, and from outward appearances, far from "successful." What does he do in that space of "burden"?

"At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. – Matthew 11:25"

It's from within the intimacy of Father, Son, and Spirit that Jesus then turns to his disciples, and to us, and welcomes them – and us – into the conversation.

Jesus' yoke is to come into the relationship of never-ending love. It's coming to a place of nearness with God through Jesus. Everything else flows out of that place. It is communion with the Living God through Jesus, in the power of the Spirit.



5. Travelling light means that we...move. We respond by moving to Jesus."

"Come to me..."

"Come!" This means moving. Reordering your commitments. This isn't just something to "know" but a movement.

- A. For you, maybe it means confessing an area of sin that you've tried to manage on your own or keep hidden from God. He has already carried that burden up the hill of Calvary, and dealt with it through his death for you on the cross. Leave it there.
- B. For some of you, it may be your need to be in control: to feel that if you don't keep the plates spinning the world will end – or something like that. Jesus is still on the throne. God can be trusted, even when we can't see a way through it all.
- C. For others, it's something painful you've been through – maybe something others have put you through. You don't need to carry that alone. God is "with us". You may need to talk those things over with a trusted Christian friend or counselor, but you also need do that *with God*.



Personal Reflection/ Discussion

Through the summer, most of our Life Groups are on a break but we wanted to provide some personal reflection questions, or things you can discuss with friends or family.

I've outlined a way to reflect on this text using a long-standing Christian practice of reflection on Scripture (and you can do something similar with any passage of the Bible).

Dig In

1. Take a few quiet moments to **ask God to speak to you** as you consider what Jesus' words in this passage may be saying to you in your specific situation this week. It could be something simple like: "Speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10), or "Lord, I open my heart to hear from you as I read this text. Give me ears to hear and a heart that is ready to respond."
2. Reflect on Matthew 11:25-30. **Read through this text slowly, at least two times** and **pause over any places** that seem to be most significant to you in this moment and circle them in your Bible.

3. Next, take time to **mull over these words**, and perhaps write those words or phrases in a journal. Consider the situations in your life where you particularly need this word of Jesus for you.

(It may have to do with a burden you have been carrying but need to give over to Jesus; it may have to do with an area of sin/self-centeredness you have tried to keep hidden from God; it may have to do with a way you have structured your time that does not leave any room for just being with God on a daily basis).

4. **Give thanks to God** for what you are hearing, and, if you feel led, **write down how you would like to respond to what you were hearing today.**