

Rest for the Burdened

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] It's great to worship with you. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church. And it's my great honor and joy to preach God's word to you this morning. If you have your Bibles with you, please open to Matthew chapter 11, verses 25 to 30.

It's a short passage this morning because there is such a rich and important passage. Matthew 11, 25 to 30.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word. Heavenly Father, since the beginning, the devil has been slandering you.

And making us think hard thoughts of you. But we ask this morning that by your word, by your son, Jesus Christ, that you speak over our hearts and minds once for all.

Your true character. Your true heart. What you are like. What our Savior, Jesus, is like.

[1 : 31] And that for all sinners here this morning, weary and heavy laden.

That you grant us all the soul rest that Christ alone offers. Do this.

For your glory, Father. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Please stand if you are able as I read from Matthew 11, 25 to 30. 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 reveal them to little children.

Yes, Father. Yes, Father. For such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. And no one knows the Son.

[2 : 51] 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. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

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.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. Many critics throughout history have claimed that Christianity is too demanding, too burdensome for its followers.

In his books on the genealogy of morality and another one of his books, The Antichrist, 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche railed against Christianity for imposing what he labeled a slave morality.

A morality of the weak and the powerless that inverted the natural master morality of the strong and the powerful. He argued that Christianity's teaching about renouncing worldly pleasures and sinful desires inhibits full human expression and enjoyment of life.

[4 : 22] He claimed that Christianity's emphasis on guilt and sin creates an inner tormentor that psychologically cripples people and spiritually burdens people.

Maybe you feel this morning the sting of Nietzsche's critique in your own life. You feel that the requirements of God's law are a heavy burden upon your shoulders.

Perhaps for some of you it has felt too heavy lately. I can concede that Nietzsche's observations are not entirely unfounded.

Earlier in chapter 10, verses 38 to 39, Jesus said, Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Following Jesus entails taking up a cross and following him on a path of suffering, persecution, and possibly even martyrdom. We do have to renounce ourselves, our selfish desires, and our selfish ambitions for the sake of Christ.

[5 : 31] But the problem with Nietzsche's observation is that he sees only half the story. He doesn't understand what we gain as Christians.

He doesn't understand that the sacrifices that we make are no sacrifices at all, considering what we gain in exchange. He doesn't understand that only those who have renounced the fleeting pleasures of this world can enjoy the eternal pleasures at the right hand of God.

He does not get it, that only those who acknowledge their guilt and sin can confess their sins and receive the freedom of forgiveness and the mercy and grace of God.

That only those who have truly felt the depth of their own depravity can also truly feel the depth of God's mercy. Yes, following Jesus entails taking up our cross.

Yes, it means taking on the yoke of Christ. But Jesus assures us in this passage, my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

[6 : 42] Do you seek reprieve from your heavy burden? Do you long for rest from your wearisome labors? This passage teaches us that Jesus offers rest for little children who come to him.

First, we're going to talk about the revelation of Jesus. And secondly, we'll talk about the invitation of Jesus in this passage. He says in verses 25 to 26, 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 reveal them to little children.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. The phrase, at that time, links this passage to the passage that came before it, which Ed preached on this past Sunday, where Jesus denounced the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for their rejection of him and his message, the gospel of the kingdom.

In verses 18 to 19, we saw some of the reasons why people of these towns rejected Jesus. When John the Baptist, who lived an austere life and fasted from food and drinks, often proclaimed that Jesus, the Messianic King, is coming and that therefore they need to repent of their sins, these towns rejected John the Baptist saying, he has a demon.

When, on the other hand, Jesus came after John on the scene and then he started befriending sinners, calling them to repentance and eating and drinking in their homes. People then rejected, these people from these towns rejected Jesus too, saying, he is a friend of sinners, friend of tax collectors and sinners, a glutton and a drunkard.

[8 : 27] They rejected John for being too ascetic. They rejected Jesus for being too indulgent from their perspective. They were like a fickle child when you play a card game with them and says, hey, whoever has the most cards at the end of the game wins.

And then as you near the end of the game and when the child is about to lose, he says, oh, no, no, no, no, the person with the least cards wins the game. He keeps changing the game, changing the terms of the game, moving the goalposts, like a debater who keeps changing the terms of the debate, who are not interested in learning the truth, finding the truth, rather only interested in proving themselves right and proving the others wrong.

Reflecting on this reality, Jesus, in this passage, he prays to God the Father, a prayer of thanksgiving, which is shocking in light of the rejection that he just faced.

And he says this, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and reveal them to little children.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. God the Father, who is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, has in his authority, in his prerogative, hidden these things from the wise and understanding.

[9 : 51] What are these things that God has hidden from them? It's the good news of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus has been proclaiming. Namely, that Jesus is the son of God, the divinely appointed messianic king who brings forth the kingdom of God to save his people.

But why is God hiding these things from the wise and understanding? The wise and understanding refer not to those who are truly wise and understanding in a biblical sense, spiritual sense, but rather to the prideful people in the world who are wise in their own eyes.

Wise in a worldly sense, esteemed by the world. How do we know that? Skip back to verse 23 for a moment with me. One of the towns that rejected Jesus was Capernaum.

And Jesus says, and you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades.

The people who rejected Jesus pridefully thought to themselves that they will be exalted to heaven. We are the wise ones who know our stuff. We're not like the simpletons who are following after Jesus.

[11 : 03] The world is going to see how wise and discerning we were in the end. We're going to be exalted to the heavens. But the Lord of heaven and earth has other plans.

He has decreed that far from being exalted to heaven, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, all these towns that reject Jesus will be instead humbled and brought down to Hades, the underworld of the dead.

God the Father has hidden the saving knowledge of his son and his kingdom from the prideful. In contrast, Jesus says, the Lord of heaven has revealed these things to little children.

Little children is one of Matthew's favorite way of referring to the disciples of Jesus, those who humbly follow Jesus. Earlier in Matthew chapter 10, verse 42, Jesus said, whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple.

Truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. The little ones of God are the disciples of Jesus Christ. Later in Matthew 19, 13 to 15, when his entourage rebukes the parents who are trying to bring their kids to Jesus so that Jesus can lay hands on them and bless them and pray for them, Jesus rebukes those disciples and he says, let the little children come to me and do not hinder them for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.

[12 : 38] Why does the kingdom of heaven belong to people who are like these little children? Jesus tells us in Matthew 18, 1 to 6. In that context, his disciples are arguing about who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

So this is proof that we are not the only generation fascinated with the goat arguments, who is the greatest of all time. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And then Jesus puts a child in the midst of them in the middle and he says, truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Humility is the point that Jesus is getting at.

How are children humble? Children instinctively entrust themselves to their parents' provision. Jesus said in Matthew 6, 31 to 32, do not be anxious saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink?

[13 : 44] Because he said, for your heavenly father knows what you need. The children of our church never worry about where their next meal is coming from because it's not their job.

It's not their concern. They're not orphans who must fend for themselves and feed themselves. They have parents who provide for them by God's grace. So likewise, we Christians, we ought to entrust ourselves to our heavenly father's care.

When I'm walking with my girl sometimes, yesterday I was walking home with Ina and then about 50 meters ahead, there was a homeless man who just burst out laughing all of a sudden.

And he's actually a really nice guy with friendly terms. But Ina doesn't know. She's just kind of freaked out. She's like, what is going on?

And then of course, immediately what happens is she comes next to me and starts holding my hand. Because that's what children instinctively do when they're afraid.

[14 : 54] They rely on their father for protection. Children understand their own neediness. They are by definition not sufficient, not self-sufficient.

That's why we call them legally dependents. The Greek word used here for little children is the same word that is later translated in Matthew 21, 16 as infant.

They are really dependent children. In the earthly value scale, infants offer no economic value.

They're on the opposite end of the spectrum as mature, self-sufficient adults. But in the heavenly value scale, many who are first will be last and the last first, Jesus says in Matthew 19, 3.

God reveals himself only to little children because God is the only father in the household of God. Only dependents may come in to his family.

[16 : 06] God saves only those who acknowledge that they cannot save themselves and cry out to him for help. Proverbs 3, 34, quoting Proverbs 3, 34, 1 Peter 5, 5 says this, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

This is God's mode of operation. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1, 26-29, for consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you are wise according to worldly standards.

Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. God reveals himself only to little children so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Think about it this way. If you invite rich and powerful people to your party, they think to themselves, well, of course, I'm invited to this party.

[17 : 19] Who else would they invite? I'm important. I'm successful. I'm deserving. I have something to offer. They boast and glory in themselves.

But if you invite the poor, and the weak, the needy to your party, they think to themselves, why did I get invited to this party?

I don't belong here. How generous is this host? How gracious is this host?

That is God's purpose. Yes, Father. Jesus says in verse 26, for such was your gracious will.

It pleases the Father to reveal himself to little children. Jesus continues in verse 27, all things have been handed over to me by my Father.

[18 : 24] 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. Maybe some of you have had the unfortunate but common experience of trying to break into a very tight-knit, intimate, and exclusive friend group in the past.

They've known each other for years, and you've known them for weeks. It feels like you'll never quite fully be included. Well then, imagine what it's like trying to get inside the Son's eternal relationship with his Heavenly Father.

Jesus says in John 17, verse 24, that God his Father loved him before the foundation of the world. What was God doing before he created the world?

He was loving his Son. God is love. God the Father is the lover. His Son is the beloved. And it's the Spirit of God who envelops them.

In that triune love. And Jesus says, no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son. This is the most intimate, most exclusive, infinite relationship.

[19 : 49] Well then, who can know God? No one knows the Father except the Son. No one knows the Son except the Father. We, however, here Jesus opens the door. No one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

We, the creatures, can come personally to know God, our Creator, if Jesus, the Son of God, chooses to reveal him to us. That's the amazing privilege that this passage is speaking of.

And that's a remarkable statement. Early in verse 25, we were told that it is God, the Father, who as Lord of heaven and earth, sovereignly chooses whom to reveal himself to. But now, in verse 27, Jesus says that the Son is the one who reveals God to whomever he chooses.

How can this be? Look at the beginning of verse 27. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. Do you see the staggering implications of that?

Jesus is claiming for himself the cosmic, universal, sovereign authority of the Lord of heaven and earth. Students of Scripture have frequently noted that the Gospel of John has a very exalted Christology.

[21 : 07] It speaks of Jesus in cosmic, divine, exalted terms. But while John's high Christology is the most explicit, it is not true that the other Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, have a lower Christology.

They have just as high a view of Jesus, and our passage this morning is an unmistakable instance of that. This is the kind of language that John uses, that Matthew has here in this passage.

To give you an example, John 1.18, no one has ever seen God. God, the only Son, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known. John 3.35, the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

John 5.21-23, for as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

The Father has entrusted all things, it says, to the Son. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. Therefore, it is the Son's prerogative to choose whom He will hide these things from and whom He will reveal these things to.

[22 : 24] This is what we see in Matthew 13.10-16. When His disciples ask Him, Why do you speak to the crowds in parables? Jesus answers them, To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. But blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear.

Jesus' parables were not like sermon illustrations that we use that are meant to clarify and make more vivid the points that we are making. No, the parables of Jesus were meant to hide, conceal the secrets of the kingdom so that people might hear the truth and yet still not understand.

Then that raises the question, To whom does Jesus reveal the secrets of the kingdom? His disciples, the little children.

And what is the difference between the disciples and the crowds? Jesus says in John 9, 39-41, For judgment I came into this world that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.

[23 : 44] Some of the Pharisees near Him heard these things and said to Him, Are we also blind? Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say we see, your guilt remains.

The difference between Jesus' disciples and the Pharisees is that the Pharisees claim that they can see. We have spiritual sight, you see.

We have wisdom. We are enlightened. And therefore, because of their pride and self-sufficiency, the secrets of the kingdom of heaven are hidden from them.

They are blind because they think that they see. The disciples, on the other hand, they know that they are blind. They know that they lack wisdom.

And it's their humility and dependence upon God that makes them recipients of the revelation of Jesus. So that they can say, I once was blind, but now I see.

[24 : 51] That, of course, raises the all-important question for us. Which group am I in? Am I in that group, those from whom the truths of God are hidden?

Or am I in the group where the truths of God are revealed? How do I get that exclusive ticket to the loving knowledge and relationship between the Father and the Son?

You need not wonder because Jesus' sovereign revelation of Jesus is put right next to His gracious invitation in verse 28.

You can find out which group you belong to by how you respond to Jesus' invitation. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

First, let's note what the subject of this invitation is. What is Jesus inviting us to? Or whom is Jesus inviting us to? The subject of this invitation is Jesus Himself.

[25 : 56] He invites us to come to Him. Come to me, and I will give you rest. This is striking. Jesus is speaking here of soul rest. He's not an innkeeper who says, come here, and I'll let you sleep and get some rest.

He's talking about soul rest, eternal rest, eternal life. So what must we do to inherit eternal life?

Eternal rest, Jesus says, come to me. Many people have noted that Jesus is likely here alluding to the book of Sirach, which is a Jewish literary work written about 200 years before Jesus' time.

It's not part of the Old Testament canon, but it was included in the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, which was read by early believers. Sirach 51, 23, 27, which in turn is alluding to Isaiah 55, 1 to 3, which we read in our call to worship, says this, draw near to me, you who are untaught, and lodge in my school.

Why do you say you are lacking in these things, and why are your souls very thirsty? I opened my mouth and said, get these things for yourselves without money. Put your neck under the yoke, and let your souls receive instruction.

[27 : 18] It is to be found close by. See with your eyes that I have labored little and found for myself much rest. There are clear echoes of our passage in Matthew 11, words like to me, labor, yoke, instruction, find, rest, soul.

But there's also a significant difference between Sirach and Matthew. In Sirach, the sage, the wise man, invites people to come under the yoke of wisdom from under which he himself has learned and found the rest of God.

But Jesus invites people to come under his yoke. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

And then Jesus himself promises rest, I will give you rest. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus is divine wisdom in himself.

He is the personification, or rather the incarnation of divine wisdom, the word of God. This audacious claim, come to me, and I will give you rest, sets Jesus apart from the founders of every other major religion.

[28 : 39] Hinduism teaches that one must fulfill the dharma, one's righteous duty, in hopes of escaping the birth and rebirth cycle. Buddha taught that one must follow the noble eightfold path, cultivate the right view, the right resolve, the right speech, right action, right effort, right mindfulness, and so on, in order to attain enlightenment and escape, be freed from suffering, escape the cycle of rebirth.

Muhammad thought that one must obey the five pillars of Islam, the declaration of faith, the prayers, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca in order to enter paradise.

But Jesus does not point to some other path or way to salvation like other religious leaders. He doesn't say, go that way, follow that path.

He doesn't point to some other truth or teaching, believe that teaching that I've taught you or proclaimed to you, obey that thing. No, Jesus points to Himself and He says, come to Me.

As He says in John 14, 6, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. Jesus does not say, here or there you will find the light.

[30 : 03] He says, I am the light of the world. John 8, 12. Jesus doesn't say, there's the door. That's how you enter the kingdom of heaven, paradise.

No, He says, I am the door. John 10, 7. Jesus doesn't say, you can find life over here or over there. No, He says, I am the resurrection and the life.

I am. I am. I am. Because Jesus is the great I am. The Lord God. Therefore, the subject of this invitation is Jesus Himself.

Come to Me. Who then are the objects of this salvation? Who is this invitation for? Jesus says, come to Me. All who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Later in Matthew 23, verse 4, Jesus pronounces woes on the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees and the scribes.

[31 : 14] And He says this, they tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

These Jewish leaders practiced their righteousness before men, not out of a genuine obedience to God or love for God, but for show, to be seen by men and to be praised by men.

They laid heavy legal burdens! They laid heavy legal burdens upon the people of God and were being complicated by ever mounting prescriptions, extra prescriptions and prohibitions that they invented that God never put in His Word.

And when the people of God began to sink under the weight, sink under the weight of that, and collapse under the weight of that, they would not lift a finger to help them out.

Jesus is speaking of that burden, the burden of the law, the ethical demands that God's law has placed upon us. This interpretation is confirmed by Acts 15, verse 10.

[32 : 20] When the apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem church are deliberating what to do about this influx of non-Jewish, Gentile converts to Christianity, he says, some believers who belong to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, it is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.

But the apostles and the elders decide instead that since God has made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and instead, He has cleansed even the Gentiles' hearts by faith, and because He has even given them of the Holy Spirit, they say that no such burden should be placed upon them.

Instead, they say in Acts 15, verse 10, now therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus just as they will. The burden and yoke are the burden and yoke of the law of God.

Do you remember the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, which was Jesus' authoritative exposition of the law of Moses? Jesus taught that even those who harbor anger toward your Christian brother and sister is guilty of murder.

[33 : 53] Jesus said not to repay anyone evil for evil, but instead to turn the other cheek, to love even our enemies and not only our neighbors. Sure, we can stop ourselves perhaps from cold-blooded murder, but what shall we do about the hatred and bitterness that rise up from within our own hearts toward people who have wronged us?

Jesus said that anyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Sure, maybe we've never committed adultery, but if even a glance, a lustful glance is adultery, who has a chance?

Jesus said in Matthew 5-48, you therefore must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. That is the standard of God's law.

Perfection. And all of us have fallen short. But here's the good news. This invitation is not for those who are stout and broad-shouldered who can carry their heavy burdens!

[35 : 09] It's not that while nary breaking a sweat. no, this invitation is not for the strong and the self-sufficient. It's for the weak little children.

It's for all who labor and are heavy laden. Isn't that good news? Have you, like me, felt felt on your shoulders, on your back, the back-breaking weight of the perfect law of God?

Have you tried and tried and tried again in your own strength and failed again, again, and again?

have you seen the wicked, hopeless depravity of your own sinful heart?

Have you seen the utter ruin of your soul? Have you despaired of your own righteousness? Are you just about ready to collapse under the weight of God's moral demands to give up, to give up and bear the consequence of sin, death, damnation?

[36 : 40] Do you see that that is in fact what you and I deserve? Then this invitation is for you.

Come to me all, all who labor and are heavy laid and I will give you rest.

How sweet is our savior? And why does Jesus issue such a gracious invitation for sinners like you and me? Jesus tells us in verse 29, take my yoke upon you and learn from me for because that's the reason for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

19th century English preacher Charles Spurgeon has noted in one of his many sermons on this passage, I think he's preached half a dozen sermons or more on this passage, I hope I get to do the same in my life.

he notes that in all of the four gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John which tell us about the person and work of Jesus, this verse right here is the only place where Jesus tells us about what's in his own heart.

[38 : 11] And what's the heart? The heart is the inner center of a person from which flows the springs of life. Proverbs 4 23 says Jesus says repeatedly throughout Matthew Matthew 12 34 15 18 15 19 that all our words and deeds all our actions all our speech everything we do flow out of the abundance of the heart.

In other words, if you know a person's heart, you know them inside and out. You know what they're really like. And you know what Jesus' heart is like, what he's really like, at his very core, he says I am gentle and lowly in heart.

because Jesus is so holy, because Jesus is the son of God to whom the father has handed over all things, we expect Jesus to be harsh and haughty like sinful people get when they're in positions of authority, when they're better than us.

we expect Jesus to be harsh and haughty, we expect him to be sore and severe, we expect him to look at us up and down and in disappointment and disgust and say how pathetic are you really?

Is this the best you can do? I tell you everything you have to do, A to Z, and you still can't do it. You have sinned yet again.

[39 : 50] You've sinned so many times that I have lost count. My patience is really running thin. So get your act together before I put you out of my presence.

Isn't that how we sometimes view God? Isn't that what the devil tells us God is like? But praise be to God that that is not what Jesus is like.

He says I am gentle and lowly in heart. The word gentle occurs only three other times in the New Testament. First in the Beatitudes where it is translated as meek.

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. In Matthew 5 5. The meek seem like the last kind of people who will inherit the earth in our minds. Right? Doesn't the earth belong to the strong?

Doesn't the earth belong to the assertive? The aggressive? To those who seize the moment and seize power? Not according to Jesus. The earth belongs to the meek. To those who are willing to be overlooked.

[41 : 01] To those who are willing to be downtrodden. As they trust in and wait on the deliverance of God. God. The second instance is in Zechariah's prophecy concerning Jesus which is cited later in Matthew 21 verse 5 and there it's translated as humble.

Behold your king is coming to you humble and mounted on a donkey. In this context it describes King Jesus coming into hostile territory to Jerusalem where his detractors will frame him with trumped up charges and crucify him unjustly.

But even when he is coming into this rebellious city instead of coming on a mighty stallion to wage war against these ungrateful rebels to conquer them instead of doing that Jesus comes on a donkey sauntering down the mountain in peace that's meekness third this is the last instance of the word in first Peter three four it's used to describe godly woman whom God cherishes people women he says are precious to him they're described as having their hearts clothed with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that word gentle is the same word meek humble if Jesus is meek in his heart then he is not irritable or easily exasperated when we come to him he is humble he is gentle he has the longest patience he has the most gracious disposition he is the most understanding of anyone we have ever known

Jesus also described as lowly in heart this is also a word that sometimes translates as humble for example in 1st Peter 5 5 which I cited earlier God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble it refers to those who are of humble estate as Mary says in Luke 152 so Romans 12 16 commands us do not be haughty but associate with the lowly haughty people only hang out with the high and the mighty but lowly people are fine with being associated with the lowly and Jesus is fine with being associated with lowly people like us no matter how far you have sunk down in your mire of sin Jesus is willing to go that low to lift you up 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 we should take the yoke of Christ the yoke of learning because Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart that's how we know that in him we will find rest for our souls for he says in verse 30 my yoke is easy and my burden is light a yoke is a wooden cross beam that is laid upon an animal or on a person to help them carry or pull a heavier load than they otherwise would be able to without it this is a symbol of burden it's a symbol often of oppression of control but wait didn't Jesus say earlier in Matthew 7 13 to 14 enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many for the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few the way of

[45 : 22] Christ that leads to eternal life is hard so then how can Jesus say that his yoke is easy there's no contradiction here the word translated easy here is a different word than the one that's used in Matthew 7 13 the word that's used here is a word that means kind for example when it says in Luke 6 35 that God most high is kind to the ungrateful and the evil or in Romans 2 4 when it says do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance or Ephesians 4 32 be kind to one another tenderhearted forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you all of these instances of the word kind that's translated easy in our verse it describes they describe how

God treats the undeserving sinner with forgiveness with forbearance with kindness in other words the idea of a yoke which conjures up images of control and oppression weight and burden is meant to be ironic the yoke that Christ offers is the yoke of freedom but how can Jesus lighten that yoke that was so heavy because God cannot lower the standards or lighten the burden without doing damage to his own dignity and glory and holiness how can Jesus offer us an easy yoke and a light burden Jesus can offer this to us because he himself has borne this burden on the cross he says in

Colossians chapter one and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross that heavy back breaking burden that we stumbled underneath that we crumbled underneath Jesus carried that on the cross he nailed all of our debt all of the legal demands of the law nailed it to the cross when he died on the cross for our sins and then after he as he was dying with his final breath Jesus said it is finished all other religious leaders tell you do do do

Jesus is the only one who says done it is finished I have done it I have carried the burdens of my people for them the leaders the Jewish leaders would not lift a finger to help lift their burden Jesus carried it all on the cross so that we might live so what is this yoke yes it's a yoke it's the yoke of submission to God but when I think Dane Ortlund uses this illustration in his book Gentle and Lowly when when a rescuer throws a life preserver to a drowning man tells him put on that burden put it over yourself carry that thing does that seem like a burden to the drowning man that's being rescued no that's life that's salvation in a world of tyrants in a world of that's governed by the prince of the power of the air who enslaves us to sin and death when

Jesus Christ the king offers service to him instead offers servitude to his kingdom instead and says you pledge allegiance to me and you are no longer beholden to any of these tyrants and you say gladly yes I will serve you Jesus I will submit to you for the rest of my life is that a burden is that that's freedom that's liberation that's the yoke of freedom that Jesus offers us so we can say as Paul said in Galatians 2 20 but the life I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives within me and the life that I now live in the flesh or in the body I live by faith in the son of

[51 : 07] God who loved me and gave himself for me he is no longer I we live out of the finished work of Jesus Christ Jesus Christ himself enables us and carries our burdens and helps us to live in faith and obedience that's why it's easy that's why it says in 1 John chapter 5 verses 2 to 5 by this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments for this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome for everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world and this is the victory that has overcome the world our faith who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the son of

God that's why Christian life is faith working itself out in love it is not work work work so that I might be saved no I am saved I am loved and we live out of the joy and freedom of that reality I pray that you will experience that in rich measure by the power of the Holy Spirit every day of your waking lives let's pray together Lord Lord

Jesus you were not ashamed to call us lowly! lowly sinners your friends your brothers and oh Lord we are not ashamed to call the crucified Lord the gentle and lowly Lord our Savior our Lord that's our Lord there is no one like you no one deserves our allegiance our praise our glory like you empower your saints

Lord to live out of their union with you Lord Jesus out of their fellowship with your very spirit in faith working itself out through love Lord I pray specifically for those who have felt like their lives have been heavy lately burdensome Oh Lord help them to relish the easy yoke the kind yoke and the light burden in Jesus name we pray amen to to and to to!