

I am tired. I have this backpack on my back that is filled. I see Russian aggression in the Ukraine. The shooting of a surface to air missile by the separatists that kills almost 300 innocent people. I look at the borders of the United States. The White House tells me they are secure, but I see 50,000 children crossing. The borders are not secure. I am not against little children, but I am against terrorists, drug dealers, and diseases that come across that border. I am against gov policies that are not being enforced to provide a clear path to citizenship. And then there is Palestine, where those poor Jews just want to have a small plot of ground, but the Arabs around them, want to blow them out of existence. My backpack is filled with sadness for this world and its unwillingness to do what is right and kind.

What is in your backpack? Is it heavy? Maybe your backpack is filled with the complications of getting older. The back hurts, the leg hurts, the knees hurt. The doctor's office is a regular main course in your life. Or maybe your backpack is loaded with family problems. You have children or grandchildren who are caught up in drug use, dealing with divorce, or aren't at all interested in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Or maybe your backpack has the sadness of losing someone you loved, or that person has some pretty serious health problems right now, and you are carrying the burden of trying to help them deal with it. If you are a non-retired person here this morning, your backpack might be filled with pressures to find work, or to raise Christian children in a non-Christian world. Whatever is in your backpack, you are tired, you are exhausted. You are looking for peace and rest. Jesus comes to you and me today and says, Come to me. "I will provide, "Rest for the Stressed."

Relationship problems, financial problems, health problems, the effects of old age.... These are all secondary causes of the weariness we might be feeling right now. But they are not the primary or "big-picture" cause of weariness. There is something behind this all... under this all. There is something bigger that we may not see or fully acknowledge that is causing us to be weary and burdened. The underlying cause is: sin. We and the rest of the world are carrying around this huge load of sin and guilt that weighs heavy on our hearts and minds.

In fact try to picture the load of sin visually. Imagine a very large potato sack. But this isn't a potato sack, it's a sin sack. Every one of your sins is a rock. And you carry the guilt of it around with you. You doubted God and trusted self. There's a big rock in your bag. You spread a bad rumor about someone. Rock. You were filled with worry about your grandchildren or children. Rock. You were lazy, unhelpful, selfish, rude, impatient, passing the buck, said hurtful words... rock, rock, rock, rock, rock, rock, rock. How big is the sin sack that you're hauling around? How heavy is your burden?

People frequently go through life assuming they must carry that heavy burden. They did the wrong thing, now they must bear the consequences for the rest of their lives. How would it feel to unload that burden and live guilt free? Is it possible? Many assume not. To remove the sin sack, we must know how. Listen to what Jesus says: 25 Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of

heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things [the truths that bring true rest] from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

To remove the guilt of our sins, we must know how. It must be revealed. The rest we seek is hidden from many. The rest we seek is not found where people think. The wise and learned people will tell you that relief from your burden of guilt is found in yourself. Do more. I know a lady who is interested in joining a church where she can do a lot of community service. She feels this will be fulfilling and will make God like her more. Yes, the wise and learned tell us, Try new techniques. Change yourself. Grow more. You can do it! People who listen to the “wise and learned” only end up bearing a heavier burden! Our sinful nature cannot get rid of the rocks... only add new ones.

Instead the truths that reveal the secret to unloading our burden are something revealed by God himself. And they are revealed to people who acknowledge they don't have the answers and they depend on the heavenly Father. Jesus calls such people, “little children.” Don't be an adult, be a child when it comes to God! Sounds strange, doesn't it? Don't we usually tell people, “Would you stop acting like a child! Would you just grow up!” But God says when it comes to the removal of our burden of guilt, we must be a small child before him.

You see, a little child knows full well that he needs his parents. When lost in a mall, the small child doesn't conclude, “No problem. I'll just go on home and meet them there.” When a small child gets hungry, he doesn't think, “I'll just run to the store and then cook dinner.” And when the mortgage bill comes in the mail, the child doesn't think, “I'll grab my checkbook and cover that this month.” No, for all their needs... even the basic ones... they rely on their parents. And in a healthy home, the child does not worry about food, shelter or transportation... he trusts his parents. And if it appears mom or dad is not around to take care of needs, then the child will worry, knowing full well he's not able to take care of himself.

When it comes to our relationship with God, when it comes to the removal of our burden of guilt, the true believer knows full well that he is a little child in his relationship with the Father. We are utterly dependent on him. For our needs, we must look to the Father. But what is his solution? **27 “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.** Jesus reveals a bit more about how to remove the burden of sin. If we rely on the Father, than we should know that the Father has entrusted this matter to his Son. The Father entrusted to his Son this matter of relieving our sin-burden. And the Son has revealed to you and I the solution for our sin, the relief of our guilt. And the Father's solution is this: Jesus Christ takes our sin-sack.

The whole burden. Jesus himself has no sin-sack. He had no burden of guilt. He was perfect. And in his love for us, he picked up our load. All of it. He takes it on his shoulders. He takes it to the cross. The Father's wrath for those sins is taken out on him. He dies, and our sack of sin is carried with Jesus to that grave where his body was placed. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and walked out of that grave. No longer did he bear the guilt of our sins. Through his perfect life and innocent death, the punishment we should have received was received by

Jesus. The Son reveals to you and to me, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life. And so with this background, Jesus speaks to us some of the most beautiful words in Scriptures. Does the burden of your sin and guilt weigh heavy on you? Have you been trying to carry them around yourself? Have you tried to free yourself from the guilt, but you have not been able? Jesus says this: 28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

So where do we find the rest we need? We are not told that we need more leisure time. We are not told that we are to take a vacation. We are not told that we need bed rest; rather we are told that we need the yoke. The yoke is the key to our rest. For so long we have been trying to work alone and we have worn ourselves down. It is now time to put on the yoke and get harnessed together with Christ. He says, “Come to me.

Jesus uses in our text an illustration from his day and age to explain his help carrying loads. He says that our situation is like the yoke placed on an oxen. It reminds me of a story I heard about a farmer in the old days plowing his field with a team of oxen. One of the animals was seemingly a little bigger than the other. The big animal was an older animal that was well trained and the smaller one was a young animal that was new to the yoke. They were yoked together for a reason. The older ox was the best ox the farmer had, he knew his way around the field. The older ox was more knowledgeable, and could teach the younger ox how to plow. If this never happened, the younger one would never learn to plow. By himself the younger ox would pull himself to death, but together he learned to cooperate and let the older ox help him.”

In like manner, Jesus’ yoke is made after the same pattern, the heavy end is upon his shoulder, and the lighter one is upon ours. Jesus tells us loud and clear this morning, we don’t have to live life alone, we don’t have to live life with all of our failures, with all of frustrations, with all of our burdens, but we must bring them to him. And then he will shoulder them with us, in fact, he will take most of the weight of our burdens upon himself. He will carry our burdens, he will lighten our loads.

Could there be a better situation for learning than when we are yoked together with Him? The problem many of us face today is that we know so little about our Lord. His desire is that we would have a full knowledge of Him. We can only learn of him when we abide with him. That is one of the important elements of the yoke; it keeps us bound together with Him in a place of closeness where we can be taught. You cannot learn anything if you are not around the teacher. Christ desires us to be yoked together with him so He can teach us.

In the yoke of Christ, we learn from Christ how to be patient in suffering, to walk humbly, to trust implicitly, to love intensely, and to rejoice exceedingly.

Want to be more spiritually rested! Quit thinking like an intellectual and think again like a child. Quit trying to carry the load by yourself. Yoke up with Jesus. He provides Real Rest for the Stressed!