

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

MATTHEW 11:28

Recently one of my adult children stopped by after a day of work at her new, first full-time job. She was exhausted. I had to bite my tongue and not blurt out, “Wait until you are married, have kids, and a job!” My younger college students often share how exhausted they are, and I have to confess I have said, “Wait until you enter the real world.” Perhaps the best place to begin is to confess that we all experience weariness and frequently feel heavily burdened and that often it’s our own choices that leave us exhausted. Whatever the cause, Jesus simply invites us all to come to him and he will give us rest. But there is more to the passage: “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 11:29). A yoke is the wooden piece which makes it possible for a heavy load to be shared equally by two animals. When we are yoked with Jesus, our load is lightened. This image is used in other places in the Bible to describe how a husband and wife are yoked together in marriage. But Jesus promises more than just a day off; he promises rest for your soul. Back to confession: Isn’t much of our weariness driven by trying to impress others, to prove our worth, to maybe even earn our salvation? The soul-resting that Jesus provides is rooted in God’s deep love for us. As we rest in that grace, we can be renewed and sent forth to love a weary and burdened world!

Reflection Questions:

- At what times do you feel weary?
- To what extent is your exhaustion from choices you have made? Why have you made these choices?

Family Activity:

Take a few moments to share what your perfect dream day of rest would be like. Partner up and take one arm each and lock it around each other’s waist sideways, so you are standing side by side, but with only two arms exposed. Now attempt a task in the house or yard, such as pushing a wheelbarrow or filling a cup of water while holding it. It takes both of your hands to complete the task. Many hands make work easy and sharing our burdens with Jesus lightens our load.

Teenage Activity:

Pick up a heavy object like a cement block and carry it as far as you can. Invite someone to share the load and see how much farther you can carry it. How was the experience different? How does this lesson apply to my daily life? What can Christ help me carry? Who needs my help in carrying their load?

Adult Activity:

Draw a cross. Under each arm of the cross write your list of burdens. The load is not yours alone. Christ promises to lighten your burden by you taking on his yoke. His yoke is his love and ultimate sacrifice for you. You are not alone in these burdens. Find rest in knowing that Christ carries them side by side with you. He will never abandon you or leave you. He will always be there helping carrying the load.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I often forget you during my busy and stressful days. Help me to believe and trust in your promise of rest in your yoke, and that you call me to help carry...