

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: “Heavy” from the “Rest for the Stressed” sermon series

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- In this section of Matthew, Jesus finished instructing the twelve disciples and was teaching and preaching in the towns of Galilee. In this final portion of His teaching, Jesus appeals to the crowds with an invitation to all who hurt or are in need.
- In verse 28, Jesus assures the crowd to come to Him “...all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Verse 29 continues, “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.”
- A yoke is a frame made of wood placed upon an animal’s neck, in order to make them pull a cart or plow. Throughout Scripture, the word yoke has several meanings: (1) is used to refer to slavery and hardship (ex. Gal 5:1; 1 Tim 6:1; Acts 15:10); (2) used to positive ways (ex. Matt 11:29-30); and (3) used to describe the nature of the work of the Church (ex. Phil 4:3-KJV).
- The NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible explains, “Only the poorest people would use a yoke to pull their loads. When used figuratively, a yoke represented slavery or submission; Jewish teachers spoke of bearing the yoke of God’s kingdom, through the yoke of the law. Only God would call the yoke of the Kingdom or of the law “My yoke”. Jesus frees people from the oppressive burdens of life. We are offered “rest” through love and peace with God.
- Verse 30 concludes, “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- Today's message acknowledges the *heavy* burdens that we carry with us throughout our lives. This can be seen and unseen! Too often we try to hide this.
- We live in a hurting world and are touched by brokenness everywhere around us.
- If we mask our burdens and try to conceal it, which creates a heaviness over time.
- "There is nothing more human than our bondage to sin and guilt. Yet so much of our human ingenuity is spent in concealing it." -Rev. Dr. Stephen Dill
- There is nothing more inescapable than our mortality and our suffering, yet, we spend so much energy denying this.
- What makes you feel heavy in your life? What are you carrying with you? How do we get through this?
- To get through these moments, Jesus teaches us to "come unto Me." We must bring our pain and brokenness to Christ.
- "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." Jesus is presenting an illustration of what life is like when we turn to God in this weary, broken world. We are never alone!
- It is helpful to reflect on not just *what* we are carrying, but *how* we are carrying our burdens. We were never meant to carry our burdens alone.
- Suffering secretly is a sign that we are suffering silently and singularly. You are carrying this burden with a singular yoke and not a double yoke.
- "My yoke is easy to bear, and my burden is *light*." We often define this lightness as our burdens feeling lighter, or not as heavy. What if this actually means "light"? In other words, *illumination*. God enlightened this burden and God transforms the heavy into a "light", which illuminates! We become "light-bearers" to the world!
- God can and will make meaning out of brokenness, God can redeem the hurt and harness it for healing and transform whatever is heavy into light.
- When we become followers of Jesus, even in the heaviest of moments, we can find joy inexplicably. In serving, in sharing, in holding one another until all heaviness bears lighter. Until all darkness is transformed into light.
- Although our lives may look like chipped clay pots, than golden relics, we believe that God will fill the cracks with light! God's mercy will hold it together. God will provide a way for us to be a light in the world!

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- While we are not promised a life of ease and comfort, we are promised a yoke that will bring us rest and comfort. How is Jesus' "yoke" easy?
- What are some areas of your life that you find hard and weary? How can you find comfort from what Christ teaches us?
- Read 1 John 5:1-4. How do these verses help us to understand this section of Matthew?
- How have you experienced the rest that Christ has promised to us? How can we help others experience this?
- What makes you feel *heavy* in your life? What are you carrying with you?
- What does it mean to find *rest* or *restoration*?
- What does it mean to be a *light-bearer* in this world? How can we become one?

