

Bearing Our Burdens

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28 - δευτε προς με παντες οι κοπιωντες και πεφορτισμενοι καγω αναπαυσω υμας.

Come unto me is *deute* the plural of *deuro*. It was an exclamation, a particle of excitement and exhortation used in the plural to address a group of people, (hence the plural), to come to Christ for something. In the plural Christ is addressing his disciples. And by way of application it applies to all believers in Christ today.

All is *pantes* the masculine plural of *pas*. Now *pas* refers not to everyone, but to a specific group of people. The group that Christ is speaking to, that this applies to, is the weary ones, those disciples of Christ that are wearied. So it is these weary ones that Christ is exhorting to come to him for rest, that is, rest for their souls.

We get more of a context in “*And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.*”, Luke 10:17, where the disciples had come back from ministering for the Lord and they were excited that even demons submit to them in the name of Jesus.

But not every town received the message with an open heart. “*Woe unto thee, **Chorazin!** woe unto thee, **Bethsaida!** for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, **Capernaum**, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*” Matthew 11:21-24

Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were pointed out as those who had completely rejected the doctrine of the Lord, which was accompanied by miracles. Now, as so often is the case, the men of God take this to heart the wrong way and feel that they have failed in some way in reaching the masses of people. So they end up with no results, after much wearying labor. But it isn't the men, or the message that failed – it was because they were negative to the Word!

Christ tells his men that whoever listens to **them**, that is, to their teaching, is listening to **Christ!** But whoever rejects God's communicators and their teaching, is **rejecting Christ!** But it doesn't end there, whoever rejects these men, and in turn are rejecting **Christ**, they are actually **rejecting God!** “*Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.*” Luke 10:16

Now Christ is telling them and us to come to him, so we can have **rest for our souls**. And it is the teaching of Christ that gives our souls rest! Case in point is right here in the passage. It is natural, after laboring long and hard in the ministry, or anything else that involves the expression of our Christian faith, to the point of exhaustion, to become burned-out and to feel like we have failed in some way. Now when considering these three negative towns, Christ tells us that these truths have been hidden from the wise and prudent and given to babes! “*At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*” Matthew 11:28

So what is this saying? That it all doesn't depend on us! *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”* Isaiah 55:11 We labor in the ministry, or whatever else God has assigned to our lives, we labor, yes, but the results belong to the Father! We have to learn to be content to let the results lie in the hands of God.

Then Christ tells us something else, something about himself, that he wants us to learn and implement in our lives to prevent us from becoming burned-out. He tells us that he is **meek** and **lowly** in heart. *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”* Matthew 11:29

Now the word for **lowly** is *tapeinos* and it deals with the area of authority, that is, there is always someone, who is in charge, one who lays down the rules, or gives the orders, and the one who is lowly, or humble, submits himself to his authority. And for all believers in Christ it is God the Father who is the authority and we are to submit ourselves to his will for our lives – just like Christ did!

The first word **meek** is *praos* and it deals with the attitude of the individual concerning God's dealing with him, in that, he does not resist it, he does not rebel against it, he does not resent it, he accepts it willingly and wholeheartedly, he accepts it as being good and fair, he does not fight against it. And this means that if the things that you have been laboring in as unto the Lord do not turn out the way you wanted them to, or expected them to, you're OK with that.

Case in point again, the three towns that rejected the gospel of Christ that had been given to them. We see no reactor factors whatsoever from the Lord. It didn't wear him out, he didn't get mad, he simply applied a doctrinal principle to it all that the Father had hidden these things from the wise and prudent and given them to babes. *“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”* Matthew 11:28

The same thing went for giving out the message to those who are openly negative. No reactor factors, just don't cast your pearls before swine! *“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”* Matthew 7:6

Christ was in complete submission and resignation to the Father's will. There was no frustration, no resentment, no feeling like a failure, because everybody didn't get saved, or because everyone didn't turn positive to the Word. He left it all in the Father's hands.

Now who is this group that Christ is addressing? **All ye that labour** – *hoi kopiontes*, the present active participle of kopioo. *Kopioo* referred to mental or physical weariness caused by extremely hard labor, whether in the woods, the mines, the study. It was used of soldiers in battle, or slave laborers. It meant to wear oneself out, to become exhausted. And in our language today it exactly fits the term “burn-out”.

Whenever anyone is subjected to prolonged physical labor, or mental stress, without any break from it, one will get to the place of **burn-out**. Now this can come from the ministry, from one's work or profession, from the home in dealing with family, from too many jobs, from exhaustion in the work place to go back home and face an exhausting routine there. In the present active participle it tells us that this has become a daily reality. But in context, this is not talking about burn-out from bad decisions, but from one's burden in life.

Now the believer in Christ has the same responsibilities and pressure that the unbeliever has, but he also has to **war on three fronts**: one, fighting the sin nature resident in his flesh; two, fighting the pull of the world system and its allurements, distractions and temptations; three, fighting against the demonic attacks of Satan and his army.

Warring in all those concepts will leave the believer exhausted, but then you add to that the heavy load that many believers have laid upon them, then you get into the area of weariness, or burn-out. For these believers it is vital that we learn how to get rest for our souls!

The next word is **heavy laden** and it is the perfect passive participle of *phortizo*. Now the first thing we notice that this is in the passive voice telling us that the believer has received the action of the verb! That is, it is a load, or burden, not of his own volition, but one that has been given to him to carry or haul. And, of course, the one who has given this burden to the believer is **the Father** in heaven.

The second thing we notice is that it is in the perfect participle, which shows that it has become a permanent condition or fixture in the believer's life. And it also shows that there was one, a beginning in all this, two, a development where it came to a point of culmination, and finally three, it now exists in a completed state where it's a permanent part of the believer's life.

The word **laden** comes from an old English word, lade, which would be our modern equivalent of load. So lade equals load. But what it actually referred to is the cargo that one would haul on a ship. The cargo would break down like this: a ship would carry its cargo from one nation's port to another; a bill of lading would be produced; from there it would be placed on ox carts, or carts pulled by workers, to be hauled to the town or city, or it would be placed on the backs of camels, if it was to be hauled across the desert. Once it reached the town, workers would place the lade, or phortion, on their backs to haul it to the individual store. The word **heavy** is added to the translation because the cargo one hauled would be **heavy**, so as to maximize profits. So **heavy laden**, phortion, could be the load one is carrying on his back and it could refer to the load one is hauling in a cart behind him.

Now the phortion, the load or burden we are carrying, is a separate matter from our own personal load! Our personal load deals with the area of our personal responsibilities; things that pertain to us alone. For example: we have a single man or woman, so the only load they have is **themselves!** Now maybe they have little money, which can be a problem, or maybe they are getting on in years and have failing health, which is another problem. Maybe they have had a rough life, or childhood, that still affects them to this day, and that's another problem! Maybe they have mental or physical problems they have to deal with. Their lot in life deals with their own life. They still have to come up with money for food, housing, clothes, medical needs, etc.. But all that is their own personal load that they, like all of us, have to deal with. That's the word **baros**.

But phortion is something different. It deals with responsibilities other than your own that are laid upon you to carry or haul. Let's say that the single man or woman gets married, now there is added responsibility. But let's say that one of them comes down sick or injured, the finances take a major hit, not to mention, that you also have to help carry the loved one through their sickness, injury, or disease. And add to that, one of the kids move back in and now you not only have another mouth to feed, oftentimes they come with major problems or attitudes! The load is getting heavier. **Baros** would be your own personal load that you have to haul the rest of your life, but phortion is the added load placed upon us by God that we have to haul along with our own load! So how do we handle this? By constantly going to God for him to give us the strength and rest for our souls!

Now the passage has connected *kopioo* - weariness or burn-out, with *phortizo* - being heavy laden. How so? What it's telling us is that **certain believers have become burned-out, as the result of having to haul the heavy load that the Father has placed upon them!** A load that they have to carry, or haul, in addition to their one personal load and fighting in the angelic conflict. Wow! Who is competent for this? No one, without the help and strength of the Lord!

Now our load, *baros*, deals primarily with ourselves, with **self**. But being **heavy laden**, *phortion*, deals with **others!** As one can see, one deals with self concerns, while the other deals with other people, which gets into the area of agape love. In being **heavy laden**, *phortion*, we do these things for other because of our love for them, or because of God's love for them! God is using you to help out his other children. He is doing it because of his great love for them, (he loves them as much as he loves you), and is using you as a vessel of honor and one that will be greatly rewarded. Now, obviously, God would never lay this heavy load upon us unless he knew we could handle it with his strength and help.

Now in this matter of being exhausted, or burned-out, as we would say, we find that it is in the present participle, which tells us that it is something the believer is presently experiencing. While the burden or load that he has been given to carry is permanent. But burn-out can be dealt with by coming to Christ for his strength and by applying the doctrine. In the flesh we will resent the load we are carrying, or rebel against it, or want to run away from it! But how God wants us to handle it is to come to Christ!

In Galatians 6:2 it tells us that we are to help each other, *allellos* – one another of the same kind, that is, we are to be helping other believers in Christ, in bearing each other's burdens. ***“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”*** - ἀλλήλων τα βαρη βασταζετε και ουτως αναπληρωσατε τον νομον του χριστου. And the law of Christ is **love!** So it is **love** that motivates to help other Christians in the personal burdens they are carrying, and it is **love** that motivates us to carry the load the Father has placed on us. The word **bear** here is the present active imperative of *bastazo*.

Getting back to the idea of *baros* being one's own personal load they have to carry throughout life, versus *phortion* being the added weight of responsibility, *baros* could look at a backpack, while *phortion* could look at the idea of a cart they are pulling. Galatians 6:2 would be the backpack and the analogy would be the brother in Christ is sick, injured, wounded, or exhausted, so another believer would come alongside to take some of the weight out of his back pack and place it in his own. Or, he would haul his backpack for him for awhile till he gets through the hard time he is suffering.

But it changes in Galatians 6:5, where it tells us that every man shall bear his own burden! ***“For every man shall bear his own burden.”*** - εκαστος γαρ το ιδιον φορτιον βαστασει. The word for **every man** is *hekastos* and it refers to each and every believer as an individual. The word for **shall bear** is the future active indicative of *bastazo* again.

His own is *idion*, from *idios*, and that refers to that which pertains only to that individual. And the word **burden** is *phortion* again, which refers to the added load of responsibility placed on you by God, or things that one is not necessarily responsible for, that one has to haul in life. So what we have here is **each believer is responsible for and must bear the *phortion* load assigned to him by God**. Why? Why is he responsible for this? Because it **his** responsibility and not someone else's! A believer might encourage a Pastor as he ministers, but he is not to shoulder the responsibility of the ministry for him! One might help out in some way a mother, who is struggling with her kids, but not raise her kids for her! One might help a farmer with getting his crop in, or dealing with an injured animal, but you are not to take over the farm for him. We all have to shoulder our own *phortion* burden assigned to us by God.

*“And I will give you rest.” - kago anapauso humas. Give you rest is the future active indicative of *anapauo*. The first thing we notice is that this is in the active voice, which tells us that it is Christ himself who will be giving us rest. The second thing it tells us, because it is in the future indicative, is that this is a promise from Christ himself to all who believe in him.*

*Anapauo is an intermission from labor, a break from work, a pause in strenuous activity. It is not a rest **from** work, but a rest **in** work! It doesn't take the burden, the load, you are hauling away from you, but gives you rest while you are hauling it. Much like having to pull your load behind you on a cart and over a period of time you get wore out, exhausted, where you feel like you can't go on any more. So you stop, take some time to relax, refresh, get some food, water and rest, and now you're able to continue hauling your load, because you still must haul the load to its destination.*

There is the idea of **the cessation from our labor**, or more accurately works, but what that's talking about is the ceasing of trying to handle things in our own strength and ideas, to stop that and start living our lives by faith relying on the strength and ideas of God! *“For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath **ceased from his own works**, as God did from his.” Hebrews 4:10*

There can be the problem, in certain situations, with physical exhaustion, but the weariness being described here is the weariness of the soul! Where the soul becomes exhausted, or wearied, so the rest that is needed, the pause in bearing our burden, has to take place in the soul. And this is where the doctrine of spiritual renewal comes in.

*Colossians 3:10, “And have put on the new man, which is **renewed in knowledge** after the image of him that created him:”, deals with that very matter. This tells us that the new man, which was created in us the moment we believed on Christ as our Savior, is **renewed**, *anakainoo*, by means of knowledge, or epignosis knowledge, which is the Word of God that we have metabolized by faith, the promises that we have believed.*

Now the word for **renew**, *anakainoo*, doesn't mean to create something all over again, but to bring it back to its original condition, to refresh, to reinvigorate, where something is just like new again. If someone is physically exhausted, they can be restored back to their original physical condition, after getting some good, nutritious food, some water, and some rest or sleep. They are physically renewed. And the same thing goes for the soul; a little rest, some good nourishment from the Word of God, and the filling of the Holy Spirit will renew the soul. This is its pause and its rest.

In a way, we're between a rock and a hard spot. On the one hand, we have this constant pressure from the heavy load we have to carry in life, and on the other hand it causes us weariness and exhaustion. The natural reaction is to dump the load and go on with our lives. But we find that this load has been permanently assigned to us from God, so we can't get away from it! So what do we do?

In the flesh we're always trying to figure out ways we can escape from it, or we can rebel against it, or we can resent it. But **none of those things solve the problem!** So what we have to do is apply the doctrinal situation to the problem and the first thing we do is realize that this load has been laid upon us by God. The second thing we need to apply is the doctrine of meekness, where we accept **all** of Gods dealings with us as being fair, so in meekness we learn to accept the burden he has laid upon us. The third thing we need to do, in humility, is accept his authority over us and submit to it in obedience. Which means that when God assigns to us our load in life, he also gives us his perfect provision to handle it, so we apply the doctrines by going to Christ for the rest our souls need.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:29 - αρατε τον ζυγον μου εφ υμας και μαθετε απ εμου οτι πραος εμι και ταπεινος τη καρδια και ευρησετε αναπαυσιν ταις ψυχαις υμων.

Now a lot of believers will say that, “**they can't**”, while other believers will rebel at the whole situation and say, “**I don't want to any more**”. Both of these situations are expressions of the flesh nature. For the believer, who keeps whining the same mantra that they can't, well the answer is they honestly can't! No one is capable in their own strength to do the will of God, or to carry the burden he has given you in life! So what's God solution for those who think they can't? They can through Christ! “**I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**” Philippians 4:13 What's God's solution for those who don't want to? Well the “I don't want to” is also the cry of the flesh for it is not only incapable of doing God's will, nor does it want to. “*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*” Romans 8:7 “*The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*” NIV

We need the filling of the Holy Spirit, which gets us out of the flesh nature, so we can accomplish the Father's will for our lives in every area and that includes carrying the load he has laid upon us. This is what Philippians 2:13 tells us, “*For it is God which worketh in you both to **will** and to **do** of his good pleasure.*” It says that it is **God** who works in us, through the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, that not only gives us the **power** to do his will, but also the **will** to do it, or to be willing to do it. So what we need to do is draw upon the strength of the Lord found in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and we will not only do God's will for our lives, but we will be able to haul the load he has given us to haul.

On the practical side there were many holy days throughout the year that gave man a pause from his labor, there were also many times throughout the year that they could relax before and after the harvest; then there was the sabbath day of rest once a week, and then there were breaks during the day where one had a pause in his labor. So for us, having a pause in carrying our load, can be having some time off, getting away from it for awhile, as well as, the faith rest dynamic.

“Take my yoke upon you,” - *arate ton zugon mou eph'humas*. **Take my yoke** is the aojist active imperative of *airo*, which is a command to begin an action. What this tells us is that these believers have wearied themselves to the point of exhaustion because of the heavy demands of the ministry. So Christ commands them to take his yoke on them.

Going back to our analogy of the Christian hauling his cart of the heavy load of responsibility that the Father has given us in life, the Lord commands us **to start yoking ourselves to Christ!** So now there is not one person hauling this load, the believer by himself, but now there are two people hauling the load, the believer and the Lord! One can only imagine how light the load will now become with Christ hauling it with you!

“And learn of me;” - *kai mathete ap'emou*. To **learn** is the aojist active imperative of *manthano*, which is to study certain doctrines under a teacher. In those days young men would sit under the teaching of one teacher or another; this was their school. The school of Plato, the school of Socrates, etc.. The idea was that they were to learn what he had to say, then apply it in their lives. Because it is found in the aojist imperative, Christ is commanding the men to apply a teaching in their own lives and to start doing it now. The active voice tells us that only they can do this of their own volition. To learn **of** me is the preposition apo, which denotes the origin or source of something, in this case, a teaching, so it is to learn from me. And Christ is using himself as a personal example in the matter.

“For I am meek and lowly in heart:” - *hoti praos eimi kai tapeinos te kardia. Hoti*, translated as **because**, for this cause, for this reason, now gives us the reason why. What teaching is Christ trying to convey to his disciples that he wants them to learn? What do they need to become, so they can have rest for their souls, while bearing their load in life! **Meekness and humility!**

And, as we have seen, **meekness** is that quality of soul that accepts God's dealings with you as good, fair, and out of his love. Therefore, you accept the things in life that you have to go through, or bear, because you know that they come from the hand of God. This is accepting the **Six P's**: the **plan** of God, the **power** of God, the **protection** of God, the **promises** of God, the **provisions** of God, and the **process** that God chooses to mature you. As it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “*In every thing give thanks: **for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.***”

And in **humility**, *tapeinos*, it means that we recognize that God is our sovereign and that he is the authority over our lives, so we are in submission to his will and commands. And what that means is that instead of chafing against the bit, we now accept the load from God that he has given us in grace to carry, but instead of trying to handle it by our own works and strength, we now handle it by faith, the power of the Lord and by applying Bible Doctrine to the situation!

“*And ye shall find rest unto your souls.*” - *kai heuresete anapausin tais psuchais humon*. Now why does Christ bring up the issue of **meekness** and **humility** in this matter of dealing with burn-out? Because it is when we resent, or resist the will of the Father for our lives, and when we rebel against being in submission to his authority over us, then we compound our misery and end up exhausted from “kicking against the goads”! “*We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’*” Acts 26:14 “*The words of the wise (Bible Doctrine) are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.*” Ecclesiastes 12:11

Burn-out comes from either trying to handle our burdens in life in our own strength, or from fighting against the whole concept, “kicking against the goads”. The pressure becomes stress in the soul, which will in time lead to burn-out of the soul. Now what Christ is telling them, and us, is to stop fighting against the Father's will for our lives, which includes the load, (whether light or heavy), that he has given to us to haul! Or, to stop trying to handle it in our own strength!

Now he says an interesting thing, “*you will find rest for your souls*”! The word for **you will find** is the future active indicative of *heurisko*, which means to find or discover. All you who are burned-out and carrying a heavy load laid on you by the Father, come to Christ and learn from him about being resigned to the Father's will for your lives, and by applying the doctrines concerning being in submission to the Father's authority, and you will discover rest for your souls.

Whether the Christian is **rested** or **burned-out** is a condition of the soul! And what determines which one is, if the flesh is controlling the soul, or if the spiritual life dynamic is going on in the soul. No SLD and the soul becomes burned-out. So the key for the believer is living in the SLD! But how can one do that, if they are fighting against the will of God? They can't! If the Christian is resisting, or resenting the will of God for their lives, then they are not filled with the Holy Spirit. No filling of the Spirit, then nothing but stress and burn-out in the soul, for the will of the Father is still there for the believer, even if they are fighting against it. So what do they have to do? Confess their negative volition, confess their rebellion, make the decision to accept God's will for you life humbly and meekly, exercise faith in the promises and doctrines of God and **bear your burden willingly in meekness and humility.**