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I. My Notes ... WWC message 2/21

II. Series: Finding Rest in a Restless World

- Title: The Great Exchange
- Text: Matthew 11:28-30
- Quote: You Must Know Your Audience ... Ron Cornelius (VP, My Brother)

III. Introduction

- If you feel like you've been doing some heavy lifting lately, you aren't alone. For the last few weeks, we have sat together in the tension of pain and suffering. We've looked the tough questions in the face. We've wrestled with the 'why' and the 'how long.' And if I'm honest, that kind of soul-work leaves you with a bit of a 'spiritual limp.' You're tired.  
We live in a culture that tells us the only way to deal with weight is to 'power through' it. We're told to grind harder, to optimize our schedules, and to somehow carry the weight of our families, our careers, and our anxieties on our own two shoulders. By the time we get to Sunday morning, most of us aren't just looking for a sermon; we are looking for a breath of air.
- We often come to the words of Jesus in Matthew 11 looking for an exit ramp—a vacation from our lives. We hear Him say, 'Come to me, all you who are weary,' and we might think He's offering a nap. But when you look closer, Jesus doesn't offer a hammock; He offers a yoke.
- To a tired person, a yoke sounds like more work. It sounds like another 'to-do.' But Charles Spurgeon, the great 'Prince of Preachers,' saw this text through a different lens. He once said: 'Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird; it helps it to fly. It is like the sails to a ship; it helps it to move. It is a weight that gives wings.'
- What if the 'Rhythms of Grace' aren't about doing more for God, but about changing how we carry the life we've been given? What if the very things we think are weighing us down—our commitments, our calling, our faith—are actually the 'feathers' meant to help us soar, provided we are harnessed to the right Person?
- We've come to a place where it might be good to begin a journey of trade-ins. We are going to take the heavy, jagged yoke of 'self-sufficiency' that has been bruising our necks, and we're going to trade it for a yoke that was custom-fitted for us by a Carpenter who knows exactly how much we can bear. We are moving from the 'why' of suffering into the 'how' of resting.

IV. Text

- I'll be referring to this passage over the next few weeks. It's the basis for our spiritual formation.

- **Matthew 11:28-30 MSG**

*“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”*

V. The Anatomy of Exhaustion

- Tired, worn out, exhausted ... we’ve been there. And as we have talked about pain and suffering over the last few weeks it can feel like we might be there again. In this passage Jesus addressed two types of tired.
- The "Weary" (*Kopiaō*): This refers to internal exhaustion—working to the point of sweat and fatigue. It’s the "hustle" of trying to be enough.
- The "Burdened" (*Phortizō*): This refers to external weight—it’s a ship’s cargo. It’s the stuff life has piled on you (the surgeries, the grief, the financial stress).
- *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened ...” (11:28 CSB)*. When Jesus speaks to the 'weary and burdened,' we tend to think of someone who has just finished a twelve-hour shift in the fields. And while that’s true, the Greek word Jesus uses for 'burdened' refers to something being piled on. In the first century, that 'pile' was the 613 laws the religious leaders forced people to carry. But if Jesus were standing next to each of us today, I believe He would look at our smartphones and our calendars and say the exact same thing.
- You see, we are the first generation in history that carries the weight of the entire world in our pockets. We don't just carry our own grief; we carry the global news cycle, the curated 'perfect lives' of people on social media, and the relentless 'ping' of an office that never truly closes.
- We are suffering from what I call 'Decision Fatigue of the Soul.' We are exhausted not because we are doing too much, but because we are carrying too much. We’ve piled on the burden of being our own providers, our own protectors, and our own priests. We are 'heavy-laden' with the pressure to stay relevant, stay productive, and stay 'okay'—all while processing the pain and suffering we’ve discussed over the last few weeks.
- Jesus looks at that invisible pile on your shoulders—the surgery recovery, the kids’ schedules, the anxiety about the future—and He doesn't say, 'Organize it better.' He says, 'Your soul wasn't built to carry a pile. It was built to carry a Partner.'
- Could it be that the treason tiredness is so prevalent isn't just because of what you're doing; it's because of who you think must hold it all together. Many (including me at times) are wearing a yoke designed for one, trying to pull a load designed for God."

VI. The Direction

- Understand that the first step to resolving exhaustion, to releasing the burden, is a choice not a task. It's choosing the direction that points to Jesus. The result of coming to Him is ... **"I will give you rest." (vs.28)**
- We often live as though there is an unwritten "Verse 27.5" that says: "Clean yourself up, get your act together, and finish your chores—then come to me." We treat Jesus like a reward for the disciplined rather than a rescue for the desperate. But look at the text: the invitation is sent to you while you are still "heavy-laden." Your exhaustion isn't a barrier to Him; it is your bridge to Him.
- The command is simply: "Come." In life today, when we get overwhelmed, we look for an "escape." We look for a vacation, a hobby, or a screen to numb the noise. But Jesus isn't offering an activity to help you forget your life; He is offering a proximity to change your life.
  - Renovation says: "Change your circumstances."
  - Relocation says: "Change your company."
- You don't need a new "to-do" list; you need a new "To-Whom."
- When we were talking about suffering, we learned that we can't always choose our burdens. But today we learn that we can always choose our Direction. You may be 'heavy-laden' by circumstances you didn't ask for, but the first step out of that weight is a single step toward the One who says, 'I've got you.'

## VII. It's Not What You Think

- Jesus continued, ***"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me ..."* (vs. 29 CSB)**. In the first century, a yoke wasn't just a piece of wood; it was a pairing device. Usually, a farmer would yoke a young, inexperienced, "frantic" ox with a seasoned, older, "master" ox. The veteran ox knew the proper pace. The veteran ox knew how to keep the line straight. The veteran ox carried the lion's share of the weight.
- When Jesus says, "Take my yoke," He isn't handing you a second harness to pull alone. He's saying, "Slide into the empty space next to Me. I'm already in the harness. Let's walk together."
- A poorly fitted yoke would gall the neck of the animal, causing sores and pain. But a master carpenter (which Jesus was) would custom-fit a yoke to the specific anatomy of the ox.
- Many of you are "sore" because you are wearing a yoke that wasn't made for you. You're wearing the yoke of someone else's expectations or a "religious" yoke of your own making. Jesus says, "Try mine on. It actually fits the way you were designed."
- The "Rest" Jesus promised in Point II is maintained in Point III by pacing. If the younger ox tries to run ahead, the yoke pulls tight and hurts. If the younger ox drags its feet, the yoke pulls tight and hurts.

- The secret to the "Easy Yoke" is simply matching the stride of the Master. This is where "Practical Discipleship" happens. It's the daily rhythm of asking, "Jesus, how fast are we going today? Are we stopping to talk to this person? Are we resting now?"
- We think that to soar like an eagle, we must break free from all restraints. But the paradox of the Gospel is that we only find our wings when we are harnessed to the Creator. You don't learn to fly by escaping the yoke; you learn to fly by walking so closely with Jesus that eventually, His strength becomes your lift.

#### VIII. Contend

- In **Jude 1:3**, he tells believers – “*I want to encourage [exhort; urge; appeal to] you to fight hard for [earnestly contend for; defend] the faith [C the authentic gospel message] that was given [handed down to; entrusted to] the holy people of God [T saints] once and for all time.*” **(EXB)**. This idea of contending is about standing firm in our faith, about living our beliefs, in the face of what is going on around us today. It is the understanding that we get to live in a way that reveals Jesus through the choices we make.
- "Now, you might ask, 'Rick, if the yoke is easy, why does the New Testament use such 'fighting' words?' Jude tells us to 'contend' for the faith. That word 'contend' (Greek: *epagōnizomai*) is where we get our word 'agonize.' It sounds like the opposite.
- But here is the connection: We contend for the faith because the faith is what keeps the Yoke easy.
- If we stop contending for the truth of the Gospel—if we let legalism, or self-help, or 'hustle culture' seep into our theology—we aren't just losing an argument; we are losing our rest. When we stop contending for the finished work of Christ, we start adding weights back onto the yoke. We start trying to pull the plow with our own merit again.
- Practical discipleship is the 'earnest contention' to stay in the stride of Jesus. It is a daily battle to refuse the heavy, jagged yokes the world tries to slide over our necks. We contend for the faith so that we can continue to enjoy the Rest."

#### IX. The Heart of The Master

- Jesus gives us the result of “yoking” ourselves to Him. “... *because I am lowly and humble in heart, you will find rest for your souls.*” **(vs. 29 CSB)**. In the entire four Gospels, Jesus only describes His own heart once. He doesn't say, "I am powerful and demanding," or "I am distant and holy." He says, "I am gentle and humble." \*\*\* Gentle (**Praus**): This isn't weakness. It's "power under control." It's the hand of a surgeon or the touch of a master craftsman. \*\*\*Humble (**Tapeinos**): It means he is "lowly." He is willing to get down in the dirt of your driveway to help you with your heavy lifting.

- When the Heart of the Master meets the Weight of your World, the result is “Rest for your Souls.” This isn't just a physical nap; it's the quietening of the "inner noise." It's the realization that you don't have to "perform" for the One you are yoked to.
- If you are afraid of the Yoke, it's probably because you don't trust the Heart of the Partner. We "contend" for the truth that God is for us, not against us.

#### X. Wrapping Up

- Pay close attention to the final words of Jesus here ... *“For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (vs. 30)*. The word Jesus uses for "easy" (Chrestos) means "well-fitting." It's the idea of a tailor-made garment. Following Jesus isn't easy because there is no effort; it is easy because it is the way you were meant to live. It fits your design. When we walk in stride with Him, the burden becomes "light." Not because the responsibilities of life vanish, but because the source of the power has shifted. You are no longer pulling the plow with your own adrenaline; you are pulling it with His grace.
- As we close today, remember that the "Rest" we've found here isn't meant to keep us on the sidelines. It is meant to prepare us for the work ahead. Remember, the work that God has done in you has prepared you for “good works” (see Ephesians 2:10) that honor Him and point others to the One who gave His all for them.
- If we have the right Rest, we can handle the Responsibility.
- You've done the heavy lifting of processing your pain. Now, for the next six days, I want you to practice the trade-in. Every time you feel that 'pile' of modern distress start to stack up on your shoulders, stop, and remember the Partner in the Yoke. Contend for your rest, because a rested soul is the only kind of soul that can truly do the work of God.
- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always