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Grace Episcopal Church  
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### Matthew 11:28-30

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 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.’

Oh, Lord. Let us find our rest in you... Amen

Good afternoon.

We hear in our Gospel lesson today, an invitation and promise from Jesus.

This is a message of Good News. It was good news to the disciples he was speaking to—and **it is** good news for us today.

Jesus came to show us a different way to be—He came to show us that **when** we tether ourselves to Him and to His way of love, we **can** know peace and find rest for our weary souls.

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I’d like to read this passage again, but this time, intentionally place emphasis on the 1<sup>st</sup> person language Jesus used...

‘Come to **me**, all you that are weary - and are carrying heavy burdens, and **I** will give you rest. 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.’

Reading it this way hits differently than I ever remember hearing or singing these words before - and it profoundly affected my understanding.

You see, immediately **preceding** this passage, Jesus is thanking God for revealing God’s true nature through Him—through the life of Christ.

Then immediately comes our Gospel lesson—where Jesus is speaking directly to His disciples—**and to us**.

He offers **Himself** as the way to be in relationship with God.

This language Jesus used would have caught the attention of His followers—**as** this NEW WAY—His way—of being was in contrast with the strict Jewish laws Jesus and His disciples had been upholding.

In the Old Testament, the use of the word **yoke** had a double meaning.

The rabbis spoke of the **Torah** and the **law** as a **yoke**—meaning servitude or bondage to the law.

This was an interpretation of the law as they had come to believe and practice—an interpretation that could make the adherence to their religious practices tedious work.

In our Gospel, Jesus offers us HIS yoke - His interpretation of the law.

The other meaning of yoke we find here, is the binding of two animals or two people—so that the burden of their work could be shared.

This is what Jesus means when he calls us to take on His yoke. He has given us the NEW commandment—that we would be **bound** in **LOVE** with one another. As Christians, Jesus is bound in love with each of us and calls us to love Him and our neighbors in return. Jesus calls us to participate with Him in bringing about God's dream for the world.

There. Are. Days. when we are weary and our burdens feel too heavy. Days when it is more difficult to trust in God and love our neighbors. Days when we can't seem to stop the voices of this world from drowning out the truth of what God wants for us.

But when sickness, despair, or violence overwhelm us, we are called to turn our eyes upon Jesus.

To take up HIS yoke—His law to LOVE—and to put down the burdens of this world.

We are called to love ourselves and one another—trusting that God is with us to help us do this sacred work.

This is Good News.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is with us. Right now. Loving us and sustaining us.