

INTRODUCTION

We were all born into this world with a heavy burden that was upon us all—that is, the burden of sin!

Romans 5:12—“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

Our sin that was upon us was a heavy burden that was destined to weight us down and cause us to sink into the quicksand of hell.

But God so loved us that He sent His own precious son, Jesus Christ, who came and shed His precious blood for us to enable us to have that burden taken away by faith and trust in His finished work!

Thank God that by the blood of Jesus and through faith in His death for the penalty of our sin, His burial, and His resurrection we are freed from that burden of sin! That heavy load has been taken away! Amen!

THERE IS POWER IN THE BLOOD! By Lewis E. Jones

*Would you be free from the burden of sin? There's power in the blood!
Would you o'er evil a victory win? There's wonderful power in the blood!*

Jesus' reference to the *yoke* here in *Matthew 11:28-30* is very interesting. It follows His invitation to the weary to come to Him and find rest.

If you are here today still carrying around the burden of your sin, I want you to know that Jesus is offering you rest right now! Rest is available for anyone who will trust in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Jesus says that taking on His *yoke* is the way we can find rest for our souls! Two times He speaks of the *rest* in the context of His *yoke*! Yet, when we examine what a *yoke* is, it is not an instrument of *rest*, but rather it is an instrument of *labor* that was placed upon the oxen at work!

If that be the case, then how do those who are *yoked* to Jesus find rest?

1. **Jesus says that if we take His yoke, we will learn from Him!**
The imagery used is that of the young, inexperienced ox being teamed up with the more experienced ox for training.

Jesus was saying that as we are *yoked* to Him, we learn from Him! He is the One Who is *mEEK* which speaks of the *gentleness and humility* that characterize His Person.)
So, in yoking up with him, we find *rest* for our souls!

BURDENS ARE LIFTED AT CALVARY, by John M. Moore
*Days are filled with sorrow and care, Hearts are lonely and drear;
Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near.
Cast your care on Jesus today, Leave your worry and fear;
Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near.
Troubled soul, the Saviour can see every heartache and tear;
Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near.*

2. **Jesus says that His yoke is easy and His burden is light!**
The word translated “*easy*” also carries with it the idea of “*good*,” “*gracious*,” and “*kind*.”

It is important to note that the Lord Jesus is not promising to remove all of our burdens!

However, He does promise to provide *His good, gracious, and kind strength* for us to be able to do His will while we are in His yoke.

There will be **burdens**, but by His **enablement** we can bear those burdens and those burdens will seem “*light*” in comparison to the yoke of sin that once bound us!

Jesus' *yoke* is a *joyful burden*! Make no mistake, there are burdens involved in serving the Lord Jesus Christ! Nevertheless, those burdens will be shared by the Lord Jesus Christ as we labor together with Him. *1 Corinthians 3:9—“For we are labourers together with God:”*

THE JOYFUL BURDEN
MATTHEW 11:28-30

All burdens are not the same are they? We know that burdens can vary in both type and intensity.

I want to look at three words translated that have the meaning of “burden” in the Bible and one word that is translated “labour” in the Bible that describe different aspects of the *burdens in the ministry*.

I. THE FIRST WORD TRANSLATED AS “BURDEN” IS A HEBREW WORD THAT MEANS “A BURDENSOME MESSAGE.”

No one likes to be told what they don’t want to hear. Yet sometimes it is our duty to deliver the unpopular message. The results can sometimes be extremely burdensome.

Could I tell you that the **true** Gospel message is not a popular message in this world of political correctness! Yet we who are Christians have a duty to proclaim it as it was delivered to us and as it is in reality!

This idea of a burdensome message was familiar to the Old Testament prophets who had received a “burden from the Lord” to deliver to different people groups.

They were commanded to deliver harsh messages of rebuke that sometimes they really did not want to give! The reason they didn’t want to give those messages most of the time is because they knew that the people did not want to receive those messages!

According to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Vol. 2, page 602)*, the Hebrew word that means “a burdensome message,” *mas’s’a*, is used 27 times in Old Testament prophetic contexts regarding severe announcements of judgment from the Lord.

Each time this word is translated as “a burden” it means that the message was a **burden to deliver** and a **burden to receive**. Some of these harsh and burdensome messages were delivered to various nations:

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Israel (**Malachi 1:1**); Judah (**Jeremiah 23:33-38**; Habakkuk 1:1)

Babylon (Isaiah 13:1)

Philistia (Isaiah 14:28)

Moab (Isaiah 15:1)

Damascus (Isaiah 17:1)

Egypt (Isaiah 19:1)

Arabia (Isaiah 21:13)

Tyre (Isaiah 23:21)

Nineveh (Nahum 1:1)

Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:1)

The preacher who courageously proclaims the Word of God no matter the consequences certainly understands the burden that this oftentimes represents.

There are certain subjects that I would just rather not preach! The reason I would rather not preach certain things may be for any number of reasons:

- 1) Sometimes I know it is not going to be received too well.
- 2) Sometimes I know that Satan battles against some messages more than others. (i.e. Hell)

Paul knew about this kind of burden when he wrote to the Galatians. *Galatians 4:16*–“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”

What Paul preached did not line up with some of the Galatians preconceived ideas about how things were.

That message of truth was a burden for Paul to deliver and for the Galatians to receive.

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Nevertheless, by the enabling power of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was a joyful burden for Paul. He did not back away from delivering the truth just because it wasn't going to be well received!

We too must not back away from delivering God's truth just because it isn't going to be well received!

II. THE SECOND WORD TRANSLATED AS "BURDEN" IS A GREEK WORD THAT MEANS "A BURDENSOME WEIGHT."

A burden describes a heavy load, a weight. This particular word is used in Matthew 20:12 regarding the burden of daily toil.

In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard:

*Matthew 20:12—"Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the **burden** and heat of the day."*

It is also used in 2 Corinthians 1:8 and 2 Corinthians 5:4 regarding the burdens of suffering while in life and ministry.

*2 Corinthians 1:8—"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were **pressed** out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:"*

*2 Corinthians 5:4—"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being **burdened**: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."*

These are general terms used to describe something heavy.

In a general way, it describes the weight of heavy responsibilities involved in ministry.

Yet, it is also true as stated in *1 John 5:3—"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."*

This again points to the joyful burden of sharing the yoke with our Lord Jesus.

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So, we've seen *A BURDENSOME MESSAGE* and *A BURDENSOME WEIGHT*...

III. THE THIRD WORD TRANSLATED AS "BURDEN" IS A GREEK WORD THAT MEANS "A BURDEN TO CARRY" AS IN "A TASK OR SERVICE".

It is one thing to have a burden weighing down upon you while you stand. It is another thing to be expected to carry that burden as an extra load of cargo while you walk. Yet, that is precisely the meaning of this other New Testament word for "*burden*."

A form of the word is translated as "*lading*" and is used literally in *Acts 27:10* of a ship's cargo, "*And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the **lading** and ship, but also of our lives."*

It is also used figuratively in *Matthew 23:4* of the unbearable burdens of the Scribes' and Pharisees' interpretation of the law.

*Matthew 23:4—"For they bind heavy **burdens** and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."*

These religious leaders expected people to carry the burden in their daily lives of the Pharisees' harsh interpretations of the Law.

In comparison, Jesus said His "*burden*" is light in Matthew 11:30. Of course there are *burdens* for Jesus' disciples. But these *burdens* are not too heavy to carry, for the Lord Jesus Christ is jointly yoked with those who heed His call.

It becomes a joyful burden with Christ at our side!

IV. THE FOURTH WORD TRANSLATED AS "LABOUR" IS ALSO A GREEK WORD, THAT LITERALLY MEANS "A BURDEN TO OVERCOME."

This word is used less than 40 times in the New Testament, but it is used frequently by the Apostle Paul.

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In Classical Greek, it originally meant “a beating” or “to strike something” or “the physical consequences of being weary.” (Liddell-Scott, page 978)

It came to refer to *any kind of work that leads to exertion, pain, or hardship.*

It involved not only the activity of exertion and toil and the process of work, but it also referred to the resulting fatigue and exhaustion. (*Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Volume 1, page 262.)

Paul used this word to describe the heavy burden of his ministry, which even caused him to receive physical blows.
(2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:23)

In Colossians 1:29, Paul described this kind of weariness coming to him as a result of his ministry to present every man mature in Christ, the goal for which he labored.

Colossians 1:28-29—“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

In *1 Corinthians 15:58*, Paul said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your **labour** is not in vain in the Lord.”

We can overcome the burden of our ministries, and the resulting fatigue, because of the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ who is yoked together with us!

His yoke makes ministry an exhausting, but a joyful burden!

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Conclusion

Whether it be A BURDENSOME MESSAGE, A BURDENSOME WEIGHT, A BURDEN TO CARRY, or A BURDEN TO OVERCOME, ministry for the Lord can be difficult.

It involves proclaiming a message that not everyone wants to hear.
It involves heavy responsibilities.
It involves the crush of daily burdens.
It can lead to exhaustion.

But in all of the burdens of ministry and service for the LORD, we have a wonderful Lord and Saviour directly at our side. He is jointly yoked to us!

And this causes our burden to be a joyful burden!

Is Jesus sharing your burden today? Are you yoked up with him?
Won't you come to Him today?