**Matthew 11:25-30**

I. Seeing Matthew 11:28-30 in its context

A. Many people in Galilee were not coming to faith in Jesus. They enjoyed the miracles but there was no true repentance (v. 20)

1. Jesus pronounces judgment (v. 20-24)

2. Jesus praises his father (v. 25-26)

a. Jesus looks beyond people’s rejection of him and sees the sovereign hand of God.

1) God is hiding the truth from the wise and learned (= the proud)

2) God is revealing the truth to children (= the humble)

b. Throughout the New Testament we see a God who consistently frustrates/thwarts human pride and consistently honors and saves the humble and broken who recognize their need for him

3. Jesus puts himself at the center of everything (v. 27)

Jesus has exclusive knowledge of God and the only way people get to know God is if he reveals God to them

B. So within this context of various responses to Jesus, Jesus is inviting those who are humble and broken and recognize their need for him to come to him to experience rest.

II. Acknowledging the burdens we carry

A. A yoke is a farming image: a bar placed on an ox’s head for tilling the land

B. When Jesus says “take my yoke upon you,” the assumption is that we are already carrying a yoke, and he is inviting us to exchange the yoke we are carrying for his yoke.

C. What are the yokes people carry?

1. The religious yoke of the Pharisees (Mt 23:4)

= a yoke of legalistic righteousness where we work in our own power to be good, to obey the law, to remove the sin in our lives in order to be acceptable to God

2. Cultural yokes of Orange County

= the expectations the culture places on us to be wealthy, successful, beautiful, accomplished

3. The yokes we place on ourselves

a. workaholics: I need to achieve in order to feel legitimate

b. perfectionists: I need to do everything right, not make mistakes

c. image managers: I need to control how others view me

d. people pleasers: I need to do things to gain people’s approval, respect

e. moralists: clean myself up in order to show God I’m worth his love

4. At the center of all these yokes is the self

= it’s up to me, I must prove myself, to justify my own existence

= and it’s exhausting

III. Jesus offers us a light yoke and restful life

A. Life with him is restful because when we are yoked to him, we are yoked to a very refreshing person

1. “Learn from me” (v. 29)

Jesus does not say “learn about me.” Rather “learn from me.” He’s inviting us to walk alongside him and learn how to live life with him

2. “For I am gentle and humble in heart” (v. 29)

a. He is not harsh, judgmental, or self-righteous; rather he is gracious and kind. So being yoked to him is a refreshing experience.

b. When we consider authority figures in our lives (teachers, coaches, etc.); more than what they teach, it is who they are that is compelling and impactful

c. In Jesus we have a mentor who is utterly refreshing/restful to be around

d. When we consider other possible yoke fellows (Pharisees, cultural expectations, our own workaholism or perfectionism), they are far more harsh and ruthless than Jesus

B. To be yoked to Jesus is to be yoked to a savior who died for us

1. Because of his sacrifice, when we are yoked to him by faith, we have God’s total approval, forgiveness, and acceptance before we even take our first step

2. We no longer have to prove ourselves or perform for acceptance, and so we are free to be ourselves and enjoy God’s grace

C. Jesus’ commandments themselves bring life and rest (v. 30)

1. If we actually follow his instructions and commands, we will be living life the way we were designed to, and so we will experience rest

2. His commands are not burdensome (1 John 5:3)

3. Not following Jesus’ commands is actually a much heavier and burdensome way to live

**Discussion Questions**

1. How do Jesus’ comments about judgment in Matthew 11:20-26 square with your view of him? How do we hold together a complete picture of a Jesus who can say what he does there with a Jesus who can say what he does in v. 28-30?

2. Consider the image of the yoke discussed on Sunday. What yoke are you currently carrying that you think Jesus would have you lay down? Practically speaking, how might you do that?

3. Consider the image of being yoked to Jesus and walking side by side with him through life. Does that image reflect how you experience your life or not? What ideas do you have for how your life might be a closer reflection of that image?

4. Do you actually believe that Jesus is a gentle and humble Lord (v. 29) who desires to bring rest and refreshment into your life? If not, what are the deep beliefs you live with in your relationship with Jesus?

5. Consider 1 John 5:3-4 and the idea that God’s commands are not burdensome. When you think of obeying God's commands, what is your natural response?  How might this passage challenge your preconception of obedience? Where have you in your own life experienced rest, refreshment and true life by obeying His commands?