

The Burden of the Lord

by Chuck Smith

Jesus invites us to surrender our lives to him and find rest and peace, a beautiful, deep, wonderful peace that comes from belonging to him.

Duration: 33:18

Scripture: Mark 8:36

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Eternal Salvation"

Description

This sermon focuses on the invitation of Jesus to come to Him for rest, emphasizing the heavy burdens of sin and the need to surrender to Him. It highlights the peace and light burden found in following Jesus, contrasting it with the consequences of losing one's soul for worldly gain. The importance of learning about Jesus from the Bible and the value of surrendering to Him completely are emphasized, urging listeners to consider the eternal significance of their choices.

Transcript

They say that a woman's prerogative is to change your mind. Well, that's a pastor's prerogative too. So our scripture reading today will be Psalm 38, not the one that's listed in your bulletin, but if you'll turn with me to Psalm 38.

I'll read the first and the odd-numbered verses and Pastor Brian will lead you in the reading of the even-numbered verses through this 38 Psalm. Let's stand as we read the word. O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, and neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as in heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh.

I am feeble and sore-broken, I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me, as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore, and my kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me, and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things and imagine deceits all the day long. But I as a deaf man heard not, and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.

Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. For in thee, O Lord, do I hope, and thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me.

When my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and any sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin.

But mine enemies are lively, and they are stronger, and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries, because I follow the thing that good is. Forsake me not, O Lord, O my God, be not far from me.

Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation. Let's pray. Father, as the psalmist is crying out in his distress, Lord, so often we find ourselves crying out because of the distress that we experience, and Lord, even that feeling of being forsaken.

But we thank you, Lord, that you've promised never to leave us or to forsake us. This morning, Lord, as we have gathered together before thee, we pray for a special blessing upon your people. Open now our hearts to receive your truth.

Speak to us, Lord, through your word, and we give thanks in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

Well, we continue our journey through the Gospel of Matthew. This week, chapters 8 through 11, so we encourage you to read them over, join with us tonight as we continue our journey through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, now in the New Testament, Matthew 8 through 11. This morning, we'd like to draw your attention to the 8th chapter, beginning with the 11th chapter, rather, beginning with verse 28, 11-28.

Jesus is here saying, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for I am meek, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus has just pronounced judgment and condemnation upon those cities where he had been ministering and working miracles because of their unbelief, and turning away from him. And thus he upbraided Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida. But now he gives gracious words of invitation.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. In the psalm that we read this morning, the psalmist said, For mine iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden. They are too heavy for me.

Have you ever felt like the burdens of life were actually heavier than you can bear, like too heavy for you to handle? Have you ever felt that you're overwhelmed by the feelings of guilt? Have you ever regretted some of the wrong things that you have done and wondered, How could I have ever have done that? Listen, Jesus is calling to you today. He is saying, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. The idea of rest is, well, rest is a synonym for peace.

I will give you peace. As long as you're living in sin, you're going to be at war with God. And as the Bible said, There is no peace, saith the Lord, for the wicked.

You find yourself fighting against God. The Bible warns, Woe unto him who strives with his maker. Striving with God, you have to realize, is a no-win situation.

How in the world could you ever defeat God? Striving with God, and if you did win, that is, if you reject him as he is calling to you, then you have truly lost eternally. So, I was reading about this prospector who was out in the High Sierras prospecting for gold, and he died out there and they found his body beside this little stream where he had been prospecting. And he had a little bag of iron pyrite, which is known as fool's gold.

And this little bag was clutched in his hand as they found his body there. And there was this note that he had scribbled, I died rich. No, he didn't.

He died poor. Iron pyrite has very little value, and he thought that he had the gold, but he didn't. And there are a lot of people today who do believe that they've found, you know, real riches and so forth, but they are poor without Jesus Christ.

You may have won against the voice of the Spirit of God that is calling you to repent from your sin and turn your life over to Jesus, but the Bible tells us that the wicked are like a troubled sea where there is no rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked. In the psalm that we read this morning, David said there in verse three, there is no rest in my bones because of my sin.

In another place, David said that I decided I would confess my sin because day and night your hand was heavy upon me. When you're fighting against God, it's impossible to have any true peace within. To that person who is struggling with sin and whose spirit is in turmoil, Jesus calls and he says, come unto me, all ye that labor heavy laden, I will give you peace.

The second thing that Jesus said was, take my yoke upon you. Now, what did Jesus mean by that? Well, the yoke was that device they used to put on the ox so that he could pull the plow. Jesus is saying, I have a work for you to do.

Turn over the reins of your life to me. Let me begin to guide and direct your life. I have a plan for your life, a work I want you to accomplish.

Many have resisted turning their lives over to Jesus Christ. They would like to join with Frank Sinatra in singing, I did it my way. Sooner or later, you will discover that doing it your way can just get you in a lot of trouble.

Our penitentiaries are full of people who sing that song, I did it my way. The wisest decision I ever made in my life was the day I decided to turn the reins over to Jesus and I said, Lord, you guide and direct my life. I surrendered my ambitions and my desires to his will.

And I began to sing, have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way. Thou art the potter, I am the clay. And now what a joy doing it his way rather than my way.

I don't know why so many people listen to the lies of Satan when he sort of challenges about surrendering your life to God. He said you better watch out about this business of surrendering yourself and saying, Lord, your will be done because you just don't know what things God might have in mind for you. And usually they have some awful story about someone who made some commitment to God and surrendering yourself completely and how that they ended up in Africa in this little thatched hut and there

were rats and vermin all over the place and they're lying there under their net and just shivering and scared to death.

And here I am in the center of God's will, but oh, I can't stand it. And like it's the worst thing that could ever happen to you is God's perfect will. Wrong.

The best thing that could ever happen to you is being right in the center of God's will for your life. I've heard so many boogeyman stories about people who have supposedly surrendered fully to God and then had horrible calamities take place, but opposite is true. The Bible said, delight thyself in the Lord and he'll give you the desires of your heart.

What God does, and it's just an ingenious thing, he plants his will in our hearts. That is, he gives me a longing, a desire to do a particular thing and a zest and a love for it. And then all of a sudden I discover this is exactly what he wanted me to do.

I'm right in the heart of his will and what a joy it is to be doing the things that God wants me to do because there's such peace, there's such contentment, and there's such absolute joy in doing it. As the prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 31-33, this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, says the Lord, I'll put my law in their minds and that I will write it in their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

What is he saying? God will put his law right in your mind, in your heart, so that that will be your desire and your longing to do this. And as I said, then you discover this is exactly what God wanted you to do. And you can say then with David, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.

In case you're questioning, Jesus added, my yoke is easy, my burden is light. It's interesting how that so often we hear people talking about how God laid this heavy, heavy burden upon me and I just don't know if I'm going to be able to make it. Oh, what a heavy burden that he's laid on me and I pray that God will help me just to bear my cross and so forth.

And, you know, it is possible that you can take on yourself more than what God has put on you. And I usually have discovered that the heavy burdens that are really too heavy for me are not things that God has laid on me, but things that I have taken upon myself and thinking maybe that I was doing what God wanted me to do, but in reality, I was just loading myself down with these heavy things. And he said, my yoke is easy, my burden is light.

Years ago, when I was pastoring in the very first pastor I had in Prescott, Arizona, a little church up there and I decided that I wanted to get close to the boys in the neighborhood and so I started talking to them about taking a hike down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. And so 17 of the little guys volunteered to go with me to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, hiking down. We were going to spend the night down at the Angels Falls campgrounds and then hike out the next day.

And so, well, I didn't have enough sense and I hiked down with these kids and it was not too hard going down. But, I mean, coming back up, that was another story. But we decided that we would stay at this Angels Trails camp.

And so in going down, we left the sleeping bags and all of the food there. We went on down to the river and then hiked on back up to the Angels Falls campgrounds and there we had our dinner and slept the night and then hiked out the next morning. Well, the next morning coming out, we had these little, some of

them were just junior high school boys, and they started saying, oh, I can't carry my sleeping bag any further, I'm too tired.

And so they made a pack mule out of me. And here I was, they were laying on me all of these heavy sleeping bags and so forth and I was trying to carry them out of the canyon and I began to think that, you know, I'm not going to be able to make it. And then I was praying and the Lord sent this heavy shower and it started raining really hard and all of the little kids began to scramble out and he saved me out of that because I don't know what I would have done had I tried to make it all the way out.

But I think that that's so typical. People oftentimes want to put their burden over onto you. And many times we don't have enough sense.

We try to carry not only our burden but everybody else's burden also. And, you know, the Bible, the Lord sort of rebukes the people. He said, I'm tired of hearing people say, oh, the burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord.

He said, I didn't put any burden on them, you know. And he said, I don't want you to use that phrase, Jeremiah, again, the burden of the Lord. I'm sick of it because people are complaining about the burden of the Lord.

I didn't put any burden on them. And I wonder how many times we're carrying burdens but not of the Lord. In other words, he didn't do it.

We took things on ourselves and maybe took on more than what we could handle ourselves. But yet so many times people are trying to interpret that as the burden of the Lord on them. But Jesus said, take my yoke upon you.

Learn of me because my yoke is easy. My burden is light. Then Jesus said, learn of me.

Why do you suppose he wants you to learn about him? Because he knows that the more you know him, the more you're going to love him. Because you're going to discover just how much he really loves you. You know, it's an interesting thing.

Some of you fellows have your favorite sports stars. You read all about them. You know all of their statistics.

You know how many touchdown passes that they've thrown. You know how many yards they've gained and all of this. And you know all of this information about them.

Because you admire their capacities and their abilities as a true sportsman. In fact, you know much more about them than you do Jesus. But you know, what you know about your sports heroes won't even get you a ticket into the game.

But what you know about Jesus will give you a ticket on into heaven. So he said, learn of me. But where do we learn of him? Well, I know of only one source of true information, and that's the Bible itself.

Too many people make the mistake of learning about Jesus from others. And many times the others that they are learning from are those who really hate Jesus. And thus they get a distorted view of Jesus.

And if you want to really know the truth about Jesus, read what those men said who were with him night and day for three years. Get their opinion of him. Read the Gospels and find out what they are telling you about Jesus.

And you'll get a true understanding of his nature, his character and all, as you read what his friends have said about him. Don't read what the enemies have said. You can pick up and look at some blogs and look up Chuck Smith and you'll find that there are some who have said some horrible things about me on the blogs.

They don't even know me. I've never met them. Never talked to them.

And why they do those things, I don't know. But they get some kind of a kick out of it, I guess. It's sort of sad that they write like they know me and so forth and say all these things.

And they hate me. If you want to know the truth about me, don't go to the blog. Go talk to my wife.

Go talk to my children. They know me intimately. And they can tell you the truth about me because they know me.

They really know me. And so I think that with Jesus, don't just listen to what other people might say about him. But go to those that were with him, who traveled with him, who were his disciples and find out what they have to say.

Jesus said, learn of me. He said to the Pharisees, you do search the scriptures, for in them you think that you have eternal life. But you will not come to me that you might have life.

The Bible is our best source for knowledge concerning Jesus Christ. But you wonder, why don't people use their brains? Jesus said, by their fruit ye shall know them. Look at the fruit of Christianity in our world today.

Look at all of the hospitals. Look at all of the schools. The things that have been created for the betterment of mankind because of a Christian influence.

But compare that with the fruit, say, of Islam. Their God, Allah, teaches them that they can serve him by giving their sons to die for him. To attach suicide belts to themselves, get on some bus and blow themselves up and kill as many people as they can.

And thus they are giving some kind of a service to their God, Allah. And he will reward them with 70 virgins. And it's a sad thing that the fruit of Christianity is the proof of Christianity in my mind.

Now what is the final result? You shall find rest or peace, Jesus said, for your souls. The first consciousness that you'll have once you surrender your life to Jesus Christ is just a beautiful, deep, wonderful peace. You go home, you lie down in bed, and suddenly everything is peaceful.

You just feel so good. And it's like, Lord, I'm not running from you anymore. I'm not fighting against you anymore.

I've surrendered to you. I now belong to you. Now I belong to Jesus.

He belongs to me. Not for the years of time alone, but for eternity. And to just know that I am his and he is mine.

And what a wonderful, beautiful peace there is in knowing Jesus Christ. There's a couple more things I'd like you to just consider very quickly. And that is in Mark's Gospel, where Mark speaks of this time where Jesus was saying, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you. Mark's Gospel adds that Jesus then said, For what shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? How rich do you want to be when you die? How much of an inheritance do you want to leave for your family and for your friends? How large of a bank account will it take to make you happy and content? What profit will it be if you attain all of your dreams, but in doing so, you lose your own soul? How valuable do you suppose the bragging rights are of going around hell and saying, I was the richest man who ever lived? What kind of satisfaction do you suppose that would bring to you? The second question that Jesus asked was, What will a man give in exchange for his soul? Should today as you leave the service, you get in your car, you discover that Satan has jimmed the lock and he's sitting there in the passenger's side, and as you sit down to drive home, he turns to you and he says, You know, I've been watching you and I like you. In fact, I want you.

And tell me how much to sell out to me, to become my servant and to just sell your soul to me. How much? Name your price. What would you charge him for your soul and for your servicing him? I'm certain that most of you would respond, Get out of here, man.

I'm not for sale. But I look at some people and I see how cheap they sell their souls for. Just a cheap thrill, an illicit relationship, foolish pride.

And I just wonder, if you have not yet accepted Jesus Christ, what is it that is keeping you from accepting him? What's holding you back from just surrendering your life fully to him? Is it worth it? Whatever it is that's keeping you from surrendering fully to Jesus Christ, is it worth it? Is it worth your soul? Is it worth selling out to Satan? I want you to consider that. Because, you know, that's exactly what's happening with so many people today. As you are fighting against the work of God's spirit that is calling you to surrender your life fully and completely to Jesus Christ.

To deny yourself, take up your cross and follow him. Father, we thank you for this beautiful invitation that Jesus has given to all of us. And we pray, Lord, that today we might consider this offer that he is making of peace, of eternal life, of joy, of contentment.

Lord, we pray that those that are here today who have been wrestling with the issue of what to do with Jesus Christ, Lord, we pray that this day the Holy Spirit will really speak to their hearts and that they might make that lifelong decision to just surrender and to yield themselves to serve you, to follow you. That they might gain eternal life with you in your glorious kingdom. We ask it, Father, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's stand. The pastors are down here at the front to pray with you today.

If God has been speaking to your heart and you're considering these things, I would encourage you to make the decision to just deny yourself, take up the cross, follow him. Let him have his way in your life. Surrender yourself to him.

Guaranteed, you'll never regret it. May the Lord be with you. May the Lord bless you.

May he guide you this week into a deeper, richer walk with him. And may the joy of the Lord become your strength. And may you just be blessed as you experience his touch upon your life.

The Lord bless thee. And keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee.

And be gracious unto thee. And be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee.

And give thee peace. God bless you.

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