



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

WHEN OUR BURDENS SEEM UNBEARABLE

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 11:28-30 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Psalm 25:12; 55:22; 68:19 | Zechariah 12:1
Matthew 26:36-38 | John 6:37 | Galatians 6:1-2 | 1 Peter 2:24; 5:6-7

► SUMMARY

When your heart is heavy, your body is weary, your emotions drained, and you're feeling discouraged, hopeless, and greatly burdened, where do you seek relief?

Do you turn to someone or something for comfort or a way of escape? There is a better option, and it's found in Matthew 11:28, "Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

► SERMON POINTS

When Jesus offered rest and hope to the weary, He was speaking to people who had very difficult lives. They were ruled by Rome, and many of them lived in poverty or slavery. In addition, under the Pharisees, Judaism had become a legalistic religion with standards that placed heavy burdens on the people. But this isn't unique to generations in the past. Today many people feel overwhelmed as well. Some are living on the edge and wondering if they can continue. And Jesus offers help to us as well.

In the Bible, two types of burdens are mentioned.

1. The Burden of the Lord. In the Old Testament, a divine message from God to a prophet was called a burden or an oracle (Zech. 12:1). The prophet felt a sense of heaviness, urgency, and responsibility to speak to the people the words the Lord had given him. Many times, these prophesies were a declaration of God's impending judgment on a person or a nation. Since

these were authoritative messages, they are recorded in Scripture.

Today, Scripture is complete, but we may feel a burden to pray for or help someone as the Spirit brings that person to mind. Or we could be convicted to tell someone about Jesus Christ and the gospel. For pastors, it's a sense of urgency to preach the truths of God's Word to the congregation. These promptings produce within us a similar heaviness of spirit, urgency, and sense of responsibility as experienced by the prophets. These are all ways God uses us to minister to fellow believers.

2. Everyday Burdens. Because we live in a fallen world, there will always be trials we must bear. They come in various forms—financial problems, health issues, family relationships, troubles at work, abuse, past regrets and sins, physical ailments, or the death of loved ones. They may make us feel burdened beyond what we can bear.

Jesus offers a solution.

1. The Invitation. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). The living Son of God, who is sovereign over all things and has all power, is willing and able to come to our assistance. Nothing is too difficult or heavy for Him to bear.

The scope of this invitation is universal. To the unbelieving, He offers salvation. He bore the punishment for sins with His death on the cross, and offers all who believe in Him forgiveness,

righteousness, and eternal life. “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24).

Since He was our sin-bearer, He will certainly bear our lesser burdens once we are believers. He invites us to come to Him with whatever is weighing us down.

- **Come in prayer.** Humble yourself before Him by admitting your weakness, telling the Lord what’s weighing you down, and asking for His help.
- **Give Him your burden.** Shift your focus away from it and onto the Lord. You’re invited to cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you (1 Pet. 5:7), and He promises to sustain you so you won’t be shaken (Ps. 55:22). He may not lift your burden, but He will strengthen you to bear it.

2.The Command. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me ... for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matt. 11:29-30). A yoke is a wooden frame placed over the necks of two oxen to evenly distribute the weight and align them as they walk together. In Jesus’ time, the people were under the religious yoke of the Pharisees who laid heavy burdens of legalism on them that even they couldn’t bear. Jesus told those who were weary with legalism to exchange yokes by taking His and learning from Him.

Jesus’ yoke is received by God’s grace through faith, not works. To take His yoke we confess our sins and receive Jesus as our Master and Lord. As His disciples, we learn from Him and respond in gratitude and love by living a godly life of surrender and obedience. As the daily burdens of life come, He helps us bear them and teaches us how to walk through them with peace and confidence in Him, so they don’t become unbearable.

3.The Assurance. “For I am gentle and humble in heart” (Matt. 11:29). The character of our Savior is a great

comfort for us when we feel burdened. He’ll never condemn or cast out one of His own disciples who come to Him in time of need (John 6:37). He deals kindly with us and humbles Himself to help us carry our heavy loads.

4.The Promise. “You will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:29). When we trust Jesus for salvation and for every daily burden, He gives us eternal assurance and peace in our hearts. As we keep our focus on Him, He replaces turmoil, fear, anxiety, anger, and frustration with restful confidence in Him. He comes alongside to bear our burdens so they don’t feel as heavy. Even though the burden may remain, our souls will be at peace because we trust Him with whatever we don’t understand.

Our first response when the trials of life become heavy should be to come to Christ, take His yoke, and learn from Him. No matter what we’re facing, He is sufficient to sustain us. But the Lord also provides comfort and support through His body, the church. As believers we’re here to serve one another, and part of that is bearing each other’s burdens (Gal. 6:2). Even Jesus asked three of His closest companions to pray with Him when He was burdened at the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-38). When we seek help from wise, godly believers, our burdens are lightened, and we both receive a blessing.

► RESPONSE

- Have you surrendered a burden to the Lord, only to rise from prayer and find it back on your shoulders? What role does your mind play in taking it back? What can you do to shift your mind away from the burden and onto the Lord?
- Sometimes we have trouble surrendering burdens to the Lord because we feel vulnerable if we have no control. What attributes of God qualify Him to handle your burden? How do your abilities compare to His? Would you rather have control or rest for your soul?

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