

## **"Lay Down Your Burdens"**

**Jesus said, "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" (Matthew 11:28-30).**

**Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,**

**If you feel like you are carrying heavy burdens, then listen to this invitation of Jesus: "Come to me,...and I will give you rest."** Perhaps you are struggling with health concerns. Maybe you have a loved one who is sick or who is facing big problems, like addiction or loss of a job. Perhaps you are dealing with depression or grief. **And now, during these unsettling times, maybe we all need to hear Jesus' promise even more: "I will give you rest....you will find rest for your souls."** There are surging cases of coronavirus across the country. We have witnessed disturbing police violence against fellow Americans who happen to have black skin. Millions of people are out of work. There is widespread anxiety. A recent AP News poll found that Americans are more unhappy now than at any time in 50 years.

**There is a heaviness in the air.** There are vast public health concerns, turmoil over racial injustice in our society, and political and economic uncertainty. And it's not only here, but all over the world the pandemic continues to take a huge toll in illness and death and economic damage.

**If you are carrying heavy burdens, whatever they are, hear again these words of Jesus: "Come to me, you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."** Notice that Jesus is speaking very personally to you. Picture him standing in front of you, looking at you with love, and saying these words to you. You are not alone. Jesus is with you. He is here to help you carry your burdens. He is here to face your problems with you.

**Yes, you have a part to play.** You can accept Christ with a trusting heart. You can pray for others and for yourself. You can give witness to God's love. You can tell others about Jesus. You can forgive others and listen to others and show them the love of Christ. But you cannot save anyone. You are not the Savior. Jesus is. You can point to Him.

**So lay down your burden. It is not all up to you. Learn from Jesus.** He regularly went off to pray. He took time for Himself, to be renewed. **Take care of yourself. Tend to your soul. Pray. Rest. Be renewed.** Taking care of your

spiritual and physical and emotional well-being is not being selfish. It is being equipped to come back and take up the tasks God gives you. But in that quiet place of spiritual refreshment, you can give your worries and cares to Christ. Lay down your heavy burden and take up instead the yoke of walking with Christ. It is not a heavy yoke. It is a light burden, and Jesus carries it with you.

**In this time, when so many other comforts have been taken away from us, it is wonderful to know that God's steadfast love and faithfulness endure, and they surround us and fill us and lead us forward.** When the burdens of life weigh you down, rest in Jesus' promise.

Journeying with you,

Pastor Steve

**"O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."** (from the service of Evening Prayer, Evangelical Lutheran Worship)