

Grace, Waupun, WI
July, 2020
Matthew 11:25-30

In the 1800's, people back east heard about a wonderful place in the West with cheap and fertile farmland, a place called Oregon. Thousands of people chased their dreams and headed westward on what became known as The Oregon Trail. (2,170 miles)

When families prepared for that journey, they had to decide what to take along and what to leave behind. Many families packed more than was necessary. When animals died or were injured, or when the wagons broke down, families were forced to lighten their loads. Scattered along the Oregon Trail were discarded dressers, beds, tables and dishes.

I am sure that when people had to throw things away, there were questions like, "Are you sure we can't take this along?" Other people would look at the stuff in the wagon and say, "Why are you still carrying all that?"

Today our Lord asks us the same question,
"Why are you still carrying that?"

What are **you** still carrying? Perhaps you don't think you have anything that needs to go. You could be the only person in the world with nothing to leave behind, but that's not too probable.

In the Gospel, Jesus talks about the worldly wise and how certain things are hidden from them. They don't see that they are carrying something they need to put down. They think they can keep going on with no problem. They just power their way forward. Others pretend they aren't carrying anything, so they aren't bothered. Some blame others for the baggage they are carrying, but what you are carrying is still yours!

There are people who think they need help carrying their load. They look around for friends to help them. But friends get tired of carrying our load, so they drift away. After all, they have their own

loads to carry. There is only so much we can ask friends to do. In the end, we carry our own loads.

Have you carried a heavy load? How did you feel when you put that heavy load down? Relief, right? The strain on your arms and back was gone! You could stand up straight and stretch your back. It felt so good to get rid of that load.

If only it were as easy to drop all the heavy things we carry all the time.

I asked you earlier, "Why are you still carrying that?" Perhaps you know what heavy things I am referring to. What you are still carrying is probably different from the person sitting next to you, but we are all carrying a heavy load!

Some of you might be carrying the weight of past sins, an arrest, an outburst of anger, things done and things left undone. Maybe you feel like King David when he wrote, My guilt has overwhelmed me, like a burden too heavy to bear.

Some might be carrying the weight of a heart broken by betrayal or abuse.

Some might be carrying the weight of temptations that could ruin your life, your marriage, or your career.

Others might carry the weight of a troubled conscience.

What about the fears we carry? Fear of sickness, fear of growing up, fear of growing old, fear of being alone, fear of the future, or fear of death.

Maybe you are carrying something else. Something I didn't mention. Something only you know about.

Wouldn't it be a cool thing if we could just put down all these sins, feelings, emotions, hurts, and sorrows and just walk away? You can! Jesus made it possible with His perfect life and innocent

suffering and death!

Jesus asks you, “Why are you still carrying those burdens? (Your worries, your sins, and your fears?) I will take care of those things for you! He says, Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give your rest. This invitation is from the Almighty God! It is from your Savior who died for you and rose from the dead to give you life!

You don't have to live under all the things that weigh you down. Whatever it is that is bothering you, Jesus wants you to rest.

Someone said, “Sleep doesn't help when your soul is tired.” But Jesus **can** help! Psalm 62:1 says, My soul rests quietly in God alone. My salvation is from Him.

When we give Jesus the burdens that wear us down and wear us out, He gives us another burden, the new life He asks us to live. We look for ways to show our thanks to God for the blessings of His grace. The trials we go through don't pull us down, they strengthen our faith. As we faithfully follow Jesus, the easier His burdens become! Jesus said, 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.

- If you are carrying the burden of past sins, Jesus said, “I came to save sinners.” (1 Timothy 1:15)
- If you are afraid of God's anger, Jesus said, “I drank the cup of God's anger for you.” (Luke 22:42)
- If your heart is broken, Jesus said, “I will heal the brokenhearted and bandage your wounds.” (Psalm 147:3)
- If you are in need, Jesus promises, “When you call out to Me, I will answer; I will be with you in trouble and I will rescue you.” (Psalm 91:15)
- Are you carrying the heavy weight of fear? Jesus promises, “Do not fear, for I am with you. I am your God. I will help you.” (Isaiah 41:10)
- If you carry the fear that you might become spiritually lost, Jesus promises, “No one will snatch you out of My hand.”

(John 10:28)

- We can rest easy when Jesus is there to help!

It had to be hard for people traveling the Oregon Trail to leave things behind, but they had to, if they were going to survive and finish their journey. It's hard for us to drop our burdens of past sins, broken hearts, worries and fears. But, Jesus will take care of them for us!

What a great deal! We give Jesus the heavy loads that weigh us down and He gives us the light load of peace of mind, forgiveness and the hope of heaven! Why? Because Jesus loves us with a love that never stops!

So, “Why are you still carrying that heavy weight?” Put it down! Jesus will take care of it. Enjoy, peaceful rest!

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