

Prairieland Parish

As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.  
May we together experience the presence of God

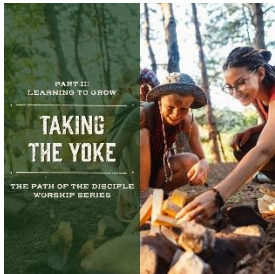
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**We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord**

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Announcements – Joys/Concerns**



**Opening Meditation**

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Who was Jesus talking to? Well, Jesus was talking to the people of the day who were weighed down by the rules put in place by the Jewish religious authorities. They couldn't possibly live up to the expectations set before them and they are weary from trying. Then comes Jesus and what an incredible invitation he extends to them.

But it's not much different today, is it? Many of us are weary and burdened. We are weighed down by what we are carrying. But there is hope because Jesus is inviting us to put down the heavy yoke.

And Jesus doesn't stop with the invitation, He follows up this invitation with a promise. If we go to him, we will find rest.

You see, we often have this picture of God just wanting us to obey him. But we got it backwards. He's not demanding obedience for obedience's sake. It's through obedience that we can enter the good life he came to deliver.

What Jesus is inviting you into a life free from unnecessary burdens. A life where you can find rest. The invitation is open, all you have to do is go to him.

He goes on to say: “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.” Matthew 11:28-30

We often think the meaning of this scripture is an invitation to take off our yoke and rest. But we miss this important piece. Jesus invites us to put his yoke on.

Following Jesus doesn't mean we are released from all responsibility. To take Christ's yoke upon you means to obey the Gospel and to submit to God's will for our lives.

Jesus is clear, there are expectations to following him. And it won't always be easy. But he's gentle. He's not like the other things we yoke our lives to that weigh us down.

Even in the difficult seasons we can find rest and peace because we are yoked to him. We aren't going through life alone and by our own strength.

And when Jesus goes on to says "my yoke is easy" he doesn't mean effortless. Rather he's saying his yoke is appropriate.

Folks, following Jesus requires work. But the work he gives us is fitting for what we can accomplish with him. His burden is light.

In contrast the burdens that many of us carry are heavy. Life heaps on heavy burdens on our shoulders. The religious expectations weigh us down. The trials that we face make us weary.

But Jesus' yoke is easy. Not effortless, but appropriate. With Christ by our side, he can lift those heavy burdens off our back and place them on his.

We come to the Lord this day in the words of Christ written in Matthew 11:28-30 which shows us God's intention for us. It's not to weigh us down but give us rest. God has a purpose for you, but his purpose isn't an unbearable burden, it's an appropriate weight. And you don't have to accomplish it alone, you are yoked to Jesus.

This passage should be a breath of fresh air. In a world that is exhausting with its toil, demands and trials, God has a different way for his people. His way is life-giving, and it allows us to experience the fullness of life.

Jesus has created you for a purpose. But that purpose is light when we are with him.

### **A Call to Worship**

Come on ya'll, let's worship the Lord!

Come to Jesus, all you who have suffered a beat down this week.

**Come to Jesus, all you who have experienced family turmoil this week.**

Come to Jesus, all you who are tired of conflict all around, tired of high gas prices, tired of glass ceilings, quotas, minimum wage jobs, and limited family values.

**Come to Jesus, all you who have a job that is getting on your last nerve.**

Jesus said, "I'll give you rest. I'll bring you relief. I'll provide your deliverance. I'll make a way."

**And Jesus will give us wonderful rest!**

**Come on ya'll, let's worship the Lord!**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

**In times of weakness and hour of need,  
yours is the strength by which we carry on,  
the shoulder we rest our head upon.**

**When our load is heavy and too much to bear,  
yours are the arms stretched out to help us**

the grace that we depend on.  
In times of weakness and hour of need,  
your voice is heard,  
'Come... find rest.'  
This is grace divine,  
the path we tread to wholeness  
of body and spirit,  
the path that leads to you,  
and for which we offer our offering of praise. Amen.

**Praise Hymn UMH #375 "There Is a Balm in Gilead"**

*Adapter and Arranger: William Farley Smith (1986)*

*Copyright: Adapt. and arr. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House*

**Refrain:**

**There is a balm in Gilead  
to make the wounded whole,  
there is a balm in Gilead  
to heal the sin-sick soul.**

**Sometimes I feel discouraged  
and think my work's in vain,  
but then the Holy Spirit  
revives my soul again. Refrain**

**2 Don't ever feel discouraged,  
For Jesus is your friend,  
And if you look for knowledge  
He'll ne'er refuse to lend. Refrain**

**3 If you can't preach like Peter,  
if you can't pray like Paul,  
just tell the love of Jesus,  
and say he died for all. Refrain**

**Old Testament Prophecy..... Zechariah 9:9-12 (NRSV)**

**The Coming Ruler of God's People**

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you;  
triumphant and victorious is he,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 He[a] will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
and the war horse from Jerusalem;  
and the battle bow shall be cut off,  
and he shall command peace to the nations;

his dominion shall be from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

11 As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,  
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

12 Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;  
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

This is the Word of God, for the people of God, **Thanks be to God!**

## Children's Sermon

### **Faith Hymn UMH #128** *"He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought"*

*Author: Joseph H. Gilmore (1862)*

*Composer: William B. Bradbury (1864)*

## Message

### **Prayers of the People**

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying "Lord, have mercy."

For the peace from above, for the loving-kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the Holy Church of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For our President, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For this city and community for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For seasonable weather, and for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who travel on land, on water, or in the air [or through outer space], let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who

remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Let us come to the Lord this day in voice and prayer as we unite saying: Our Father...

### **Offertory/Doxology/ Offertory Prayer**

*God of compassion and mercy, you claim each one of us as your children. Like a parent, you are joyful when we find joy and your heart aches when we fall, fail, or feel less than the beloved heirs to the kingdom you meant us to be. The yoke the Bible describes doesn't burden us but reminds us that you yearn for us to be a church, a community, that supports, steadies, and sustains when life makes us weary. The gifts we give this day we give in gratitude for this yoke that helps us finish the race in faithfulness. Bless our giving and its use, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. (Matt 11:16-19, 25-30)*

**Departing Hymn UMH #98**    *"To God Be the Glory, Great Things He Hath Done!"*

*Author: Fanny J. Crosby (1875)*

*Composer: William H. Doane (1875)*

**1. To God be the glory, great things he hath done!**

**So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,  
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.**

**Refrain:**

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
let the earth hear his voice!**

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
let the people rejoice!**

**O come to the Father thru Jesus the Son,  
and give him the glory, great things he hath done!**

**2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
to every believer the promise of God;  
the vilest offender who truly believes,  
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. Refrain)**

**3. Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,  
and great our rejoicing thru Jesus the Son;  
but purer, and higher, and greater will be  
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. (Refrain)**

### **SENDING FORTH**

As you go from this place, remember: Christ offers his yoke to you, promising to come alongside and stick with you no matter where your journey takes you. So, when your week gets hard, when you feel like you are at your wits' end, when the overwhelm is too much, Christ holds out his yoke to you. Will you take it? Amen.

**Postlude**