

## St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 22nd February 2009

### Good News – for those who are worn out.... Matt 11:25-30

Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "How heavy is this glass of water?" Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g. The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes." Most of us struggle either continually or so it can seem, or seasonally with a sense of being tired and weary... In verses 25 to 27 Jesus is claiming to be the very epicentre of all revelation. Whatever revelation there may be dispersed in human intellect, in nature or throughout history the absolute centre of God's "self disclosure" is Jesus Christ. Jesus is explaining this to his gatherers 5 different elements; Firstly he is clear that God the Father conceals and reveals as He sees fit. Secondly Jesus claims to be the Father's representative Thirdly – only the Father fully understands the Son. Fourthly only Jesus – the Son fully understands the Father. Fifthly – Jesus shares the Father's nature as well as ours and He alone can reveal the Father to us. He is the great introducer. This is what makes Christianity or the claims of Jesus so clear – there is no middle ground – we either run to a relationship through Jesus with the Father and in the power of the spirit or we deny the authenticity of Jesus claim. Having delivered such a bold revelation Jesus then delivers his rescue remedy!

#### **The Causes of weariness**

**Why are we weary and burdened? 3 factors...**

##### **1/ That's Life !**

Struggles in life make us weary, health factors, grief, relationship breakdowns... We work too much, get less sleep than we need and try to pack too much into our lives. When we do that we pick up and carry the burden of weariness.... Life makes us weary – physically, spiritually and emotionally. Work, money, relationships, cars, careers, health, children, you name it – pressure! We are all in such a hurry all the time. If we are not on schedule then we are behind schedule – rarely ahead of it and either way our schedules are designed to squeeze as much into the jar of life as possible. But we are eternal beings – designed to ask big questions, made to draw close to God and to worship him, designed to have time for relationship, we ask eternal questions – where did I come from, what is the meaning of life, where am I going, is there life after death? Left unanswered and buried beneath the burden of a wearisome busyness, such questions will steal our rest. In Psalm 23 we are reminded that we are sheep who need the shepherd to lead us into safe pasture, beside still waters... **the only job the sheep have is to watch the Shepherd –2/ Christianity or Christianitis?**

Christianitis! It starts a little while after becoming a Christian and joining a local church. You begin by serving the church in some way – like joining the coffee rota – good idea, then you join a small group – very good idea... after a few months you hear an appeal for side people – etc etc – before you know it you are busy doing church. All these things are good and worthy and within God's will they bring great pleasure to Him and to others but in our good and honest desire to serve God we can end up just getting too busy and the busier we get the more we can lose the intimacy of our relationship with Jesus. The medication for Christianitis is simple – its prayer. Come unto me all who are weary and I will give you rest... **If we make Jesus our priority then we will do good things, in His strength and not our own.** If we are always striving... doing more than we should - we become anxious and nervous. Trying to work it out ourselves without praying it through. We can want to do 100% for Jesus but sufferers of Christianitis do 110% and end up getting exhausted... we are called to ride the waves God creates and there is a rest between each ebb and flow...

##### **3/ The burden of sin**

There is a burden of sin which we choose to carry... We are burdened with a yoke of sin. A yoke is heavy. An ox can handle it, but for a human to shoulder a yoke would be rather difficult. Such is our yoke of sin. It is a burden. Sometimes we carry this Yoke around for years – feeling it is ours to bear alone but it is not – Sometimes we are particularly burdened by a particular sin. Something that you keep reliving in your mind, wishing you could change what you said or did. Just sometimes you wonder, whether God can really forgive – even this sin?! It's a burden we carry but **Jesus died for our sin, he went through all that suffering to take the burden from our shoulders upon his own.** Are we really going to sit here and cling onto our burden of sin? I hope not for to do so is to reject the greatest gift – the gift of life, the gift of Jesus forgiveness and the gift of freedom...

#### **The Road to Rest - How can we find this rest?**

When Jesus invites all who are weary and burdened, it is a universal appeal. He offers rest, and he says, "Take my yoke upon you" – take my yoke upon you and **learn** from me, learning is important... we need to learn to be utterly humble – but it takes time to learn. It takes time and patience and persistence to learn from Jesus who He says is humble and gentle at heart... We are not going to get there overnight; learning is gradual, every step becoming stronger and more confident as we learn to trust that Jesus' invitation is for real. Take my yoke upon you Jesus says and then you will find rest for your soul. My yoke is easy to bear and the burden I give you is light... If the yoke we bear feels too hard or too heavy then the chances are we are out of God's will in some way... The yolk that Jesus offers to us is one of **love – not duty, of peace not of striving, a response of those who are liberated – not the duty of those who feel obligated** and that makes all the difference. It is a yolk to bear which does not feel too heavy. A yolk whose burden fits perfectly. We can carry the light end and he carries the heavy end and the hard part.

This morning perhaps you feel worn out, or perhaps you feel that you have been carrying the burden of life or of sin for too long on your own. Jesus invites you and I to take His yolk upon us. In other words to give ourselves a break –

for His yolk is light. If you and I can receive the gift of His yolk, and partner with Him pulling through life's challenges and opportunities, allowing Him to carry the heavier part, then we will truly find rest for our souls for he is humble and gentle at heart.

So be at rest now, draw near to the Lord, learn to be with Him, watching TV, at work, cooking, in the shower, managing the kids, receive the gift of His yolk and literally "lighten up" for **the Road to rest does not require us to carry any luggage for the journey...**

**Remember too that Jesus offers to carry any luggage you have for you....**

---

Witness: questions to discuss

**Guidance:** Before discussion read the Bible passage and ask God to help you discern what the Spirit wants to say to your group. Consider one or two questions below – don't feel you have to use them all! Make sure there's plenty of room for prayer and ministry.

- 1/ What causes weariness in your life? What is in your luggage?
- 2/ Discuss Christianitis? Are you a sufferer? Review your "Church based activities" and during the week ask the Lord to help you to discover His perfect will for you.
- 3/ Discuss what it means to carry a "burden of sin". How does this feel and how do you think the Lord feels about it? A resolution?
- 4/ Share in what ways you find rest? What do you feel is the best road to the rest that Jesus talks about in this passage?
- 5/ In what ways could you practically "lighten your load"?
- 6/ Perhaps share one cause of weariness with one another and offer it to the Lord.  
Read verses 28 – 30.. meditate on them. Isaiah said this – "you will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you..."