



# Links Players

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## The Heavy Burden

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, 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, NIV)*

My wife is so annoyingly empathetic. The Mrs. and I were on the sofa watching a golf tournament. More accurately, I was watching the golf tournament, and she was doing the gazillion things she does on her phone. But she came up for air briefly and looked at the TV just when the camera was on a golfer and his caddy walking down the fairway.

“That caddy has to carry that huge bag and all those clubs up and down that 18-hole course?” she asked with a degree of wide-eyed dismay, conveying the sense that she would certainly never require this of a fellow human.

“Yes. But, to be sure, there is ample incentive. They get paid decently for doing it and quite spectacularly if their golfer finishes first. Let me also point out that he’s on national TV, and we aren’t.”

“I don’t care. This is chiropractic waiting to happen. That bag is monstrous and looks like it weighs a ton.”

“Probably does. I use a push cart myself.”

Today’s topic is a heavy burden. Jesus says his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. He encourages us to try it—to take it.

Here’s where I’ve arrived in terms of sifting this for meaning. It didn’t seem that in the Garden of Gethsemane, with crucifixion looming, Jesus considered his burden to be anything close to “light.”

And that doesn’t square particularly well with his comments in Matthew 11. Orthodox Christian teaching has it that his “burden” at that time was the full weight of all mankind’s sins, which doesn’t sound all that light to me. It’s a big burden. Big!

The key to this may be Jesus’ unique status as the God-man. True God and true man. As a man, this weight of sin would be unfathomably crushing. I think I heard it said once in a sermon that this may

have helped explain why crucifixion, which often took days to kill people, killed Jesus relatively quickly. Maybe.

But as God, the weight of the sin of mankind - immeasurable to us - probably is a light thing. Analogous to how we (correctly, from our perspective) view galaxies as being immense, but they're not all that big to God.

Unpacking the notion of "yoke" might be helpful, as well. "Take my yoke upon you," Jesus says. Rabbinical tradition taught that the "yoke" was the Law - the Law delivered to Moses and which bound the Israelites to God.

In Acts 15, Peter describes the Israelites' inability to handle that yoke: "Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?"

In other words, the Israelites never had much success fulfilling the requirements of God's Law. Not so, Jesus, who, in addition to keeping the Law perfectly, fulfilled that Law.

**Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you that your son fully bears our load of sin. Help us not to add to that burden. In his name, we pray.**

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