

Matthew 11:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Analysis

Jesus describes His yoke: 'For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Greek: ὁ γὰρ ζυγός μου χρηστός καὶ τὸ φορτίον μου ἑλαφρόν ἐστιν, 'for my yoke is easy and my burden light'). The word χρηστός means 'easy, pleasant, well-fitting' - like a yoke crafted to fit properly, not chafing or causing pain. Jesus' teaching isn't burdenless but the burden is 'light' (ἑλαφρόν) - manageable, appropriate, even liberating. Compared to legalistic religion's crushing weight, grace-based discipleship is freedom. The 'easiness' doesn't mean effortless but rather well-suited to our design, empowered by grace rather than sheer will.

Historical Context

Rabbinic Judaism multiplied commandments - 613 laws plus elaborate oral traditions. The burden was genuinely heavy, creating anxiety about perfect observance. Jesus offers grace-empowered obedience motivated by love rather than fear. Early Christians experienced this liberation (Acts 15:10, Galatians 5:1) while maintaining ethical seriousness. The paradox is genuine - Jesus' way is easy compared to alternatives, yet involves cross-bearing (16:24). 'Light' is relative to legalism's impossible demands and sin's enslaving burden.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How is Jesus' yoke both demanding (requiring everything) and easy (grace-empowered)?
2. What makes discipleship to Jesus lighter than alternative ways of living?
3. In what ways do we make Jesus' yoke heavy by adding legalistic requirements?

Interlinear Text

ὁ γὰρ ζυγός μου χρηστὸς καὶ τὸ φορτίον μου
G3588 **For** G1063 **yoke** G2218 **my** G3450 **is easy** G5543 **and** G2532 G3588 **burden** G5413 **my** G3450
ἐλαφρόν ἐστιν
light G1645 **is** G2076

Additional Cross-References

1 John 5:3 (Parallel theme): For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

John 16:33 (Parallel theme): These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Philippians 4:13 (Parallel theme): I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Galatians 5:1 (Parallel theme): Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Micah 6:8 (Parallel theme): He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Galatians 5:18 (Parallel theme): But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Acts 15:10 (Parallel theme): Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Acts 15:28 (Parallel theme): For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

Proverbs 3:17 (Parallel theme): Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

2 Corinthians 4:17 (Light): For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;