

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 χρηστὸς καὶ τὸ φορτίον μου ἐλαφρόν ἔστιν, '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' (ἐλαφρόν) - 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

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

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