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Don't you get tired of carrying stuff, dealing with stuff and having to sort through stuff that seems to make no sense and have no enduring relevance in your life? I know I do. The fact of the matter is that on a daily basis we get saddled with all kinds of challenges and opportunities. Some of these challenges are things that we have bargained for, some of them are things that get projected on us because of who we are or what we do and still others just seem to come completely out of nowhere. At times these things are heavy, in fact too heavy for us to bear. At other times some of them cause us weariness. Beyond these times other things can bring us great joy but it seems that those are less often than the troublesome times. A true sign

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PASTOR'S *Perspective*

of life is that challenges do come and obstacles do get in our way. So it is safe to say that challenges and obstacles are a sign of living. They give testament to the fact that we are confronting the realities of life. Even though this is the reality of life it still doesn't make it any easier to contend with them.

Matthew records in his gospel in the 11th Chapter a time of Jesus teaching and preaching to great crowds in the cities of the disciples. Jesus was a great teacher and He was always able to speak directly to the things that ailed people. Apparently, Jesus detected that there were people in the crowd who were wearying and troubled. Perhaps He had heard of the challenges that people were facing. At that time there was great struggle with law and grace. People who were strictly law adherent believed that the stuff that Jesus taught was hogwash. This was of course usually the thinking of the religious and government leaders. So they made it difficult for those who had historically been living under Mosaic Law to embrace Jesus and the establishment of the reign of grace. Jesus' message was aimed at two different things. He first wanted to let those who were suffering under the grip and burden of law to know that there was another way and it was the way of the Kingdom. He also wanted people who were suffering from the weight of life in general to know, as well, that they could become bound to a higher calling. In doing both of these things Jesus was attempting to assure them that in His gospel and the Kingdom of Heaven they could find relief for their burdens and their distress through the assurance of grace. He

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wanted them to understand that in Christ they had a "yoke mate" or someone who would help them through their burdens.

Wouldn't it be nice to have some help in those times of great distress and burden? Where does your help come from in these times? Jesus extends an invitation to the people of Biblical day and to us in these days. His invitation is to come unto Him. His invitation is such that we are challenged to give up the solo struggle and team up with Him so that in doing we now contend with Him at our side. So Jesus says to us that whatever we are dealing with, we can bring it and ourselves unto Him. We can bring all that we are struggling with unto Him. We can bring all that we are puzzled by unto Him. We can bring all that we are grasping to find resolution for unto Him. Life really is a struggle when we try it by ourselves. But when we team up with Jesus the struggles are lessened, the burdens become lighter and the way becomes brighter. Why not give it up and come to Jesus as we are. Don't come just as a remedy during the storm but instead come with a made up mind to stay teamed up with Him always. It will be amazing how easy the burdens become and how wonderful the rest that is found in Him truly is!

"Come unto me all that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens 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."