INTRODUCTION

- Last week we looked at How the Lord Jesus Refuels our lives.
- This week I want us to look at how to conserve the fuel in our lives by “Lightening Our Loads.
  - It’s a well-known fact that the heavier the load the more fuel you use or burn.
  - If you have a car or a truck that is loaded down and then you hook a trailer up to it, you know that it’s going to burn more fuel.

- It’s the same way with life.
  - If we are not careful, we can load ourselves down with the cares and burdens of this life and end up running on empty.
  - If that’s not bad enough we will often take on the cares and responsibilities of others.

- Please understand what I’m saying.
  - There is nothing wrong with helping others and sharing their burdens.
  - In fact God’s word instructs us to care for one another and share one another’s burdens.
  - However if we are not careful we will take on all the responsibilities of others while they sit by and wait for us to solve their problems.
    - God did not instruct us to do that.
- There is to be a mutual responsibility in sharing the burdens of others.
  - You and I cannot carry our burdens and all the burdens and cares of others.
  - If we do we will eventual run out of gas.

- Job 6:1 “But Job answered and said, “Oh that my grief were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.”
• The NLT says, “Then Job spoke again: 2 “If my sadness could be weighed and my troubles be put on the scales, 3 they would be heavier than all the sands of the sea. That is why I spoke so rashly.”

• Job felt and believed that the cares and burdens he was carrying were too much for him.
• Have you ever felt that way about your life?
  o You were just burdened down with too many things and you were running on empty.

• The point I want to make is this, “the heavier the load that you’re carrying the faster you run out of gas!”

• Here are two scriptures that God will help us to lighten our load.
  • Psalms 55:22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
  • 1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

• God wants to do this for you.
• He wants to lighten your heavy load and refuel your life with faith and passion for Him.

• Let’s examine How We Can Lightening Our Load.

• The Lord Jesus tells us How We Can Lighten our Load through three Acts of Faith.
• If you and I follow through with these acts of faith I believe this will start the Process of refueling our lives.

The First Act of Faith is to:

I. ACCEPT GOD’S INVITATION TO YOU

• We all get invitations in life.
  o You’ve received wedding invitations, birthday invitations, and graduation invitations.
  o You’re never going to get an invitation like this.
  o No one will ever offer you an invitation this good.
  o This is the greatest invitation you will ever be offered in your life.
• Come to Me.
• “Come to Me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in spirit and you will find rest for your soul. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.”
  o That invitation is to, “Come to Jesus!”
  o That’s the starting point.
  o Turn to Him.

• People come to Jesus for different reasons.
  o Some come to Jesus to ask Him a question.
  o Others come to be healed.
  o Some come to Jesus because they have a problem, they want advice, and they want eternal life.
  o But Jesus says you and I can come to Him and receive rest?

• You’ve probably come to Jesus for answers to your prayers.
  o You come to Jesus for encouragement.
  o You come to Jesus for a lot of things.
  o Jesus says, Come to Me for rest.

• It’s a special kind of rest.
  o He says this is rest for your soul.
  o It’s soul rest.
  o That is the deepest kind of rest that you need.
  o You can’t make it in life without soul rest.
    ▪ You’re going to go nuts.
    ▪ You’re going to fall apart.
    ▪ You’re going to throw in the towel.
    ▪ Your soul has to have rest.
    ▪ This is much, much deeper than physical rest.

• The biggest source of your stress is not worn out muscles
  o The issue is a tired mind.
    ▪ It’s tension.
    ▪ It’s worry.
    ▪ It’s fear.
    ▪ It’s anxiety.
    ▪ It’s guilt.
    ▪ It’s resentment.
- It’s problems that you’re thinking about over and over in your mind and that’s what you need relief from.

- Let me ask you question this evening.
- How do you relax and refuel yourself after a hard days work?
  - Many people go to the movies or to a good restaurant only to find that there is a crowd to fight.
  - Others try to relax and enjoy a good game on TV only to be disturbed and interrupted by phone calls, a spouse or kids.

- These are good things to do.
- There’s nothing wrong with any of these things I just mentioned.
  - But they will never give you rest for your soul.
    - You can take all the naps in the world but it’s not going to relieve the stress in your soul.
    - It’ll rest your body.
    - But it won’t rest your spirit, your soul.
    - None of those can rest your soul.

- There’s only one thing that can rest your soul – God.
  - God can rest your soul.
  - He can give you that inner peace that relieves you of stresses and pressures of life.

- Isaiah 40 “He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; He offers strength to the weak. Those who wait on the Lord will find new strength.”
  - Underline “wait on the Lord.”
  - The antidote to your overloaded soul is to wait on the Lord.

- What does that mean?
- He’s saying if you’re stressed out and run down, the answer is not a plan, a purpose, a priority, a program, a philosophy, or a pill.
  - The antidote, the answer to your run down life is a person.
  - Jesus says, “Come to Me.”

- Who is this invitation given to?

- It is given:
A. **To Those Who Labor.**

- There are those that are laboring to gain God’s approval and acceptance of them.
  - There lives can be summed with these words, “I’m trying to do better!”
  - These individuals live their lives running on empty because they are always trying to do better.
  - They want to live a better life than what they do.
  - They want more peace and joy than what they have.
  - They labor hard only to discover that the wages they receive isn’t enough.

- The only way to a better life is to accept His invitation to come to Him.
  - The only way to a life of peace, joy and fulfillment is to come to the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - The way to live better and do better is by coming to the Lord.

B. **To Those Who Are Over Loaded.**

- People are loaded down with the cares and worries of life.
  - People are burden down with a religion that offers no hope but is always demanding more than we have or can give.
  - We get so wrapped up in religious activities that we fail to build and develop a relationship with God.
  - Any religion that requires so much of our time that we don’t have time for our relationship with God is not of God.

- Jesus says I want to relieve you of all that.
  - I want you to have a personal relationship with me.
  - I want you to know me.

- What we really need more than anything else when we’re overloaded is time with God.
  - I don’t know the last time you spent time with God alone.
  - But it says, “Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength.”

- What does it mean to wait on the Lord?
  - It means you just be quiet and sit there alone with God.

- Some of you may have never done this.
o Others of you, you haven’t done it in weeks or months.
o That’s why you’re overloaded.
o You need to spend time alone with God in silence, Pray and read the Bible.

• Over and over in the word of God, God tells us, “Cry out to Me. Call out to Me. Talk to Me. Cast your burdens on the Lord. Bring them to Me.”

• If you’re running on empty this evening the first thing you need to do is Accept God’s Invitation to Come to Him.
• “Come to Me when you’re heavy laden, you’re burdened down, and I will give you rest.”

The second step is a little harder.

II. SURRENDER CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE TO GOD

• Matthew 11:29 29Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;

• Coming to Jesus is the first act of faith.
• Surrendering control or give up control is the second act of faith.

• That’s so important because the reason why we’re often so overload is we are trying to control too much.
o We think it all depends on us.
o I’ve got to hold it all together.
o I’ve got to make it all work.
o We are not the general manager of the universe.
o We can resign and it won’t fall apart.

• Here’s Jesus’ second solution.
o First He says come to Me, those of you with heavy loads, and I will give you rest.
o Then He says…“Take my yoke upon you.”
  ▪ That doesn’t sound too relaxing.
  ▪ That doesn’t sound much like rest.
  ▪ Take something else on?
  ▪ That sounds like a burden.
  ▪ I don’t need to take any more on.
• I need to take it off.
• This does not sound like a good solution here.
  o I’m already carrying way too much and now Jesus says “Take My yoke upon you.”
    ▪ That sounds like I’m going to get more burdens, become more overloaded, and have more pressure.
    ▪ If that’s what you are thinking then you don’t understand what a yoke is and what it’s for.

• What is a yoke?
  o It’s not the yellow part of an egg.
• **A yoke is a single piece of wood that brings two farm animals together, so the load is shared, so the load is lighter.**
  o A yoke is not a harness.
    ▪ A harness you put on one cow or one horse or one camel or elephant or whatever.
    ▪ They have to pull the whole load.
    ▪ They pull the entire cart with a harness.
  o With a yoke you team up two or more together so the load is halved.
    ▪ It is lightened.
    ▪ The purpose is to make it easier on the animal not harder.
    ▪ It is sharing the load together.
    ▪ Jesus says, “Take My yoke upon you.”

• When Jesus said, “Take My yoke upon you,” I believe that He had two things in mind.
• The first thing He had in mind:

  **A. Was a partnership.**
  • Jesus is saying, “I never meant for you to carry all your problems by yourself let Me help you.
    o I never meant for you to carry all that stress, all that burden, all those difficulties, all those worries by yourself.
    o Yoke up with Me, team up with Me, partner with Me and I will help you carry the load.”

• Jesus isn’t saying, “I’m going to add to your load.”
  o He’s saying, “I’m going to take some of your load off of you and onto Me.”
God doesn’t get over loaded nor does He get tired. He has a stronger back than you and I. So when we yoke up with Jesus it’s not so we can share His load. He doesn’t have one. The yoking is you sharing with Him so He can help you pull what you’re planning to pull.

- The purpose is partnership and the reduction of stress, the reduction of the load.
  - Somebody else is helping carry it.
  - And God’s got a stronger back than you do.

The Second thing Jesus had in mind was:

**B. Was of control of the partnership.**
- Farmers yoke up farm animals so that they will go in the same direction, to the same place, at the same time, in the same pace.
  - When you are yoked to another animal you can’t go faster and you can’t go slower and you can’t run off in a ditch because the other animal’s not going to let you run off in a ditch.

- We get into trouble when we’re not yoked to Jesus Christ.
  - What happens is we go too fast, we go in the wrong direction; we get sidelined and fall off in a ditch.
  - Every time you’re disconnected you’re going to get into trouble.
  - You’re going to fall off in a ditch.
  - But if you’re connected to Jesus, He knows exactly where to go in your life because He created you.
  - He knows exactly the pace you should go because He wired you up, He shaped you, and He formed you.
  - And He knows the time and the space and the place and the pace in your life.
- A yoke keeps you from getting into trouble.
  - It’s a guidance mechanism.

- When we’re yoked together with Jesus we move together in the same direction and the same pace.
The truth is you’re going to be yoked to something in life.
You’re already yoked to something.
  ▪ You may be yoked to your job.
  ▪ You maybe yoked to the expectations of somebody else, your parents, your husband, your boyfriend, your girlfriend, whatever, a teacher.
  ▪ You may be yoked to making money.
  ▪ You may be yoked to being famous.
But you are tied to something.
  ▪ You may be yoked to your own ego.

If you’re going to be yoked to something in life you might as well choose the lightest, easiest yoke.
  o Jesus says, “My burden is easy.”
  o The actual word is “My yoke fits perfectly.”
  o That’s what the Greek word means: it fits perfectly.
  o It’s a custom fit yoke.

It’s easy to wear because it fits you.”
  o God knows your shape.
  o He knows how you’re put together.
  o He knows your personality.
  o He knows what you can handle and what you can’t handle.

Are you Overloaded?
  o Stressed out?
  o Running on empty?
  o Come to Jesus.
  o Give up control.

Then He gives us the third key and this is extremely important.

III. LEARN FROM JESUS

The third act of faith is learning from Jesus.
The King James says, “Learn of Me.”
The NLT says, “Learn From Me!”
The New Century Version says, “Accept my teachings and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit, and you will find
rest for your lives. The teaching that I ask you to accept is easy; the load I give you to carry is light.” (NCV)

- He says, “learn.”
  - Underline “learn.”
- Learning is not something that happens overnight.
  - Learning is a process.
  - It takes time.
  - Learning is a lifetime experience.
  - We are always in a continuous educational program.
- You and I have to learn to reduce stress in our life.
  - We have to learn how to lighten the load.
  - We have to learn what to carry and what not to carry.

- We have lived so long in this fallen world that we have naturally taken to living the way the world lives.
- Coming to Christ and Surrendering Control of our lives to Him requires us to learn from Him on how to live and do things in a way that pleases God and keeps us from running our fuel.

- We didn’t get in the mess we’re in overnight.
  - The stress that’s built up in our lives and the overload that we experience took time to build up.
  - It will take time to learn how to unload and lighten the load.

- That means you’ve got to be willing to learn.

- What am I supposed to learn?
  - We need to learn Meekness and Humbleness.
  - We need to learn Gentleness and Humility.
    - Gentleness and Humbleness will relieve us of the aggression and arrogance in our lives.

**A. What is aggression?**

- Aggression happens when we do things too quickly.
  - We don’t wait or think about it.
  - We just jump right in with both feet.
  - You just jump in and in America we are taught to be aggressive.
  - The early bird gets the worm.
  - You’ve got to go for it with gusto.
• You only go around once in life.
• You’ve got to get out there and make it happen.

• That aggression of not waiting, not thinking through, not pausing, not pacing yourself, that sense of let’s just move forward, you get over committed.

B. The other thing is arrogance.

• What is arrogance?
  o Arrogance is the whole idea of trying to control everything.
  o I know what’s best for me so I’m going to control my life.
  o And I know what’s best for you and your life would be a whole lot easier if you’d just get with my program.

• The truth is when you try to do it all, have it all, be it all, experience it all that is aggression and arrogance.
  o You’re acting like superman or super woman.
  o The antidote is gentleness and humility.

• You need to remind yourself every day that you’re not everybody’s savior.
  o That God is God and you’re not.
  o You do what God wants you to do and you don’t have to worry about the rest.

• Jesus didn’t worry about what other people thought.
  o He didn’t even have His own preferences.
  o He just said I just do what I have come to do.
  o In fact, He says it twelve times in the book of John.
    ▪ “I just say what the Father tells Me to say… I go where He tells Me to go… I do what He wants Me to do…” as a result there’s a sense of peace in His life.

CONCLUSION

• You have tried everything else in stress reduction, why don’t you try trusting God one hundred percent.
  o See if that doesn’t reduce the overload in your life.
  o Accept the invitation and Come to Jesus.
  o Surrender control of your life to Him.
  o Learn from Him.
• I promise you that if you will do those three things you will feel your load getting lighter.