

## I. Intro: Sometimes I talk too much and my writing is too long

### A. Yes, I admit it (ask my family about that)

1. Even my recent pastoral evaluation hinted that some of you wish I would not belabor my points, but get to the point more quickly
2. That's fair enough

### B. Makes me wonder, I bet that some of you, when sermon time comes around, wish there were some kind of shortcut

1. Do you ever find yourself wishing preachers had a "Reader's Digest" version of the sermon? Well, here it is.
2. If you want a condensed version of my message today, there's actually two of them ... two ways that you can cut to the chase and avoid wasting your time:

a) First shortcut: Are there any here who have never carried a heavy burden on your heart? Any who've never felt burdened down?

(1) If so, this is your lucky day, because you can leave right now if you want. Really, you're dismissed!

(2) I don't want to waste your time because my message (and Jesus' message in Matt. 11:28) is not for you.

(3) So the first sermon shortcut today is very simple: Feel free to go if you have no burdens at all.

b) Now for those of you who do have some burdens, the second shortcut is pithy and to-the-point

(1) Here's the sermon-in-a-nutshell: ***Come and lay it down!***  
(repeat)

(2) That's all you really need to know this morning (repeat  
*emphatically*)

(3) In the immortal words of Porky Pig, "*Ebiddy-biddy-biddy, that's all folks!*"

c) *Pause*

### C. Well, looks like 99% of you didn't leave when I dismissed you,

1. and **most** of you are still trying to appear half-interested in what I have to say.
2. So I take that as license for me to elaborate a little more on "Come and lay it down!" (*back to pulpit*)

## II. (Getting in touch with our burdens)

### A. Early in the service we paused in silence just to give praise and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. I believe that his Spirit is with us this morning with the express purpose for us to come to him and find rest
2. Even now, from our very first worship song, I was hearing him beckoning each of us, adding the gentle words of that shortcut:

a) *Come! Now is the time to worship. My child, come and lay it down!*"

3. Debbie asked us to ponder how we came today ... You've already been asked to put down on that paper some burden you're carrying

a) Some of you had no trouble at all naming something to draw or write about

b) Some even had to narrow it down ... *which* burden to name?

c) A few of you struggled with this task ...

(1) You may feel very blessed these days and couldn't come up with a burden to write down

(2) I'll be honest, if that's the case, I think you're either

(a) blocking out the burden that you are carrying now *or*

(b) perhaps you're not yet self-aware enough to realize a burden that's hidden deep inside you.

4. Regardless of what (or whether) you put anything on that little paper, I believe Jesus has a word for you this morning, ***Come and lay it down!***

### B. Friends, we all carry burdens

1. We carry around heavy things that

a) make us not want to get up in the morning or

b) not want to face that certain person

c) We lug around fears and hurts that make us say to ourselves, "I can't keep going on like this!"

2. I can't claim that my burdens are truly heavier or lighter than yours, nor can I say that God cares more about my burdens than about yours

3. We experience our burdens in different intensities:

a) Sometimes we carry them only for a season, for a period of time

b) But there are people who also live under a constant weight that would just feel crushing to someone else ... (hardship after hardship, hardship *upon* hardship)

4. Some of you here today may be feeling that right now ...

a) If so, I think Jesus is especially talking to you in our Scripture today

b) And what do you think he's saying? (*elicit Come and lay it down!*)

### III. (A closer look at v. 28)

#### A. Every once in a while as a pastor I dust off some of my Greek language Bible study books from seminary

1. (you know, those "trophy volumes" that pastors display prominently on our shelves to impress people? Well, not really ...)

2. They really can be helpful in getting a glimpse of the New Testament's earlier meanings, before 2000 years of translations and interpretation have made us confident we know what it says

3. So I took a closer look at some key Greek words in Matt. 11:28

#### B. So what did I find?

1. Well, those of you who grew up on the KJV remember "Come to me, all ye that labor ..."

a) Word "labor" might give impression Jesus is talking to anyone who simply works hard for a living

(1) Most English translations use words like "weary" or "tired", but I think the meaning here goes beyond ordinary tiredness

(2) From the Greek word, (*kopiōntes*) we would see that Jesus is inviting people to come to him who are not just tired, but "worn out" or "exhausted"

b) Is that how you're feeling these days, mentally or emotionally or spiritually exhausted?

2. Another important word in v. 28 also showed me something interesting in Greek

a) From older translations like KJV there is a phrase that has a certain ring in our ears, but it's language that we hardly use today: "heavy laden"

b) Many of the more modern versions use the word "burden"

(1) What I learned from looking up the Greek word is that the verb means more than just actively carrying a heavy burden, as if Jesus were speaking to people who have only occasional burdens ...

(2) Greek word (*pefortismenoi*) implies a state of weariness, as in "you who always feel burdened"

3. So after my brief research, here's my own non-expert attempt at translating this invitation from Jesus:

a) *Come to me, all who are worn out and feel perpetually burdened ...*

b) *Come to me, all who are worn out and feel perpetually burdened, and I will give you rest*

**C. So if you're feeling worn out, beaten down by life, perpetually burdened, by now you know what Jesus Christ is saying to you ...**

1. Elicit "**Come and lay it down!**"

2. But even if you're not feeling exhausted and totally fried, you may have a burden, a secret burden that no one else knows about

a) Problem is, that burden may be weakening your walk with the Lord

b) That burden is a barrier between you and the Lord

c) That burden takes away from your joy in the Lord ... Why?

3. Because you're dragging that burden around all by yourself, all on your own power

4. No wonder you feel run through the wringer!

#### **IV. Conclusion**

**A. God did not intend for you to carry life's burdens all by your own power ... in fact, God knows that you can't!**

1. That's why Jesus the Lamb of God, the Good Shepherd, the Beginning and the End, the One who is faithful and true, took the burden of our sin upon himself

2. He offered his own life so that we might find rest for our souls

**B. Jesus didn't promise to magically remove all burdens**

1. He didn't say there will be no heavy times ... He didn't promise "Easy Street"

2. But he did promise rest for the weary

**C. Will you bring that burden and give it to him today?**

1. His life-giving invitation still echoes down over the centuries ...

2. *O my precious child, **come and lay it down!***