

Matthew 11: 25-30:
Jesus' invitation to come to Him

In this passage from St. Matthew's Gospel Jesus says that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. But how can this be true? Doesn't each of us, at times, have a heavy burden to carry?

Nobody needs me to say what makes a burden heavy. Everyone can look at their own life and make the list. And even if there is someone who has no worries or sadness in their life, they must be a very lonely person if they are not carrying a burden for someone else whom they love.

So, in what sense is Jesus' yoke easy and His burden light?

To see why the Lord's saying really is true after all, consider the condition He sets for getting the gift He offers to us, the easy yoke and the light burden: **"Come to Me,"** Jesus says!

To come to someone is to let that person come into you. It is to be open to them, to let their will make a difference to what you yourself will and do. This is not safe, generally speaking.

But when the Person to whom you come is Christ Himself, the vulnerability which openness brings with it is more than matched by the love the Lord gives. In the gift of that love, everything that might be loss is turned into gift given and gift received, to be returned again in love.

Even death is like this. One does not have to face death as if it was a depredation. Within the love of Jesus Christ, what might be only irrevocable loss of one's life can become a sharing with the Lord too. One can offer one's life as a gift to Christ, with Christ and for Christ as one goes through death to arrive at life in love with Jesus Christ.

And if the heavy load of death can be lightened this way, that what Christ says is also true about every other heavy burden: in coming to Jesus, in shared love with Him, we will find that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

A Litany of the Names of Jesus
Composed from the various names St Ignatius used for Jesus

Jesus, Son of the Virgin, have mercy on us	Jesus, poor and humble ...
Jesus, our Creator and Lord ...	Jesus, made obedient for our sake...
Jesus, eternal Lord of all things ...	Jesus, plunged in sorrow ...
Jesus, who created & redeemed us ...	Jesus, overwhelmed by anguish ...
Jesus, who is to be our eternal judge ...	Jesus nailed upon the cross ...
Jesus, divine majesty ...	Jesus, who died out of love for us ...
Jesus, complete & perfect goodness ...	Jesus, our Risen Savior ...
Jesus, infinite love ...	Jesus, now in glory ...
Jesus, our kindly Lord ...	Jesus, full of happiness & glory ...
Jesus, infinite wisdom ...	Jesus, our Consoler ...
Jesus, author & source of every blessing ...	Jesus, our peace & joy ...
Jesus, giver of every good gift ...	Jesus, our hope & life ...
Jesus, our salvation ...	Jesus, our reward exceedingly great ..
Jesus, our help & support ...	Jesus, true life of the world ...
Jesus, our Mediator ...	Jesus, our Model & Guide ...
Jesus, the power of God ...	Jesus, the Father's gift to us ...
Jesus, our Supreme Leader & Lord ...	Jesus, help us conform to Your will ..
Jesus, obedient for our sake ...	Jesus, move hearts to follow You ...

Blessed be the Name of Jesus, now & forever. Amen

Leaving Home

In the story of the Prodigal Son, the younger son left home. Home is that place in the heart of each of us where God lives, where God is the center of my being, where I hear the voice of God say: **You are my beloved friend;**

Leaving home is what constitutes sin.

Leaving home is making something else the center of my life rather than God's plan for me.

Leaving home is denying that I belong to God with every part of my being.

Leaving home is trying to create my own happiness in this world rather than receiving my happiness from God.

Leaving home is being so busy that I forget God and the people God has given me.

Leaving home is being more concerned with pleasing others than following God's commandments.

Leaving home is making myself the center of everything.

Leaving home is following my own plans without consulting God's plans.

Leaving home is trusting my own abilities rather than asking for God's help.

Leaving home is trying to create my own identity in life rather than developing my identity as a friend of God.

Leaving home is denying that God is the ultimate reality in my life and that of my family.

Leaving home is trying to solve my problems with my own wisdom alone and not asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Leaving home is losing faith in the One who calls me to be His friend and His companion.

Leaving home is forgetting how much Jesus Christ loves me and how He proved that love by His cross.

Home

Home is where I find meaning, strength, acceptance and love: everything I need to be happy, to be fulfilled.

Home is living in God's grace and friendship.

Yet time and time again I leave home and go to a distant land to seek happiness:

- making myself deaf to the words of God,
- seeking the love I already possess.

The sacrament of reconciliation is coming home!

Coming home is acknowledging that God alone can fulfill my longings for love and acceptance.

Coming home is letting God affirm my goodness despite my faults.

Coming home is having God wipe away my guilt, my fears, my sins.

Coming home is being embraced by God and hearing Him whisper once again to me – **Peace be with you.**

Coming home is looking into the eyes of Jesus Christ and seeing His acceptance and invitation to friendship.

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In your life:

When do you leave home?

What draws you away from God?

What prevents you from accepting Jesus Christ's invitation to friendship?

GOD IMAGES

- God the Manipulator: this god manages or orchestrates every detail of my life. If something bad happens; it's god's fault. If I suffer it's because god want me to. God blesses some with prosperity and curses others with poverty. God, according to this image strategizes obstacle courses for me.
 - The true God is the Creator who made us with free will, reason and conscience and the ability to make choices, which affect our lives.
 - The "I don't care God." This god is almighty but far beyond us and hard to reach. This is a clockmaster god who winds up the universe at creation and then lets it go; indifferent to creatures.
 - The true God is love Who took on human flesh. "In God we live and move and have our being." While God is beyond any image we have God is closer to us than we are to ourselves.
 - God the ATM: I put in my request and I expect a quick answer on my own terms. It's a demand and delivery approach. I measure god's love for me on how much he delivers and how much he gives me. This god only gives what I have in my account!
 - The true God is present at every step of my life, feeling what I feel, understanding my needs and requests; but not manipulated by my desires. God's presence is more important than God's answers and solutions. God knows our deepest desires more than we do. **Our God is generous beyond our imagination.**
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- God the taskmaster: this is the law giving, punishing god who is out to get me. It's an image of a god who waits for me to make a mistake and then zaps me. It's a god who tests me and if I pass the test he rewards me. My attitudes toward this god are shame, guilt and vigilance.
 - The true God is the God whose Son Jesus Christ gives us the resurrection gift of peace and constantly sends messages telling His chosen people not to fear. God is a God of mercy and compassion who knows our weakness, forgives us and is with us in our pain and suffering.
 - God the critical parent who loves conditionally. This is a god we can never please and yet we feel we have to please him to earn his love. If I do "this" god will love me; but if I do not god will withhold his love and maybe even abandon me. This god is created in the distorted image of an imperfect parent who is demanding, distant and absent and sometimes even mean.
 - The true God is the *Abba* of Our Lord Jesus Christ, an unconditionally loving parent. **We don't have to earn God's love because we already have it.**
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