

Well, good morning, Heartland Church.

How y'all doing this morning?

Good, good.

It's good to see all of y'all, to be down here in South County from South City.

It's a far, far drive.

I know, but I rarely venture out around two miles radius from where I live in Tower Grove Park.

So like Austin said, my name is Josh Jones.

I've been married to the love of my life, Kim, for 21 years.

We met in college.

And we have two boys, Deacon and Jackson, who are almost 12 and 10, going on way older than they should be.

And we do lots of sports and things like that.

My wife's a real estate agent, so we stay busy with ministry and all those kind of things.

And we've lived in St.

Louis City for the past 17 years now.

We came here

planted a church down in the Soulard area and about 2011 moved over to Tower Grove East where we are still seeing God's goodness and his blessing there.

You know, I met Pastor Jeff about the same time in around 2009 when I came and I filled in when he planted a church out in West County, which started out as a Mago day, but people couldn't really see it

Amigos Dios was one of the names I think somebody called in and all these other things.

And then Red Tree, right?

And then the fruit from that.

But I met him as a young punk who would lead worship.

And I came and I led worship a lot.

And those are some very fond days at the Sky Music Lounge out there in Baldwin, which was really an amazing, amazing experience covering up all the hard liquor with black sheets.

behind the bar for the children's ministry.

And so you'll have to ask him about that sometime.

It was really, really awesome.

But man, Jeff has been a consistent source of friendship, of encouragement.

He's been a voice of wisdom in my life.

He and Maren have been so good to my wife and I. And so it's an honor to be here.

and to fill the pulpit for him this morning as he's on sabbatical.

It's interesting.

I wasn't really going to dive into this, but we were talking about it in the pre-service meeting that a lot of people never really grew up with a pastor taking a sabbatical, right?

I know I didn't.

My dad pastored for many years.

He never took a sabbatical.

All the other pastors I knew didn't take a sabbatical.

And let me tell you, like, it's a really good thing, especially when it's done as like preventative care and maintenance, right?

You don't want your pastors, any of your pastors, any of your leaders getting to a point of burnout to where they have to take it and, and, and,

That crazy time of, are they gonna come back?

I don't know.

This is preventative, right?

This is, all right, Jeff and Maren, they've been at this for a long time.

They need to take a break.

Things are going good.

Things are going well, right?

But let's take a break.

Let's breathe.

Let's let God do some work in their life to rejuvenate them and refresh them.

So Heartland, I know you already pray for them, but pray for them in these next couple of months.

Pray that God would refresh their hearts, that he would renew their hearts, that he would renew their passion for ministry here at Heartland Church.

Not that it's gone away or anything, but that he would just give them a renewed sense of purpose and passion as they rest in the next couple months.

All right, go ahead, open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 11.

Matthew chapter 11 will be in verses 25 through 30.

If someone could shout out the page number, I forgot to look it up.

Shout out the page number in the Pew Bible here of what Matthew 11, 25 through 30.

That would be awesome.

Anybody got it?

No?

Shy?

Okay.

What page is that on?

970.

If you're using one of those pew Bibles, take it home.

You're not stealing it, right?

Like Austin said, page 970.

Hey, and if you're able, would you please stand this morning for the reading of God's word?

A reading from Matthew chapter 11, verses 25 through 30, says this.

At that time, Jesus declared, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

This is the word of the Lord.

You may be seated.

So let's build a little bit of context this morning.

We're at a point in the book of Matthew, the gospel of Matthew, where Jesus begins to face some significant opposition to his ministry.

And here in chapter 11, specifically, we see John the Baptist is in jail, but he sends some of his disciples to inquire of Jesus, if he really is the Messiah, that he and Israel had been waiting for.

And then this kind of continues on into chapter 12, where he really experiences some growing desire

deep, overtly hostile attitudes from the religious leaders, the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

But before our text today, what we do is we see Jesus, he responds to John the Baptist's questions, okay?

And if you go back and look, John's just really nervous.

He's in prison, right?

And he already knows that Jesus is the Messiah, right?

He

He showed up and he heard God declare this, but he's really looking for some assurance.

And so Jesus encourages him and kind of rebukes him at the same time, okay?

And then Jesus goes on to speak words of judgment for those who are unrepentant, giving us a warning that if we don't soften our hearts to the goodness and grace of the gospel, that there will be judgment on our lives.

And in our text today here in Matthew 11, 25 through 30, we're going to see Jesus extend an invitation to all who are weary to find rest in him.

And so with that as the backdrop this morning, pray with me and let's dive in.

Jesus, we confess that we need you right now.

Every moment of every day.

We need your words of life to comfort those of us who are hurting.

We need them to convict those of us who are hardening in sin.

Jesus, we need the power of your spirit to fill us and to move us, making us into the people that you have called us and destined us to be.

You know our hearts.

You know our minds.

So through the truth of your word, the power of your spirit, would you open them to your life-giving truth today, Jesus?

It's in your name we pray.

Amen.

Well, we're in summertime, right?

It's finally getting a little bit warm.

My kids have been out of school for a couple weeks.

I know everybody's kind of wrapping up school, unless you're one of those homeschool families that we have in our church that we were at their house for dinner the other night, and they're like, yeah, we're doing school on vacation.

And I was like, man, that's really...

Great.

Man, you may get to sleep until 10 o'clock every morning, but doing math at the Grand Canyon doesn't seem that fun to me.

But during the summer, my boys love not getting up at all.

We went on an early vacation a few weeks ago and we were at a condo in Branson and my oldest son Deacon had blackout shades in his room and it was just a really chill thing.

We didn't have really an agenda and y'all at three o'clock in the afternoon, I'm gonna walk into his room

I'm like, dude, you've got to get up.

He's like, Dad, it's so dark and so warm and so comfy in here.

I know, but you're going to be up until 3 o'clock tomorrow if you don't get up right now.

In the summer, both of my boys, they have to get up early to go to school.

Deacon's got to be at school at 7, 15.

Jackson's got to be at school at 8.

They're not morning people.

In the summer, it seems like they try as hard as possible to make up for the lost sleep that they didn't get

during the school year.

Okay.

And they're really good at it.

They're really good at it.

You know, I say this because it seems that as a society as a whole, we're always trying to catch up on lost rest.

Right?

It's a myth, right?

You don't you can't ever get back the sleep that you missed or the rest that you missed.

But but I you know, like, you've heard people say, Hey, what'd you do this weekend?

Oh, you know, we didn't do a whole I just caught up on some rest.

We're always trying to catch up on rest.

Through the popularity of terms like burnout and self-care, we see a trend that as Americans, our tendency is to run past empty, right?

And then try to catch up on as much rest as we can in the shortest amount of time.

We're always busy.

We're always stressed.

We're always tired.

And it feels like we're always running behind.

You guys agree?

You guys track with that?

But listen to this, friends.

Those of us who are in Christ and are a part of his church, we need to be reminded of the promises of Jesus when it comes to the idea of rest.

It is a reality, not an illusion.

It's available for us.

So here's the first thing we're going to see today is that God desires to give us rest.

Rest.

God desires to give us rest.

And in biblical terms, the idea of rest is often referred to as the Sabbath, which means to cease from work.

It's actually where you get the word sabbatical from, right?

And the Old Testament is full of this, you know, observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, but also there was Jewish customs of every seventh year.

There was a rhythm of Sabbaths for fields and people being free of debt and being released from prison.

And where does this all come from?

It's actually set forth by God the Father, the creator of heaven and earth, all himself, because what did he do on the seventh day of creation?

He rested.

He rested.

God reinforces all these things throughout the Ten Commandments and throughout the law.

And in Mark 2.27, Jesus puts that into perspective when he teaches his disciples, and you probably heard this said that the Sabbath was made for man, right?

not man for the Sabbath.

What this means is that God created and instituted the Sabbath, the rest, the ceasing from the toil of work as something to serve his people and not for his people to serve it.

Friends, we have to see and understand that rest is a part of the natural rhythm of God's world.

It is something that he established from the beginning and it existed before sin even entered the world.

I don't know about you, but I hear all the time, you're just, this word that, at first I was like, that's really cool, but then I started to understand what it really meant.

Oh, they're just a high capacity person.

They just got a lot of capacity.

And then when I realized that actually other parts of their life were suffering because they had high capacity that you could see because they weren't actually receiving the rest that God was intending for them to have, the good gift.

Because God desires to give us rest, friends.

We shouldn't just press on.

We shouldn't just think we can run on empty, but we should desire to receive rest.

Not only receive it, but use it according to the way that he intends, to the way that he says.

And that leads us to the major problem we encounter.

And the next point is that our pride leads us to exhaustion.

It's our pride that leads us

to exhaustion.

Look again with me and listen to what Matthew 11, 25 through 26 says.

It says, at that time, Jesus declared, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

What Jesus is highlighting here is that the pervasive pride of the religious leaders of the day is

You see, they had taken, like many other things, they had taken the good gift of rest and they had mutated it into a burden by adding layers around it so that the Sabbath had no longer become restful but a hardship.

If you go through and you read the Gospels, Jesus has a lot of run-ins with the religious leaders around this idea of Sabbath.

Can you heal on the Sabbath?

Can you help somebody with their ox?

Get it out of the ditch on the Sabbath?

All these questions.

It's a big deal because what they'd done is they had manipulated God's good gift and

They had distorted it and put all these fences, built up the law around it, so you couldn't actually enjoy the good gift.

You had to follow their rules.

There was no grace.

It was all law.

You see, friends, they were serving the Sabbath instead of receiving the Sabbath as a gift.

Jesus points out the exact problem when he calls them wise.

This was Jesus being silly and tongue in cheek.

He wasn't complimenting them.

He was rebuking them.

Why?

Because they thought they were wise.

They thought they knew everything.

They thought they had all the information they need to know in their own eyes, which meant they were actually fools, according to God.

They were fools.

And the way of the fool, friends, leads to pride.

And that pride leads to exhaustion, and that exhaustion leads to destruction.

Right?

I think if we're really honest with ourselves, sometimes we don't know we're exhausted because we're walking in foolishness.

And that's what these religious leaders were doing.

They let their pride blind them from the fact that they actually needed the rest that only God can give.

And they kept on pushing.

And they kept on pushing to a place leading to destruction.

Friends, this is where we have to continue to be honest with ourselves, to let God's word begin to show us where we aren't living according to his way.

When we reject the good gift of rest, either by not using it or by overusing it,

We posture ourselves as wise, but are really fools.

Jesus reminds us of the posture and consequence of being a fool in Matthew 7, verses 26 and 27.

He says, The rain fell.

The rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house and it collapsed.

It collapsed with a great crash.

One translation says, and great was the fall of it.

Friends, when we ignore the call of Jesus and we reject the good gift of rest, we're walking down a path to a great collapse, a great fall.

See, we're captivated by our pride.

We're fooled into thinking that we can treat the gift of rest the way that we see best, right?

Think about it like this.

I mean, you get a gift, a really nice expensive gift.

Let's say like a really nice watch, right?

From your grandma, your grandpa, your boo thing or whatever it is.

And it's this really nice watch.

It costs a lot of money.

but you decide you're gonna wear that watch as an earring, right, full-size watch, right?

You're gonna wear it as an earring.

Well, this is how I wanna use this gift.

Well, hey, that's not how you use the gift.

Well, I could do with it whatever I want to.

Yeah, well, you look silly.

And guess what, you can't tell the time.

And it doesn't look cool at all, right?

we become foolish when we take things that God has intended as good gifts and we use them in the way that we think is best, the way that we see fit.

Some of us may proudly indulge in rest.

It no longer becomes rest, but it leads to a pattern of laziness where we dishonor God and others by our lack of activity and participation in God's

world.

You abuse rest.

You become what Scripture calls slothful.

You don't want to do anything because you need a little more rest.

You're not using God's gift the way it's supposed to.

Some of us may proudly refrain from rest, leading to an inevitable burnout when we come to the end of ourselves.

And here's the really dangerous thing.

So many people will applaud you for that, right?

Oh, man, you just, you know, I grew up playing sports.

You just left it all on the field, right?

Well, what if God didn't want you to leave it all on the field?

What if he intended to refresh you and rejuvenate you and you are rejecting those things?

Both of these things, indulging in rest leading to laziness, refraining from rest leading to exhaustion and burnout, are a sinful way of using the good gift of rest that God has given us.

This happens when we press into our pride and when we ignore Jesus.

Friends, we need to see that to truly receive the good gift of rest, we need to be rescued from ourselves.

We need to be rescued from ourselves.

Jesus says in verse 25 that he is thankful that the Father has hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to little children.

Church, with this statement, he's showing us the way forward in being able to receive the good gift of rest.

This is what it is.

He's telling us that we need a childlike posture of heart.

We need a childlike posture of heart.

We need to abandon the false sense of security that comes with our self-perceived self-sufficiency and come to him as a child would come, full of humility and faith, knowing that he is exactly what we need.

You know, there's no, one of the greatest joys, maybe nothing better of being a father

Knowing that when your child comes to you asking for something, especially when they don't deserve it, that you're able to provide it for them.

Especially when they come in a humble posture.

Dad, can I have, can I do this?

And through this statement in verse 25, this is what Jesus is telling us, that to receive the gift of rest and really to receive any other gift that God has for us, we must come humbly.

We must come in faith, trusting and knowing that God is going to do what he said he would do because he is who he says he is.

Friends, we need our eyes and hearts to be open to the truth that we cannot achieve rest on our own because we must see that rest is found in a person.

We can't achieve it on our own.

Rest, true rest, is only found in a person.

Listen, look at verse 27 with me.

Jesus continues on.

He says, "All things have been handed over to me by my Father."

And no one knows the Son except the Father.

And no one knows the Father except the Son.

And anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Friends, Jesus invites us to know the Father by coming.

And by coming to him, we humbly recognize that it's him that is our source of rest.

Not anything that we have on our own.

It's Christ and Christ alone who is mediating, who is making it available for us to receive the good gift of rest that God has given us.

And how is the Jesus the source of that rest?

He's the source of that rest because he paid the price for our exhausting pride.

He paid the price for our exhausting pride.

He paid the price with his life so that we might know the true rest that comes with communion with the Holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit.

He's taking care of it.

Remember that when the Father Almighty created the world, he did so in sinless perfection and rest was a part of his perfect sinless world.

He even showed us how to use rest wisely and good by resting himself on the seventh day.

But because of the sinful rebellion of our first parents, rest was corrupted along with the rest of creation.

And now all of us either willfully or ignorantly disobey God's good gift of rest.

It's sins of omission, sins of commission.

We can't get away from it on the here and now.

And instead of

Rest being a good gift to receive on God's terms, rest became a prideful pursuit.

And in arrogance, we think that we can achieve it by our own sinful means.

And friends, this leads us to a cycle of never being able to catch up.

This leads to a cycle of always feeling exhausted.

But God, but God, he didn't leave us in this state.

He didn't leave us in this rat race chasing our tails because sin has put us on a tailspin.

He sent Jesus to pay the price for our pride and arrogance and to restore communion with him so that we might experience rest and the rest of his world the way that he intended it to be.

You see, friends, rest is a gift afforded to us by the gospel.

the good news about the person and work of Jesus Christ.

You could even say that the gospel is an invitation to come and rest through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

True rest is gospel rest.

Repenting of our pride and sin and surrendering to King Jesus in all things, knowing that what he has to give is better than anything this world has to offer.

Friends, rest is not found in readjusting your schedule.

Rest is not getting the correct amount of sleep that your iPhone or your Android tells you that you need to get.

Rest is not completely just withdrawing from everything and putting your head in the sand.

Rest is found in a person.

It's found in knowing Jesus Christ.

And so here's my plea to you this morning, church.

Quit searching for rest apart from the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Quit searching for rest apart from the person and work of Jesus Christ.

You will not know rest without deeply knowing Christ.

You will not find it.

But...

But in Christ, what you will find is all the promises of the Father completely fulfilled in an eternal and abundant life.

More than you could ever want.

More than you could ever need forever is what he has come to give you.

And so here's the invitation to all of us this morning.

And if you like a big idea to sum things up or to take home with you, here's the big idea to take home with you this morning is this, this call.

Find rest by responding to the call of Jesus.

Find rest by responding to the call of Jesus.

Look at verses 28 through 30 with me.

This popular verse says,

But I really, as I read this, I want you to take note of it.

What are the words that really stick out to you?

Don't just let it go in one ear and out the other because you've heard it a hundred times.

What is the Lord saying to you through Matthew 11, 28 through 30 this morning as we read it out loud?

The words of Christ say, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you.

and learn from me.

For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Heartland, there are many mysterious things about Jesus.

Right?

We can agree on that.

There are many things that we don't know

Fully about Christ.

Fully God.

Fully man.

Immaculate conception.

We could go on and on and on.

But this is not one of them.

There is a clear call to finding rest.

His heart, his hands, and his arms are open to give us the rest that God intends for us.

Let's break this passage down this morning.

First it says, Come to me, all who labor in our heavy work.

Friends, this is an invitation telling us that Jesus wants, Jesus desires that we would bring our burdens to him.

He wants us to lay down the weight and the weariness of sin at his feet.

And this isn't some sort of forced patience where Jesus is standing with his teeth gritted saying, okay, I'll listen to you one more time if I have to.

No.

No.

This moves his heart to hear the plight of his people.

It moves his heart to be able to bless us with the rest and refreshment and relief from the burden of sin that we need.

He longs that we would lift our voices in prayer telling him how much we need.

Don't ever buy into the lie that you are complaining to the Lord when you're bringing your needs before him seeking rest.

Now, if you're being irreverent or disrespectful, the Lord will let you know those things.

He will rebuke you by his word, by his spirit, by somebody else listening to you.

But man, take your burdens to Jesus.

Jesus, I can't take this anymore.

I can't handle this anymore.

You know how weak and how frail I am.

Let me know your presence.

Let me feel your spirit.

I need you.

Jesus longs for us to declare the truths of scripture about him, believing that he is mighty and willing to save us.

Go back to the Psalms, all of King David's great songs and prayers and other Psalmists, and where you know and you can see clearly that the work of Jesus has been fulfilled in one of those songs.

Say, Jesus, I know.

I know this is true about you.

I know that when my world is crumbling, you are my fortress.

I know that when I don't know which way is up, you are a rock which I can anchor my hope to.

Pray his word back to him, declare his word back to him, believing and standing on those promises.

Friends, the only prerequisite for finding rest this morning is being tired.

Being tired of sin, being tired of the weariness of this world, being tired of Satan, being tired of death.

The only prerequisite, friends, for receiving rest is being tired and telling Jesus about it.

For all who are tired of that burden this morning, Jesus beckons you to come.

Come on.

No, you don't have to clean yourself up.

No, you certainly don't have to work harder to do better because you can't.

And that's why he's inviting you.

You must simply come, hearts and knees bowed to the gracious king.

And what is the promise if we come moving on in our text?

Jesus says, and I will give you life.

I will give you rest.

Do you believe that this morning?

Or is that one of those grand ideas like, yeah, I know Jesus could save the whole world.

It just seems so big and I don't know how he does it, but I just know.

But do you believe this personal moment in this crisis that you are in, in the turmoil that you are facing, the loneliness that is going on in your heart, the trusting you're having to do because your bank account is empty or you've been sitting without a job for six months, do you really believe Jesus?

that Christ will give you rest like he says he will.

Friends, knowing Jesus is the only way to know the Father through the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit and experience true rest.

Rest doesn't come merely by our own

imaginings or by our own efforts or by our own planning.

Friends, rest comes from knowing and following Jesus.

The endeavor of being a disciple of Christ, of believing the gospel and living out a gospel-saturated life is the fact that what feels like work isn't actually work.

It's rest because we're rejuvenated by the miraculous grace of Jesus Christ as we follow him.

And so it's rest isn't always just this pausing.

It's rest isn't always passive.

In fact, I would argue that rest is always active because rest is a pursuit of knowing Jesus and following Jesus and loving Jesus because nothing else will give us rest.

Friends, Jesus is the only one who can relieve our burdens.

That's why we follow him.

Jesus is the only one who can renew our minds.

Jesus is the only one who can restore our hearts.

Jesus is the great shepherd who provides all that we need.

Jesus is the one that leads us to green pastures and by still waters.

Jesus is the one who makes our pathway straight.

Jesus is the one who is with us through dark valleys and in the presence of our enemies.

Jesus is the goodness and faithful love that pursues us all the days of our lives.

And he is the one who makes it possible for us to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Friends, we can stop looking for rest in other places this morning.

Just stop it.

Stop looking for rest by putting another thing in your Amazon cart, thinking, ah, this deal is just going to make life easier.

It's going to be better.

It's going to be better.

Stop looking for rest thinking just if you would find the perfect friend group, people that really understood you, that you would be at ease, that you would be at rest.

Quit seeking rest by thinking if I would just have this kind of job that made this kind of money, I would be at rest.

They're not found there.

It's not found there at all.

Friends, Jesus not only gives us rest, but he frees us.

He liberates us from the fruitless pursuit of finding rest anywhere else.

We don't have to toil anymore.

We don't have to push ourselves to exhaustion.

We don't have to roll up in a ball of laziness and thoughtfulness.

We can come to Jesus in the midst of anything and everything.

And he says, I will give you rest.

Heartland, do you believe that this morning?

Jesus, and Jesus alone, has called us to himself and says, come, I'll give it to you.

What you're lacking, I've got.

What you need, I will provide.

And what does that rest look like?

The remainder of our text, verses 29 and 30.

He says, take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

For I'm gentle and lowly in heart.

And you, there it is again, you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Now, I don't know if you didn't know this, but there's not a lot of yokes in the city.

You don't just see them lying around.

Does anybody in here farm?

No?

Okay.

Missed that one.

There's somebody at least 10 minutes south of us that farms, right?

You know?

And there's farmland all around us, right?

Which is one of the reasons I love St.

Louis so much.

I can live in my house in Tower Grove Park and in 30 minutes I could be completely devoid of crazy drivers and noise and all that kind of stuff.

Mainly because I leave my kids at home.

But, you know...

but we're surrounded by farmland.

And there was a day and time when there were no tractors, there were no zero-turn mowers, right?

There were no side-by-sides.

There was nothing mechanical to do work for you.

And so there's this thing called a yoke.

And a yoke is a wooden tool that goes over the necks of two animals, usually oxen.

I don't think there's anybody got a pet ox?

Okay, all right, nobody.

Oxen, you know,

They're weird looking.

I don't know how to describe them.

They're not a cow.

They're not a bison or a buffalo.

They're just kind of dopey looking, but they're really strong, right?

And this yoke went on the two necks, and then it was hooked to a harness, and that harness was hooked to a wagon or a plow or other things, and the farmer would walk behind it and drive the ox, and they would move as a team, right, to pull things and move things along.

Now I want you to think about that.

Jesus is using this idea of a yoke which seems burdensome, right?

Manual labor that you have to get livestock to do.

Seems burdensome.

But he's using it as a symbol for two things.

The truth of his transforming grace and the invitation to be his disciple.

This yoke represents the truth of his transforming grace

and his invitation to be his disciples.

See, Jesus desires for us to join him in a life filled with and led by grace, not work.

I know it's still like, oh, but you're talking about work.

Yeah, but what does he say?

How do we know this?

Well, first he tells us that he is lowly and gentle at heart.

You know, I just want you to think for that.

There's a book called Gentle and Lowly where the author expounds on a lot of this.

And one of the things I love that he says is there is nothing that you have ever been through that has not come through Christ first.

Think about that.

He's lowly and gentle in heart.

He's the one in the garden praying, Father, if it may, let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but your will be done.

He's lowly and gentle in heart.

He's the one who was mocked and beaten and stripped naked and humiliated for you and for me.

This is why his yoke is not a burden.

This is why it's actually leading us to rest and not to more toil.

Jesus is not a harsh master who desires to beat his way into us, like driving behind those oxen or a horse, just whipping away, whipping away.

Rather, he is a good master who willingly laid down his life to be beaten, mocked, and killed so that we might follow him freely.

He bears the burden.

He takes it on himself.

We're in this together with him.

And not only is it about his transforming grace, but Jesus also desires that we would partner with him in gospel ministry as his disciples.

What do you call two ox together, two oxen together?

It's a team, right?

A team of oxen.

Jesus' yoke or the work of his mission is easy.

The burden that it comes with is light because it's what we were made to do.

It's what we were created for.

It's the purpose for which he made the world.

And how do we know that his yoke is easy and his burden is light?

Friends, because he never intended for us to carry it alone.

First of all, he's carrying it with us.

He's carrying it for us.

And he's given us a family to carry it with, right?

And he desires that we would joyfully partner with him and with the local church to spread the good news of the kingdom of God because his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

It's actually joyful.

It will actually fill you up when you think you can't go another step.

When you think there's no hope left, the yoke and burden of Jesus will actually lift you up and pull you along.

Friends, this is where we find rest.

for our souls in the transforming work of Christ, in the call to be his disciple.

Friends, coming to Jesus to take on his yoke of transforming grace is a thing of eternal purpose.

It's not something that just terminates in this life, but it echoes throughout eternity.

It's a purpose for which we were created, to live in light of his glorious grace, to live with the good gift of rest.

And when we do it with him,

Right?

We do it with Jesus.

Not being driven and whipped by him, but actually with him as the Holy Spirit moves us along in this life until we see next, we will find rest.

We will find reprieve.

We will find day by day, moment by moment, an oasis of grace in the midst of the desert of this world.

Why?

Because Jesus says, I'm rest for your weary souls.

My burden is light.

My yoke is easy.

Friends, Jesus asks this morning, are you tired?

And the answer is come to me.

Jesus asked this morning, are you weary?

And the answer is come to me.

Jesus asked this morning, are you burdened?

And the answer is come to me.

Heartland friends, do you see this this morning?

All that you desire

All that you need, all that is good for you is found in coming to and knowing Jesus.

Stop looking in other places and find rest by responding to his call this morning.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for the goodness of your word.

We thank you for the gift of rest.

We thank you for the hope of the gospel on display and the person and work of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We just confess this morning that we need you.

Rest seems like a toil for so many of us.

We either don't know when to stop or we don't know how to be responsible to keep going.

So give us wisdom.

Holy Spirit, move in this place as we respond to your word.

It's in Christ's name we pray.

Amen.