

**Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you that are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.'
Come now to worship and receive rest for your souls. Amen.**

Take a few moments to focus on how you feel. Do you feel calm, relaxed, peaceful, at rest...
Or do you feel troubled distressed, anxious.... However, you feel take time to offer this to
God.

Come to God, all who are weary and tired.
Come to God, all who are burdened by life.
Come to God, all who feel trapped and underappreciated.
For you will find:
the rest you need,
the peace you seek,
and the love you long for.
Come to God, in Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Sing or Read:

1. Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side.
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
in every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

2. Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future, as in ages past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
the Christ who ruled them while he dwelt below.

3. Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
when we shall be forever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

**Dear Lord, it doesn't always sink in
just who I am talking to when I come before you.
I don't fully get it,
that I'm in the presence of such a mighty God.**

**Lord, forgive me for the times
when my picture and understanding of you are far too small;**

**when I try to fit you into that tiny box that I think I can cope with;
when I'm frightened to let your power loose in my life.
Forgive me, Lord, and make me whole. Amen.**

In Jesus' day, and indeed in our country up until about the 19th century, farmers used a yoke, a kind of collar. A yoke helps people and animal to carry or pull heavy items. Jesus applies this image to our life with Him:

Matthew 11.16-19,25-30 "But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; 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 you 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."

Thought for this week:

This is a different kind of yoke, one perfectly fitted to support and aid us in fulfilling His purpose for our lives. That doesn't mean being yoked to Christ will always be comfortable, but it's not supposed to crush us either.

Farmers used to train young oxen to plough by partnering them with stronger and more mature oxen. The job of the younger ox was simply to follow in the same direction and keep pace with the teacher ox. The older ox pulled most of the weight and understood the commands of the plough driver. As long as the young ox followed the older ox, everything was fine. But if the younger ox decided to speed up or lag behind, the work became much more difficult. Only by keeping pace with the older ox could the younger ox complete the day's work without collapsing from exhaustion or giving up. When we are yoked to Christ, He carries most of the weight.

I left school a month before my 16th birthday. At the time I had a reading age of 7, my writing ability was even worse. Although my dyslexia had generally been acknowledged at school, I was not really given much help. As I moved into adulthood, I hid this 'disability' the best I could. I felt it was something to be ashamed of.

When God called me to be a Local Preacher, I felt that He must have got it wrong or I had misunderstood the calling. Surely, I wouldn't have this disability if I was meant to be a preacher! How would I be able to do the studying, the reading, the essays and worst of all, the exams! I had to put my trust in God and be yoked to Christ. In this way I could complete the work without collapsing from exhaustion or giving up. (If you *were* wondering, I was permitted to take the exams orally) Moving on to the call to full time ministry, one of the initial steps in the process is to go and speak with your Superintendent. I got on well with my Super, he knew all about my dyslexia, because of my preacher training. He said to me,

'Pauline I will support you in candidating, but I don't think 'they' (District and Connexion) will let you do it, because of all the studying. To cut a long story short; I offered for the ministry, was accepted and went to Wesley College Bristol, by which time my reading age was up to 10 years and 3 months! After three years study at Bristol, I gained a first class BA honours degree in Theology and Ministry... and as they say the rest is history. Being dyslexic can be a disability, or it can be a gift. For me, it means that I am 'differently abled' rather than 'disabled.' Yoked to Christ, I can complete the work God has called me to without collapsing from exhaustion or giving up. God is **GOOD!**

The yoke of Christ is perfectly fitted to support and aid us in fulfilling His purpose for our lives. It is not always comfortable, but that's not the point. It is always what we need for the path He wants us to walk. Under the yoke of Christ, we don't evaluate our worth by how many items are checked off on our to-do list. Under the yoke of Christ, we do not measure our value against anyone's expectations, not even our own! Under the yoke of Christ, we rest content with where we are right here, right now, weaknesses and all, as long as we are walking close to Jesus. In what way and for what reason do you need to be yoked to Christ, so that you can complete the task without collapsing from exhaustion or giving up? Amen

I invite you to sit quietly and reflect on what being yoked to Christ means for you.

Sing or Read:

- 1 Amazing grace — how sweet the sound —
that saved a wretch like me !
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.
- 2 God's grace has taught my heart to fear,
his grace my fears relieved ;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed !
- 3 Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come ;
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures ;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.
- 5 And, when this heart and flesh shall fail
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
a life of joy and peace.
- 6 When we've been there ten thousand years
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.

John Newton (1725–1807) (*alt.*)

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Let us pray for those:
who are tired of life and all it throws at them,
or who are exhausted by the daily struggle for survival,
or who are wearied by worry and anxiety.

May they find the rest they need.

Let us pray for those:
burdened by memories of the past,
or weighed down by the expectations of others,
or who carry more than their fair share of responsibility.

May they find the release they long for.

Let us pray for those:
who are oppressed by those in power,
or who are suffocated by the demands of work,
or who are silenced in the face of injustice.

May they find the freedom they seek. Amen.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

**I take the yoke of Jesus, to learn from him,
for his yoke is easy and his burden is light;
I shall be gentle and humble in heart,
and I will find rest for my soul. Amen.**

The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with you, with those you love and with those you ought to love, this day and for evermore. Amen

