

Rest Your Souls
Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
July 9, 2023
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There have been times in my life when I have felt overwhelmed. At those times, I usually write out everything I am worried about. I write a phrase for each thing or person filling my mind; then I put a circle around each phrase. Seeing everything on one page helps me to see it more objectively. The weight of everything feels so heavy until I realize that I am not carrying it alone. I am linked to Jesus. My burdens are not just on my shoulders, but they are also on the shoulders of the Lord. Suddenly my burdens seem lighter, and I feel peace.

Jesus was aware of the burdens facing the people around him. Life in the Roman Empire was oppressive. Burdens were many. Today our burdens may be different but they certainly can weigh us down. Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you." A yoke according to the Oxford Dictionary is a wooden [crosspiece](#) that is [fastened](#) over the [necks](#) of two animals and attached to the plow or cart that they are to pull. This allows the weight to be shared. Sharing the yoke with Jesus means that we aren't alone.

Prayer is a source of great strength. It can help us to feel in a tangible way that we are sharing the load.

I like this Celtic blessing written by Beth A. Richardson. Asking God to bless us is a way to think about our hopes and articulate what we truly want to ask for.

Bless this day,
All plants and creatures,
All people near and far.

Bless the flowers
That sing praises with their beauty,
The grass
That cushions my step.

Bless those who stand
With loved ones who are sick,
With friends or family who are lost.

Bring healing, bring wholeness.

Bless the world,
Its war-torn places,
Its broken villages,
Its frightened children.

Bless our bodies,
Our hearts,
Our hands,
That we may be blessings
To all we meet.

—Beth A. Richardson, *Christ Beside Me, Christ Within Me: Celtic Blessings* (Upper Room Books, 2016)