

## SOUL CARE

SERIES: REACH | WEEK 6 | 2.28.2021

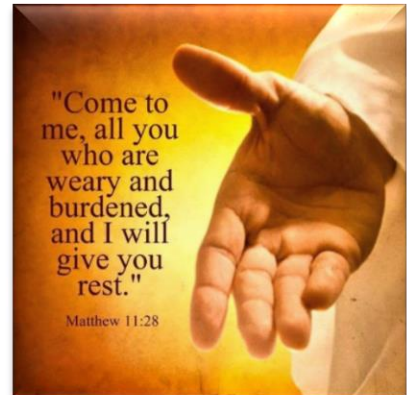
I want to bring you today a message of hope, of encouragement. I sense a lot of you are carrying some heavy weights; I have come into contact with many of you that are. And so my hope today is that God's Word would bring the very words of Jesus for you today, so I'm going to be reading from Matthew Chapter 11, verse 28. If you want to follow along you can, we're going to be putting it up on the screen, you can follow along there, but I want it to fall on you, I want it to soak into you today. I want you to hear it as if you're hearing the words of Jesus, not me, because Jesus spoke these words. He wanted you to hear them today, these are His words to you. Let me read them, Matthew 11:28:

***28 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."***

– MATTHEW 11:28 (ESV)

How many of you need rest for your souls today? Ooh, that's like most of you. I, personally this week, spent time with a number of different people who just shared their heart—one father whose son's in a recovery center right now; someone who lost a dear family member; one family who was moving their parents into their home because their parents are very sickly; one person who is dealing with a disabled adult child; two different people who are about to start cancer treatments—and Jesus says to them, and He says whatever the thing is that you just raised your hand for, Jesus says this invitation: *"Come to me."* Come to Jesus, that's His words to you today, and I just want that to settle in on you.

When I read the words of this text, there's something about these words that are very emotional and I think they're meant to be because Jesus, the God of the universe, He comes very close to you and He holds out His arms and says, "Come to Me," as a father saying it's okay. We need to hear these words, words of hope, God's peace, reassurance to each one of us that Jesus is in this place and He's inviting you to Himself. I love this invitation so I'm gonna just ask you to take a deep breath and to just bow your heads, I want to pray for you.



Jesus,



A lot of hands went up and so our first response having read your Book is to come, You said come and You'll give us rest for our souls. And I pray that as your Word is opened up before us today, as we hear your words to each of us individually, that we would find that rest today. And I pray that each person in this room would be able to take that burden off and give it to You in this hour. We ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.

I want to draw your attention to one other verse in Scripture. It's found in 3rd John, right to the end of your Bible, and the second verse of 3rd John. When I read those words that we just read a moment ago and it says, *"rest for your souls,"* I'm reminded of a very popular phrase, "soul care." I don't know, that just sounds cool. Someone says, "Hey, you can come and get some soul care." That's very well received. Let me read to you what one of the Apostles wrote in 3rd John, verse 2, because I think it's helpful. It says this:

***2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health,***

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— and then he says this:

*as it goes well with your soul.*

– 3 JOHN 1:2 (ESV)

And it reminds me of one of those phrases that we hear often, "Hope that your health is good," um, "Hope you have a good day." This [POINTING AT VERSE ON SCREEN] is sort of vanilla, sort of generic like that. It's sort of like a lot of people's prayers: *Lord God, I pray that You give me a good day and it'll be healthy.* And even John says I'm praying for you for that; I'm praying that you have a good day, I'm praying that you'll be healthy. But then the next word is I thought important, I circled it in my Bible, he says, *"as it goes well with your soul."* I think there's something being said here—if it's well with your soul, you're going to have a good day, you're going to be healthy—that there's a huge interaction here for that. So in a moment I want to talk to you about the difference between an unhealthy soul and a healthy soul, but first of all let me back up for a second.

That word soul, rest for your souls, is the word in the Greek *psuché*, it's a word we get psychology from. If you've ever been to your psychologist, my guess is you didn't think of them as someone that takes care of your soul. You're probably more apt to think that coming to church is where you get your soul taken care of, but the word *psuché* refers that immaterial part of us—our emotions, that intangible piece of what's inside of us. It's the thing that probably the psychologist wants to dig in there and take apart and they're the ones that are going to say, "Oh, it's some sort of father wound," or, "Oh, wow," you know, "you've been through some traumatic experience," and so they're going to somehow try to unwind that. But when Jesus says I'm going to give you rest for your souls, your *psuché* – psyche – I think He takes us down a very different path.

So let's talk for a moment about unhealthy souls and healthy souls because the Apostle John said when you have a healthy soul you're gonna have a good day, and you're gonna have health. But I fear that—because we have misread what it looks like to have a healthy soul—we have failed to understand this concept. So let me take you to the next slide and show you the two things.

We're going to have a healthy soul and an unhealthy soul. The unhealthy soul, Jesus defines it: *"all who labor and are heavy laden."* Now it's not abnormal for us to labor and be heavy laden, we've already agreed in this room that—well, I said almost everyone, I wouldn't be surprised if it's every one of us—we'd agree that we have burdens that we've carried in here.

I oftentimes pictured that as like a big heavy backpack that's carried in. I've pastored in churches before where there were a lot more people that would come in off the streets and oftentimes there'd be someone or someones who'd come in carrying a big, huge pack and you'd see their bed roll and when they took that off they could barely get it off and then they'd drop it in the back of the church along the wall. And while those of you in this room, those of you who are watching, probably never even carried a pack like that. I've never gone backpacking and if I did I'd be trying to buy the lightest one possible.



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We have come into this room today most probably carrying a very heavy load. You know, someone said to me earlier, "N-n-no. Backpack doesn't describe it, I have a tractor trailer and one of the extra-long versions pulling behind me today." All who labor and are heavy laden.

The effects of sin on this world have impacted everyone, even Christ followers, and in this world as long as we live in this world it says in this world there will be tribulation,<sup>1</sup> and Jesus says but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world.

<sup>33</sup> *I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]"*

– JOHN 16:33 (AMPC)

That tribulation though that results of sin is constantly bearing down upon us. And even in the Old Testament of the Bible the religious leaders led the people into what it would look like if they were to fulfill all of God's laws and to live perfectly, and so there was this constant striving to live perfectly. And yet, after a while everyone just throws up their hands, "I can't do it," and they're crying out, "Would you send a Messiah? Would you send a Savior? Would you send one to rescue us?" As even the Apostle Paul says from this body of death<sup>2</sup> that I live in. All who labor through self-effort and our heavy-laden, burdened down.

I tried to think of a phrase to sum up an unhealthy soul and a phrase to sum up a healthy soul and I came up with a phrase that's almost identical. If you're taking notes, you may want to write it down. Here's



my phrase for an unhealthy soul: When the worries and cares of life are all on me. Some of you get that this morning. It's like *everyone's* worries, *everyone's* cares are on you and you're carrying it all, and it's as if no one else is carrying their portion, no one else is bearing their weight. It's as if the problems of this world seem to find *you* as if you're a magnet for those things and it's nearly crushing. An unhealthy soul—when the worries and cares of this life are all on me. Important

note: There's more to this life than me. There's GOT TO be more to this life than me because I can't absorb it. I can't keep taking that incoming nor can you, and it's destroying you.

Healthy soul. Let me give you my one-line phrase that's just ever so slightly different: When all the worries and cares of life are all on Jesus. That's why these words are the Scripture, they're in red in my Bible because Jesus said them, "*Come to me,*" all you who are weary and heavy laden. It's not like wrong to be weary and heavy laden. And when I say it's unhealthy, it's unhealthy to stay there; it's unhealthy to deal with it in unhealthy ways. Jesus knows you're weary and heavy laden and He makes an invitation for those of us who the worries and cares of life are coming at us, we place them all on Jesus.



<sup>1</sup> JOHN 16:33 (ESV): "*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*"

<sup>2</sup> ROMANS 7:22-25 (ESV): "*For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*"

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In other words, when I talked about those laws in the Old Testament that said hey, if you do all these things you'll be perfect, so go ahead, here's how we live those out. And we all go, "I can't live those out. I can't be perfect. Thus, I cannot make my way to God." Instead, what happens, that no longer is our situation. We no longer need to earn our way to God because Jesus came to give us access to holy, Almighty God to forgive us of our sins so we can have access into His Holy Presence, to give us His righteousness in exchange for our sin—nothing that we do on our own. And when we receive that we can give all of our worries and all of our cares to Jesus and have a healthy soul.

John said I hope your day is going well. I hope you're healthy as your soul is healthy. And so today as we think about soul care we're reminded that in this world it's going to come at us and it is going to beat us up and we're going to be unhealthy, and go to your psychologist to look at your soul, your *psuché*, and find out it's not doing well. And your psychologist can bring you back for another \$286 next time, but unless they bring you Jesus it will not be well with your soul.

Let's go back to the unhealthy soul for a moment, I'm going to take you to another slide and in this slide I've tried to define just a little bit more about what an unhealthy and healthy soul looks like.



So you'll see at the beginning, again, we define unhealthy soul "All who labor," and the healthy soul who come to Jesus and find their rest in Him. When I think of the unhealthy, we're going to start with the unhealthy, when I think of the unhealthy I recognize that what we're dealing with here is do-it-yourself psychology. Do it yourself, I can fix my soul and I can make it okay. It's YouTube for *psuché*. YouTube for my soul. Now, YouTube's great for those of us do-it-yourselfers. My refrigerator, which shouldn't be broken by now, is broken already and so I went and watched ten YouTube videos, found the best one, played it really slowly and this guy [RAISES HIS HAND] who's not mechanically inclined fixed his own refrigerator. I was so proud of myself and saved myself probably 108 bucks, [LAUGHTER] but I'm not so sure that I want to go to YouTube or Facebook to fix my soul. What do they know about my soul?

Well, what they know about soul is they're going to start trying to give you some self-help, some I can do it myself methods of dealing with your soul. In fact, what they'll do is they'll have you repeating in self-talk some specific words. By the way, the words don't look bad. You'll see them up here under Unhealthy Soul, words like meditate, I mean, the Bible talks about meditation. I mean, nothing wrong with that in itself—*except*—when all I'm trying to do is fix myself without Jesus, what I end up



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meditating upon is myself. Now, they talk oftentimes about emptying your mind. When you empty your mind something fills it, so if we are not filling it with Jesus—Romans 12:1-2 tells us that we are to renew our minds,<sup>3</sup> we'll talk about that in a second—but we're to renew God's Spirit with the Word of God and let Jesus into our minds. When we empty our minds, the enemy moves in quickly. We see words like *energy* and *love yourself* and *self-love* and *connect to the universe* and *vibes*, and you hear all these words. These words are not very UNfamiliar to you, you hear them all the time in our world. In fact, as we began to look into this this week and we heard people that *you need to get a therapist; you need to suck it up; hey, just go buy something, you'll feel a little bit better. You know, just suffer in silence and don't tell anyone, it'll be okay.*

And then we began to just look into all the little messages that we get on Facebook, you're familiar with them, we're gonna pop them up on the screen right now. We went out there and we harvested a bunch of them, put fake pictures next to them, and put them up there since some of them were your mess—no, I don't know if they were your messages. I didn't even research them, so if it's your message, I'm sorry, forgive me. They sound really good but I want you to hear a little bit about them as we think about a healthy soul and an unhealthy soul in our own man-made religion.



This top one here: "I believe in myself and trust in my abilities to succeed in all I do." Okay. But here's the wording: I trust in myself. Well, you're like, "Well, you know, that's positive." Yeah, that's good, nothing wrong with being positive *except* for if all I'm trusting in is this? But imagine if I could trust in the God of the universe! Let's keep on going here. Now this

I believe in myself and trust in my abilities to succeed in all I do.

The universe will start to rearrange itself to make it happen for you.

I really wish the best for myself this year. I deserve it.

next one I don't get: "The universe will start to rearrange itself to make it happen for you." I don't know about you, but I've moved out and I've looked up in the skies, I've never seen the universe rearrange itself. I just haven't. Maybe you'll hear of that happening but I just, I don't get that. Um, I like this: "I really wish the best for myself this year. I deserve it." By the way, do you hear what we're hearing

there – "I", "I", "I"? And I don't know if you've read your Bible a lot but you find out the Bible tells me that I am desperately wicked,<sup>4</sup> that I am a sinner,<sup>5</sup> that I am sinful and I'm separated from God.<sup>6</sup> I want to be very careful when I'm depending on "I've got this."

Let me read a couple more. Oh, this next one, I don't even get it: "Vibrate so high that the toxic people of your life fall back because they no longer know how to approach you." I'll tell you what, if I walk up to you after service and you're vibrating it'll freak me out, I just – but seriously, these are some of these key words and everyone's like, "Oh, that's good. That's good. Let the vibrations of the universe..." – whatever.

Vibrate so high that the toxic people in your life fall back, because they no longer know how to approach you.

<sup>3</sup> ROMANS 12:1-2 (ESV): *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

<sup>4</sup> JEREMIAH 17:9 (NKJV): *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"*

<sup>5</sup> ROMANS 3:23 (ESV): *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

<sup>6</sup> ISAIAH 59:1-3 (NIRV): *But your sins have separated you from God. They have caused him to turn his face away from you. So he won't listen to you.*

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I like this: "You deserve the world even if it means giving it to yourself." How do you do that? You

You deserve the world, even if it means giving it to yourself.

The way to become one with the universe is to trust it.

know,

Jesus says, "***I have overcome the world.***" Again, we've got this choice here where we're going to go to for a

healthy soul. "The way to become one with the universe is to trust it." I don't under— again, I don't understand, how can you trust the universe? There's a God in the universe who says come and trust Me, who gave His life, who hung on a cross to forgive us our sins, to give us His righteousness, and we go, "Oh, man, that's weird faith stuff, you know, I don't get that." Okay, so you just go ahead and trust the universe – but you have no faith, it's not a faith thing. That's just, [SARDONICALLY] "That's cool, man. That's who we are."

And the next one: "You attract the vibes of the energy that you give off. Spread good vibes. Think positively. Enjoy life." And again, I know this is frustrating some of you, I get it, but one of the things I would say to all of us and we talked about this a little bit last week when we asked questions, like, does it make sense? Does it even make sense? Yeah, it may be cool and it may be what you're seeing everyone splashing out there, but is this like something that we're like throwing out these cool words and trying to form them in ways and trying to convince ourselves that somehow if we say these right things – and all the while every psychologist, every counselor I know right now says I am working insane amounts of hours, it is out of control, it is crazy. Wait a minute, I thought you just give off good vibes. Call on the universe, why go to a psychologist? Your soul must be just fine. Right? There is emptiness without Jesus. I beg you to know that.

You attract the energy that you give off. Spread good vibes. Think positively. Enjoy life.

This next one, I want you to hear the wording in this one, I'll try to get off this in a second. It says: "I

I am grounded. My spirit is grounded deep in the earth. I am strong, calm, centered, and peaceful. I am able to let go of fear and trust that I am eternally safe. I am worthy of all things beautiful.

am grounded." By the way, who does the Bible say the great I AM<sup>7</sup> is? Okay, think about this a moment, who this person thinks I AM is. In other words, I AM is God. This person says: "I am grounded. My spirit is grounded deep in the earth. I am strong, calm,

centered, and peaceful. I am able to let go of fear and trust that I am eternally safe." Whoa! This person says I am able to let go of fear so I'm eternally safe—they're concerned about eternity so they're repeating this mantra that I am able to be the one that can overcome all this. Jesus says, "***I have overcome the world***" – not me – it was because of my inability to do so. "I am worthy of all things beautiful."

I am motivated, beautiful, empowered, creative, bold, living, invested, unstoppable, inspired.

And again, please hear me, I mean, if you posted something like this recently I get the sentiment, I understand you're trying to encourage people. I understand you're trying to think good thoughts and all that kind of stuff, that's nice and the Bible even talks, like I said, Romans 12:1-2, to renew your mind and to get out of this deep trench that you find yourself in. But I would remind you this morning that the Bible reminds us over and over that we are desperately wicked inside and that we need a Savior. We need the Spirit of God

Sometimes you need to forget how you feel and think of what you deserve.

Nature always wears the colors of the spirit.

Be the energy you want to attract.

<sup>7</sup> EXODUS 3:4 (ESV): *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you."*

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to renew us. We need the Spirit of God to transform us. And all the "I am" statements *we* can make will never satisfy us like the One who says, "I AM" – Jesus Himself.

And again, there's a reason why when I read this at the beginning I just saw all of you go [EXHALES IN RELIEF] because Jesus says, "**Come to me,**" because I've been coming to me way too long. And every time that ugly stuff hits the fan I take the blame, I try to fix it, and I think I can turn this around. And that's fine if it's one thing, and then it's another and then it's another and it's another and pretty soon I'm saying what He says here, "**All who labor and are heavy laden.**" And after a while I think it's a backpack that I'm carrying around that can never be taken off.



And then someone says, "No, it's not. It's a tractor trailer and it's one of those 53-footers." And you're being pulled off to the side of the turnpike for one of those weigh stations because it's too heavy. And now you don't have friends anymore, and now your spouse can't stand being with you, your kids are cowering when they see you because this load has gotten so, so heavy. And you would even describe yourself, *It's dark inside of me; I don't like what I'm seeing.* You're beginning to boil, you're beginning to bubble up, the pain is starting to be shown. You're now the victim, you now have others to blame, you're frustrated with your employer, you know it's your spouse, and now unimaginable thoughts are coming to your mind that are not from God.

The left side of that chart, the unhealthy side, is not a Spirit of life, it is a spirit of death and you know what I'm talking about. And God's Spirit on the healthy side brings us life and peace and that's what He says constantly, and that's why you've come here today. I'm going to switch back to that chart again. It's why you've come here today and I invite you to Jesus. That's why when I read these words, "**Come to me,**" and you will find peace for your souls. You notice something different happening inside of you than when someone says, "Reach out to the universe and feel vibes." What did it say? Rattle or pulse or – vibrate! Vibrate, yeah, vibrate, vibrate. I can't remember these phrases they're so goofy, [SARCASTICALLY] but they're cool! Guys, we need to get away from cool and we need to decide what our source for truth is and go to the Maker of the universe.

We've talked about sin, I put sin on here because He answers the question of sin. The unhealthy soul doesn't have the answer for it so you put words to it and you try to paper it over with words or with great slogans or sayings or feel better things, but it doesn't satisfy the soul, the psyche, that darkness, that emptiness that you feel—where Jesus deals with the issue of sin. He forgives it. In fact, we've talked about it already, but when He died on the cross and you trust that His death will forgive you of your sins, they call it the "great exchange"—He takes on Himself your sin and He gives you His righteousness. Now what are we depending on? We're depending on His righteousness. And that's why all of a sudden the Spirit of God comes into our life at the time of salvation, and now God's very presence is there to guide you, to convict you, to help you make the right decisions.



Oxen yoke

He talks here later in this verse about His yoke. You know, they used to put, I guess they still do, on an ox, this wooden thing around their neck and head that was perfectly fit so that it wasn't too loose or too tight, but that as long as that ox would do what his master was saying that would never, ever chafe them or hurt them. And as a result that ox would accomplish what its master had set out to do with them, whether that was pulling a cart or plowing a field, it would never be painful and they were completely in line with what their master had said.

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Jesus says, *"...my yoke is easy,"* because God's way is always better and always right. God's Word is always true. If you disagree with God's Word, you're wrong, God's Word is always right. And as a result of that, when we begin to trust God's Word, His eternal truth, and again, we talked about this last week—you're going to have to decide what your source of truth is. If you want to go with someone's Facebook post, [SHRUGS] hope it works. But when you're still empty next week and you're having to post another one you saw and repost that, I tell you – come back to this [MOTIONS TO "HEALTHY SOUL" SIDE OF CHART]. Jesus says, *"Come to me."* When you come to Me you'll have a healthy soul. You're going to start to see His grace, His forgiveness, His mercy, His life. You're going to have a relationship with Him and you're going to get to live out the life that He made you to live, and that's where each of us want to be. Jesus wants to take control of my life; wants to take control of your life. Soul care? Jesus says, *"Come to me."*



So I'm going to right now pause and stop and bring this message back to you because I can talk for a real long time, but I want you to be able to say here today: Jesus, take control of my life. I want you to be able to say—because of your need, knowing that God loves you, knowing that you have an inability on your own to come to Him on your own terms, because you say I want to have an utter dependence on God—I want you to know Jesus is constantly inviting you to come to Him. Constantly. He doesn't want this to just be a today thing. He doesn't want this just to be a thing that happened, um, maybe five years ago when you put your trust in Jesus. He wants you to come to Him today.

If you've never come to Him, today come to Him. Come to Him as a child. If you get a chance later on, look at the verses that led up to verse 28, verses 25-27.<sup>8</sup> Jesus sort of speaks cynically to a group of people who thought they were really wise and smart, and then He speaks to those who are children and He says now that's what we're looking for. He says come as children. *I don't have it put together.* Hey, we all struggle here because we are a very smart group of people. We have access to some of the finest knowledge, some of the finest research ever known to mankind, and yet we recognize in this room our utter dependence on God, how unhealthy our soul is when all we do is come up with that stuff, and we come as Jesus told His people to come—in childlike dependence.

So what I'd like to do as we close here is I would love for you to stand up and, um, I would like to read to you these words and I'd like you to receive these words, the words of Chapter 11 and verses 28 through the end. I'm going to invite you to receive these words from Jesus so I want you to do that however you would choose to receive them. Maybe hold out your hands like this, maybe hold up your hands like this [NEITHER POSITION SHOWN ON VIDEO]. Maybe you're one that you just want to go to your knees in front of your chair. Maybe you just need to sit down and put your head between your ears, now that I've told you to stand up. Whatever it may be, I want you to hear Jesus speaking to you right now, you ready?

***<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."***

– MATTHEW 11:28-30 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> MATTHEW 11:25-27 (ESV): *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."*



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O Jesus, again, I bring these dear souls before You. The ones in this room, the ones who are watching online right now, those who will watch this later this week, maybe years from now, we've been trying to fix ourselves – we turn our lives over to You.

If there's anyone here who's never put their trust in Jesus, right now is a beautiful time to say: *Jesus, I'm a sinner, I recognize that and I can't fix that. Jesus, I repent, I turn from that sin and I turn to You and I trust in You for my salvation, for the forgiveness from sin.* And you have to do any works, you need to trust in Him alone for your salvation. If you made that decision sometime in the past but you went back to trying to do it yourself—you can't—so I want you to give it to Him right now. Jesus is saying, "Come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden."

I didn't do this first service but I feel led to do it this service. I don't know, maybe it's something specific going on in this room. I'm going to invite you as the team begins to sing to feel free to come to the front and I want you to take your backpack off, and maybe you need to actually do that before you kneel down. Maybe you need to unhitch that tractor trailer thing, let it go and just give it to Jesus, and just empty these weights and these burdens and take Jesus just to be your King in your life this week. So I'm just going to invite you to step out of your seats. When David and the team's done with this song I'm just going to come up here and pray over you specifically as you just let those things go and give them all to Jesus and trust in Jesus. So I'm going to invite you to do that right now.

**WATCH OR LISTEN**



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