

I want someone who understands!
Matt 11:28-30

Friends, are you familiar with the term Burn-out?

If you are a motorsport enthusiast a burn out is what happens when you keep your foot on the brake and step on the gas at the same time. You spin the back tires and burn rubber.

If you are an aerospace engineer, burn-out refers to the point at which a rocket has expended all its fuel in its efforts to propel itself towards its destination.

But most of us are familiar with Burn-out because we use the term to describe the point at which people have expended all their emotional, mental and physical energy and resources in their efforts to propel themselves towards their destination.

Now, racing fans love to see burn-outs, they find them entertaining and burn-out in a rocket is ok too. In fact aerospace engineers plan for it and use it.

In a multi-stage rocket a huge amount of fuel is expended to escape gravity. Once it is burned out the first stage rocket drops away and then the second-stage fuel supplies are used to break out of orbit and send a much smaller lighter load into space towards the moon or mars.

But burn-out in human beings is not ok, it's not something we plan for, and it often happens because a super-human effort is required to get something started and maintained and it uses up all our fuel, including any reserves we have, before we reach our destination and then we're at risk of either crashing back to earth or being stuck in orbit, pointlessly circling the earth.

A wise professor once told me "the trouble with burn-out is that it won't kill you, it will just make you wish you were dead."

If you've ever been burned out, you know what I'm talking about.

And friends, the people in Jesus day were burned out too. In Matt 11:28 we see Jesus specifically mentioning those who are

burned out. “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened” he says. He is speaking to those who are exhausted, demoralized, drained and spent because they have been carrying a heavy load.

Now it didn’t start out this way for these people. At some point, earlier on in their lives -they had enthusiasm, energy and they were eager to reach their goal of being God’s people, they desired to be faithful covenant partners with God.

And what it meant to be a faithful covenant partner with God was summarized in the Ten Commandments – “*And Moses wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.*”(Exodus 34:28)

1. You shall have no other God’s before me
2. Do not worship idols
3. Do not misuse the name of God
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy
5. Honor your father and mother, so you will live long.
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal

9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor
10. You shall not covet

But it’s not always easy to interpret and apply the Ten Commandments to everyday life, let alone the rest of the Law of Moses. God’s people needed help to understand it and apply it if they were to experience the blessings and benefits of which came from it.

So in Jesus’ day there were religious teachers and scholars who made it their business to interpret the law and the Ten Commandments, and help ordinary people apply it to their everyday lives so they could live as faithful covenant partners with God.

Being a faithful covenant partner was a responsibility to bear and a task to perform, and the teachers of the Law were there to walk alongside people, to teach them and train them so they could fulfill their responsibility and perform this task.

It was sort of similar to how you might train a young ox, or horse to pull a plow or a wagon. You would hook them up

alongside a more experienced animal who was already comfortable with the harness, who knew what the commands of the driver were, who knew the right ways to respond, and the new animal would learn from them.

In the same way the people of Israel were yoked together with the teachers of the Law in order to learn from them.

The trouble was that these teachers and scholars had turned God's requirements into something that was oppressive. Instead guiding people in how they could be obedient to God laws, they were always critical and afraid of how people would be disobedient and so God's law had turned into a heavy burden of expectation which very few people could ever live up to.

So instead of learning how to live as faithful covenant partners with God - the people were becoming discouraged, they were giving up, and they were burning out, and their hearts desired someone who could truly help them – someone who understood.

Friends, we have the same challenges in life don't we? We often feel weary and burdened and burned out from the demands of life. It's easy to feel like we can't keep up or measure up to something? And we also desire someone who can help us, someone who understands.

Now, perhaps like the Israelites you are feeling like you don't measure up in your relationship with God? You're so aware of how you fail.

Or maybe you're discouraged because you can't seem to achieve the good life, a life of happiness and peace and prosperity, a life with meaning and purpose.

And while at one time you had high hopes for yourself and for your relationship with God and your life – it was going to be amazing, it was going to be awesome, exciting, meaningful, and everything you wanted it to be – now all you want is someone who understands how you feel, burned out and ready to give up.

Because those who are supposed to help us often end-up discouraging us instead by adding more things we should do in order to be successful with God and in life.

Do you know what I'm talking about?

The culture we live in tells us to get more stuff, or rack up more accomplishments.

But more stuff and more accomplishments can all too easily turn sour on us and become oppressive. The new house is a money pit; the new job sucks up all our time and energy.

And our conscience tells us that we should be a better person; be more loving and kind, become less self focused, support social justice, help the poor and needy

But trying to be this good person is an impossible task, and it only ends up piling on more guilt and discouragement as we fail to make lasting changes in ourselves and in the world around us.

Life has turned into a rat race and we are stuck on the hamster wheel getting nowhere... just growing weary, burdened and burned out as we hear the voices around us saying "try harder, run faster, fake it till you make it" and we don't know how long we can keep it up. Just like the people in Jesus day.

But then the people hear a different voice, a gentle and calm voice, a voice which draws them in and invites them, a voice which says "COME TO ME!"

Jesus sees their condition and he has compassion on them and He calls out to them – "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened...get off the hamster wheel... and I will give you *rest!*"

Rest! Oh to be able to be free from the heavy burden imposed on them by the teachers of the law. To not worry about meeting all the demands, to not be anxious about having violated a ritual, to be assured they are forgiven for the obvious ways in which they had been unfaithful and broken the Ten Commandments.

Rest for their souls. Jesus offers the people respite from their impossible task, a chance to breath and catch their breath. Some space where they are free from the tyranny of the urgent and not worried about any impending consequences or looming disaster. He unconditionally accepts them as they are, and deep down in their souls that's what they really need.

And once the people are rested, Jesus says "let me take over as your teacher." "Take my yoke upon you...it is easy and light!"

Because the solution to their burn-out is not to get rid of their calling to be faithful covenant partners with God – instead they need someone who can show them what that really means. To receive teaching that will correct their misunderstandings about it - from someone who cares about them, from someone who understands what it is like to be them – and that's Jesus.

And in contrast to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Jesus is a gentle and humble teacher His ego is not at stake if his students take a while to learn. If they make mistakes, if they don't understand the commands, that's ok – they are yoked with Jesus

Jesus walks with them, alongside of them, shares the yoke with them - and if they stumble and falter, He carries the weight of that responsibility to be a faithful covenant partner with God.

Friends, did you know Jesus wants to walk alongside you as well? His voice calls out to you too – Come to me...ALL who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest!

When we are burned-out friends what we need is someone who sees our fragile condition and deals with us gently.

Just come to Jesus, forget about what you are trying to accomplish for a while – make Jesus your focus instead.

Don't listen to what everyone else is telling you – listen to Jesus instead – pick up your bible and read about **Jesus**, read what **He** taught – because his yoke is easy and his burden light.

Take a seat with hundreds of others and listen to Him teach at the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:31 and you will hear him say,

³¹ *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* ³² *For the pagans*

run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Friends, Jesus understands that we have basic needs; that we want to enjoy the world that God made and have a good and happy life in it.

But, he wants us to understand that if this has become our main goal and focus in life... that this is why - whatever we've yoked ourselves with to get the good life, be it a career, a house, a relationship, whatever... has become a cruel master which is burning us out.

Jesus says that those who don't know this, or perhaps have forgotten this - they **run** after all these things, they **run** after the good life, burning themselves out in the pursuit of it.

And Jesus goes on to gently and humbly correct us, ³³ *But seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Friends, the solution to our burn-out is not in checking out of our lives, but in taking Jesus' yoke of the Kingdom of God

upon ourselves and slowing down to match the pace of one who is yoked with us. To keep pace with Jesus who is teaching us to "**seek**" not "**run**"

Seek to live as a faithful covenant partner with God, seek to be obedient to his commands and his laws, seek to apply them to your life, and seek forgiveness from Jesus when you've faltered and stumbled.

And friends the good news is that when we stumble and fall, when we break God's laws as we seek first His Kingdom. Our souls can stay at rest; we do not need to be anxious or worried about having failed because Jesus Christ is carrying the yoke for us.

And Jesus Christ has perfectly kept all of God's laws, He is THEE faithful covenant partner with God, and because He has yoked himself to us - we benefit from this!

We benefit from His righteousness! It is transferred to us and the longer we are yoked to him, the more we become like him. No longer burned-out, but filled up with His Spirit and

recharged with His peace, and ready to seek first God's Kingdom.

So friends, are you burned out? Are you overwhelmed? Are you weary and burdened? Then come to Jesus. Come to Jesus – because He is someone who understands.

Amen.