Dear Open Door Family,

When Carol and I moved to Kansas City over five years ago we packed and moved a lot of boxes. There were times when there were things we could NOT move or carry alone. In those times we were so thankful for those who helped us move out of our home in Detroit and for those who helped us move into our home here in Belton. It was so much easier because we did NOT have to carry the load alone. Sometimes however, we carry loads that are emotional or spiritual. If you have a family member who is struggling with serious health issues - it can become a very heavy weight. Others struggle with obedience to the things of God and may even think that the Bible is FULL of heavy commands which are designed to weigh us down. I love these verses from 1 John and Matthew.

**1** John 5:3 (NET) For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments. And his commandments do not weigh us down...

1 John 5:3 (HCS) ... Now His commands are not a burden...

Matthew 11:28-30 (NET) Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you REST. [29] Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry."

I love the fact that John makes it very clear that obedience to the Lord Jesus is NEVER a burden. Perhaps John was thinking the illustration Jesus used of the Yoke when he said God's commands do NOT weigh us down...they are NOT a burden. WHY? Jesus calls us into a unique relationship. He calls us not just to be believers but to become disciples. Jesus said that being a disciple of His means joining Him in the yoke. This kind of yoke is something that makes it possible to harness two animals together so that their strength can be combined. It makes it possible for the animals to pull a wagon or a plow. Jesus was saying give up your burdens and all the things that weigh you down. Come to Me and I will set you free by inviting you to join me in MY YOKE. He makes it clear that His yoke is not oppressive or harsh but gentle and the burden is light. Why is the burden easy to carry? Because we are NOT carrying the burden alone. We are walking side by side with Him - and He is the all powerful God of the universe - if I walk with Him the weight of the yoke falls on Him. Yes, I am still in the yoke and that means effort - but that effort is made light and easy because I am walking with Jesus in the Yoke.

**PRAYER:** Lord Jesus, I do want to Obey and follow you closely. I admit that at times I feel weighed down by worry and fear. Please Lord, help me to TRUST You to carry the load. Please Lord, keep me safely in the yoke pulling with you - not wandering off on my own.

Pastor Mark Kieft