

## Heavy Laden

*Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

—*Matthew 11:28*

I have seen farmers toil from sun up to sundown, trying with every ounce of strength they have to finish the job while there is still light. And I think of the times I moved and was pressured to complete the loading of the truck because of a tight time schedule. Maybe you can think of times when you were so exhausted that your back ached, your mind whirled, and you felt like you could not take another step.

The word *labor* in Matthew indicates the most wearisome labor. Those times when you give everything you have. I remember one weekend I was in the office working on my dissertation. It was 3:00 am and I could not think straight. I slumped to the floor to try to catch a little rest only to be awakened by the light of the security guard. I guess I needed to rise and give more. This is not the case in verse 28. *Labor* describes one who has been laboring under a heavy load without a pause for an extended period.

The words *heavy laden* designate a burden that exceeds normal expectations. When a soldier carries a backpack it contains his provisions for sustenance and defense; the longer the journey, the heavier the weight on his back. Our service for the Lord may require us to carry some heavy burdens.

God has not left us unsupported. He understands the weights we carry and the work we do. As we labor for the Lord, He has promised us rest. That calm is found in Him. He expects us to take the time to cease from the labor and enjoy the refreshment of time spent with Him. Soldiers are required to take R and R when they have been in the battle. After teaching for a number of years university faculty are encouraged to take a sabbatical. Even Jesus took a while away from the needy crowds to spend time with God the Father. It is a necessity for our physical and spiritual health to accept the given rest He offers in His presence