



May 2021

Dear Friends,

Tiredness. We all feel tired sometimes. And actually, it's something that creeps up on us – so subtly, so unexpectedly that we don't even realise it. In fact – many, many people are chronically tired. Tiredness is a pandemic. Oops there's that word again. We're tired of that too. Tiredness is physical, emotional ... even spiritual. People carrying around heavy burdens – and so many cry out "*Oh God, I need a rest*". But the last thing they expect, is for God to answer. That's sad – because God wants to deal with our tiredness. I mean, actually deal with it. And just in case you should think that this is something new. That this tiredness and exhaustion is something that's exclusively related to the 20th Century. Have a listen to this, this it's what Jesus said 2000 years ago.¹ "*Come to me all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart and you'll find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*" Carrying heavy burdens is nothing new. He wasn't talking to people burnt out by an industrial age. They were a simple agrarian subsistence economy. We all carry heavy burdens from time to time.

Greek mythology came up with Atlas. You've seen the picture of a man stooped over carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders. I guess that's how many people feel. The heavy burdens that Jesus was talking about, come in so many different shapes and sizes. I've carried a few of them around in my day and I'm sure that you have too.

Sometimes we're just plain working too hard and we need a rest. Or there are pressures at work or at home and it feels like we're living in a pressure cooker. And my hunch is that that's not how we're meant to live. Sometimes it's relationships, a particular person who's hurting us or who's betrayed us or who's ignoring us or who's fighting with us or who's trying to squeeze us into some mould into which we don't fit. Sometimes it's because we're trying to do things or to be things we were never meant to do or be. Sometimes the burdens about our self-esteem or self-worth. We compare ourselves with other people and we come up with a conclusion that we just don't match up. Or sometimes it's money problems, 'I've lost my job, I don't have a job'. Many people today can't even find the money for food. Those are real burdens. Sometimes it's a loneliness, that feels like a padded prison cell where we scream and no-one can hear us. Do you see how this list goes on and on?

So often these burdens are so hard to get away from and to put down and to rest from and I've come to the conclusion as the self-reliant individual that I am, I just can't do that on my own. Here's the thing, I believe, we don't have to. God wants to take our burdens, to give us rest. I believe that God hears our cries and is there for us. Remember Jesus' words "*Come to me all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.*"

Rev'd Nicki

¹ Matthew 11:28-30