

Christ's Yoke and Burden

Matt 11:30

1

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Isn't it interesting that Jesus makes no bones about the fact that there is indeed a burden that is laid upon His followers. In this statement He makes it clear that to choose to enter into a relationship with Him, and through Him with God, is to choose to willingly take on His burden. Religion, true religion, is not an occasional effort.

James 1:27

2

27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

James says that pure religion, true religion, comes from the heart and is manifested in our attitude towards the world. That is the same thing that Christ says in...

Matt 22:36-40

3

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" **37** And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." **38** This is the great and foremost commandment. **39** The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' **40** On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Christ answers the question of which is the greatest commandment by saying that the Love of God is. But He then immediately ties love of a neighbor, the world, fellow man, to it. Christ says that...

4

- A) Love of God
- B) Love of man

These are the two components that the Law depended on. John tells us that you can't love God and not love man. Now think back to the passage we started with in Matt. 11:30. Christ says that

5

"His yoke is easy and His burden is light"

When we look at the two things Christ uses to describe our relationship with Him, the yoke is used to illustrate how closely the true disciple of Christ is tied to Him in everything. I think we all understand that a yoke was used to tie two animals together so that they could work in unison pulling a plow or cart or some other thing where two were required for the work. Brethren, that is the same dynamic at work in our work and relationship with God through Christ. We are to be so closely tied to them through the word that it is as if we are one working towards the same goal, pulling together. The other thought is of a burden, a load to be carried, borne. Think of it this way...

- 6** C) The Burden - illustrates the **job** to be done
D) The Yoke – illustrates **how** it is to be done

The service of the disciple of Christ is not to be taken lightly or as an afterthought. The yoke is to be borne by any who would be His disciple, and the stiff-neck of self-will must be bent to receive it. The burden is to be carried for Christ, and all the strength that God gives us must be used for his honor and glory.

In this lesson I want us to look at some thoughts from the text of Matt. 11:30. Notice, that like most of the scriptures...

- 7**
- 1) The context explains it
 - 2) A small word in the text defines it
 - 3) The experience of all who come to know the Lord proves it to be true

- 8**
- 1) The context explains it

This passage does not stand alone in its impact. Some do, but most, like this one, find their meaning and import in the context. These come as a conclusion to what He has said previously. In...

Matt 11:25-27

9

25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. **26** Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. **27** All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

As we see here Jesus is speaking of the plan that God instituted to bring man back into a right relationship with Him through Christ. Christ says...

"You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants"

This thought is consistent throughout the scriptures. God's wisdom and plan is often hidden from man because most men can't figure out how to submit themselves to the wisdom of God but continually seek to apply their own wisdom and intelligence in how they live their lives. But the man who can divest himself of his own importance and come to God in all innocence, like an infant, that man will find God in Christ. God knew that for man to be able to truly come to Him in worship, man had to be able to separate himself completely from this world and everything in it. That is what is meant when Jesus says...

- 10** **27** All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

If man is to ever restore his relationship with God, it must be through Christ, that is the only way to know God, by knowing Christ.

Matt 11:28-29

11

28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

When Jesus tells man to "Come to Him," He is saying come to Him according to the plan that God has put into place. Remember the discussion about what a yoke is? Christ is telling us to unite ourselves with Him in all humility and innocence and to walk with Him in our lives now so that we can find rest for eternity. The context of verse 25-29 define what Christ is saying in verse 30.

Matt 11:30

12

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Christ is saying that the plan of God is for man to come to Him and unite, yoke, himself with Christ and to take upon Himself the burden of Christ. This brings us to our next point...

13

2) A small word in the text defines it

When we consider what Christ has said here, that the plan is for man is that he willingly take upon himself the yoke and burden to find God, it just makes common sense that we know what the yoke and burden are. There seem to be as many different thoughts on what this means to man as there are religions in the world today. Some seem to think it is all about self-denial, others think it is about living perfectly, and others seem to take the attitude that since they cannot live perfectly nor do they want to sacrifice anything, the best response is to do nothing. But as the point of emphasis indicates, I think the idea here is that for us to understand what it is we need to do, we need to understand what Jesus the Christ did. That small word that defines this text is...

14

"MY"

Christ is saying that we have to unite with Him and take the same burden as He took. In Acts ch. 15 we read...

Acts 15:28-29

15

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: **29** that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

This is the occasion where the Apostles, elders, and the Church in Jerusalem sent a letter to the Christians in Antioch concerning what some who apparently had come to them purporting to have been sent from the Church in Jerusalem, but had not, and were causing trouble at the Church there. The Apostles tell those at Antioch that the burden that is laid on them is basic;

- 16** E) Abstain from things sacrificed to idols
F) Abstain from blood
G) Abstain from things strangled
H) Abstain from fornication

That is the burden laid on the Church at Antioch. Are we to assume then that the Church there was not responsible for keeping any of the other commandments given by Christ? The answer to that question should be obvious, not at all. So what were they being told? I think the idea is that they needed to be obedient to God's Law, all of His Law, and that no one can add to or take away from that Law. Note...

1 John 5:3 **17**

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

John ties our love of God to our commitment to keeping His commandments. They go hand in hand and if we try to do one without doing the other, we fail. Now note...

Heb 5:8-9 **18**

8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

According to this passage, what was that made Jesus perfect? Was it the fact that He was the Son of God? Not according to the context here. It says that "Although He was a Son," He still learned...

19 **"Obedience"**

What was Jesus learned in His obedience that made Him perfect? I am convinced that it was the difficulty that we as men have being obedient and that it was His humanity that made Him complete and that His perfect obedience made Him the perfect sacrifice for all men. Christ's burden He is asking us to take upon ourselves is the burden of obedience to God, regardless of how difficult it might be to do.

This brings us to our last point...

20 3) The experience of all who come to know the Lord proves it to be true

Christ says that His yoke is easy and his burden is light. If obedience is so difficult for us as men, how can the yoke be easy or the burden light?

Phil 4:4-7 **21**

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of

God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Notice what Paul says to the faithful in Philippi. “Rejoice in the Lord.” What a beautiful thought for the obedient to God to know that His peace is within reach of each and every one who will come to Him through Christ.

I guess the point is that if we are not happy in our lives, who do we seek to blame? Is it God’s fault? Is it Satan’s? Is it the circumstances of life? There is an old saying that is attributed to Abraham Lincoln, though the evidence for that is questioned by some, be that as it may...

22 *“Most folks are about as happy as they choose to be...”*

Friends, brethren, we stand today on the threshold of a new year. God has truly blessed us here in Oakdale. Look around you, you see men and women, young people, all striving to serve God the very best they can. We all have the same desire to have a home in heaven when our lives here are done. We are all seeking to carry the truth of God to all that we can. These are all choices that we have made. That is why we are here today, right now, instead of out there, in the world.

In this new year we will all make choices every day of this year. We will choose where we go, what we do, what we say, who we will associate with, what path we will follow, whether the way of God or Satan, we will all choose. The choices we make will be based on the truths we hold to be evident. If we don’t accept the truth of God as truth, our decisions will not be founded on it. If we do accept His truth, then we will be obedient to it. Therein is the truth of Christ’s statement...

Matt 11:30 **23**

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

When we choose to accept the yoke of Christ and be united with Him through faith. When we choose to bear the burden of obedience as he bore it, then, and only then, will we find the peace of God in which we can rejoice.

We get to choose what we will do with this year, both as a congregation and as individuals. We will choose to be faithful or not. We will choose to attend or not. We will choose to work to spread the word or not. We will choose to love each other as well as God or not. We will choose to rejoice in God or not. We will choose to be happy in the Lord or not. We will choose to take the yoke of Christ and to share His burden or we will not.

Josh 24:15 **24**

15 “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

The joy of the one who follows God is found in choosing, as did Joshua, to serve the Lord.

Christ pleads for us to come to Him for His yoke is easy and His burden is light, what shall we choose?