

Take my Yoke

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[0:00] Matthew 11, 28. It's a familiar one. The Lord Jesus says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Words of comfort, aren't they? Words of invitation. The answer for the weighed down soul, the restless soul, come. He says, come. His hands are opened. His welcome is extended. He beckons, come. Come to him. Beckon still. He beckons now. Come unto me. Come unto me. All ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. The call goes out to all that labour, to all that are heavy laden. Friends, it's an appeal to the lost. It's an appeal to the lost. Burdened down. Burdened.

We've sung the burdens that he took our burden gladly. There's a couple of songs referred to that. And Psalm 55 talks about, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.'

[1:50] And we read elsewhere in the letters of Peter, 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. And the call goes out to those labouring under those burdens of sin.'

The burden of sin. It weighs us down. It's a heavy burden. It's a weighing down. A conviction of sin. Sin loads people down. It weighs people down.

The Bible says in Proverbs 13, verse 15, 'As much as some transgressors we know, they can profit through their sin.'

And yet, when you really search their heart, and their question about their state, about their soul, there's a searching there. There's an emptiness there.

The way of the transgressors is hard. Sin is a burden. It'll weigh people down and bring a heaviness. He says to you, come. He says to us, come.

[2:58] Come to him. To him it is that we must come. Not to religion. Not to philosophy. Not to the ideals of men. As much as though some of them might be all very well.

But he says, come. Come to me. To me. He is our hope and our rest. It's an encouragement to me. As the word tells us in John 2, verse 9.

Salvation is of the Lord. You know, that, to me, says it all. Salvation is of the Lord. As much as any of us can preach and witness and testify and seek to evangelise.

And as much as there might be all methodologies to do so, it boils down to that, doesn't it? It must be God's working in the heart. It must be God that saves. Salvation is of the Lord.

It's where it begins and ends. It's with him. He's the author and he's the finisher of it. And it is to him that we must come. His tender invitation is extended still to every soul that is burdened down by their sin, that is convicted of their sin.

[4:12] He says, come. He says, come still. The timeless message of the word of God, it's still an invitation to come. To come into that true rest, that true refreshment that only he can give.

He says, come unto me. He says, also, take my yoke upon you. Take my yoke upon you. The yoke was a five or six foot long wooden beam, a carved piece of wood that was harnessing two oxen together, a lead ox and a follower ox.

This wooden device held the two together. He says to us, take my yoke upon you.

In our world, people are wearing yokes. We know that the enemy would yoke us to himself and to his way of living.

People can wear all kinds of yokes. It could be a yoke of materialism. It could be a yoke of alcohol, of greed, of lust, of pride, of ambition, of greed.

[5:30] The yoke is holding you. If you're outside of Christ, there's a yoke that you are wearing still.

But he says, come unto me and take my yoke. Take my yoke in exchange for the other yoke. And yoke speaks of work.

When the oxen were yoked together, it spoke of work. The yoke that he gives will not exhaust us. The yoke that he invites us to wear will fit you perfectly because it's designed by his hand. The master carpenter, our Lord Jesus, has shaped that yoke that is fitting for you, that is well fitting. And he wants each of them as his people, every saint, every man or woman of God has a yoke to bear, a responsibility, a role, a task to fulfill.

[6:34] And he says to you, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. What an encouragement that the yoke that he designs for us will be perfect for our need, for our serving him.

And a yoke is a symbol of service. It's a symbol of responsibility. It's a symbol of working in partnership, in harness. It's a bonding. For the unpleasant yokes, it's a bondage.

But for us, his yoke is a bond of love, of perfection. He is tender. The master carpenter shapes that perfect yoke.

And his yoke fits you. It fits us. Now, when you consider a yoke, a yoke speaks of connection. The two oxen were harnessed together.

They were joined. They were united. And if you are yoked together with Christ, it speaks to you of your dependence upon him. If you're a Christian today, we know we're utterly dependent upon him.

[7:38] As salvation is of the Lord as we come unto him. And salvation, as our uniting together with him, it's dependent upon him. The Christian walk.

We can't live apart from him. He is life. In him we live and move and have our being. We're united. We're harnessed. We're in yoke with him.

And we've got the privilege of carrying his yoke. And for us as Christians, it could be different responsibilities that we can bear for his glory. Different things that we can do in harmony with him, in harness with him.

And the load will be light because he will carry the heavier hand. There was a preacher talking on this text one day and he gave his message and a fellow came up after he had spoken and this man said, I wish I'd known that you were speaking on this message because I could have told you something.

I could have told you, you see, when I was a boy at home, I used to drive the oxen and the yoke was never made to balance as you said. The preacher thought that the yoke balanced.

[8:46] But he went on to say, Father's yokes were always made heavier on one side than the other. Then, you see, we would put a weak ox alongside a strong ox.

The light end would come on the weak and the heavier on the stronger. That's why his yoke is easy and his burden is light. He takes the heavier end.

He takes that heavier end. Our Saviour has the heavier end upon his shoulders. Thank God that we can work together as co-workers with God, co-laborers together with him.

Thank God for work. I know there's people searching for work in this church. There's numbers of people looking to work because it's natural and normal for a man to work.

And, friends, God wants us to be workers together with God. Workers together with him. Yoke together. Not working independent of God but together with him in that yoke as he supplies the strength and the sufficiency for us to carry it.

[9:51] And for all of us the question is really, whose yoke are you wearing? Because if you're saved or not saved tonight, all of you in effect have a yoke of sorts.

Every one of us is carrying a yoke. If you're lost tonight, you're in a yoke. You're yoked together with the enemy of your soul.

And he's taking you down a track to your eternal destruction. Yet, for us that are saved, the yoke that we carry is a blessing to us, not a burden. It is a joy to us.

It's God's yoke. It's God's will. It's God's service. And we must ask the question, whose yoke am I wearing?

Let go of your own hard yoke, the yoke of whether it be legalism or the yoke of sinful things, of ungodly attraction.

[10:52] Let go of that yoke and wear instead his yoke. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. The yoke illustrates Christian truth in numbers of ways.

For example, when two animals are close together in the yoke, they can hear one another. And when you wear his yoke, you can listen to him.

Amen? When you're in a yoke with Christ, if yoke is, if Christ, your Lord, is side by side with you in the yoke, his head is right next to our head.

Our ear is just a few inches from his mouth. That's a good place to be, isn't it? It's a good place to be where you're close to his word, where his voice is close to your ear, so you can hear God.

That's important. It speaks to us of the word of God. It speaks to us of prayer, of listening to God, of speaking with God. The yoke holds the two side by side.

[12:04] The yoke of Christ speaks to us of the closeness of our Saviour. When you're yoked together with him, he is close to you. It speaks of your relationship, of the closeness of your relationship with the Lord, as you're yoked together.

And we know the word tells us that we have a friend who sticks closer than a brother. That's the closeness that he wants with us. Closer than a brother. I know some of you are fortunate or unfortunate enough to have a brother, but I don't have a brother.

I've got lots of spiritual brothers and spiritual sisters as well as a couple of physical sisters. But the closeness that we can know with our Lord is closer than a brother.

He's a friend. He is closer than our own flesh and blood, our own brother or sister, our friend. And that closeness happens as we're in the yoke, as we unite it together in harmony with him.

Another spiritual truth you could draw from the analogy of the yoke is that when you're in a yoke, the two go in the same direction.

[13:13] When you're in his yoke, he will lead you. That's another good place to be, isn't it? It's good to be where the Lord is leading you, where he is guiding you, where his Holy Spirit is showing you the way to go.

He is guiding your steps, the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We see that too in the yoke of Christ as there is only one leader in the yoke and we must give way to the stronger.

We must give way to his way. Instead of pulling our own way and having that mismatch with what God is saying for us to do and our own willful spiritual ways.

Instead, stick in the yoke and hold fast to his way, to his leading, to his guidance. Another truth about the yoke is it's got the sense of submission, hasn't it?

When you're in a yoke, when you're held in that device, when you're fastened onto Christ, then there's a sense of submission, there's a sense of surrender.

[14:35] And yet, in that surrender is the greatest liberation, in that yoke is the greatest freedom, because he knows the way that is best for us.

He knows the path that we need to take, that is honouring to him. And there's that true and absolute satisfaction that he gives to us, because his word tells us that his commandments are not grievous.

In other words, his instructions for life, his guidance to us in his word, it's not going to be hard or unpleasant or grievous or hurtful to us, it's going to be meaningful and helpful to us.

His commandments are not grievous, so bear his yoke, be his servant. Come unto me, he says, take my yoke, and he says, learn of me, learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.

He tells us still, learn of me, learn of me, be my disciple, he says to you. Let this be your greatest endeavour, let this be that which occupies your energy, your strength, learn of Jesus, absorb his character, study his nature, have his mind.

[16:02] And that happens as we dig deeper, as we search the scriptures, as we see if these things are so, we hunger and thirst after righteousness, he will fill us as we learn of Christ, learn of him, learn of that one, the teacher, the master, the rabbi, the absolute, our

teacher.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2 verse 5, it starts as our mind is shifting gear to engage with eternal truth, that our mind can be renewed, changed and transformed, that Christ can start that transforming work as he captures our love, our devotion.

Let Christ be your grand subject, your teacher, your lesson, the truth. We have need of training, training in the word of God.

They that labour and are heavy laden, they still can come, we still can come. His invitation is extended still. He's not closed the book as it were.

Names can still be written down. He still says come. He says take my yoke upon you. He says learn of me.

[17:28] There's rest there. If we obey his call, there's rest, there's an assurance of his saving power. There's a haven of rest that's found in the shadow of his wings.

There is a place of pardon, of peace, of forgiveness, of burdens lifted. There is that place still to those who will come. There is no greater study, no greater learning that we can occupy ourselves with.

The universities of our day, they just really scratch the surface and sometimes they miss the whole point because the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, isn't it?

That is where it all begins as we read in Proverbs 9, verse 10, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.

That's where it begins. We can have all manner of letters after our name and still be totally ignorant of the most essential truth, of the most vital knowledge of the fear of the Lord and miss the boat for eternity.

[18:39] What a loss, what a tragedy, what a great neglect. Oh, to know him, to know him, to learn of him, to know our God in whom are here all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge we read in Colossians 2, verse 3.

It's in him, it's in him. Teach me thy way, teach me thy way, O Lord. the psalmist cried, we want to be instructed in his way.

So, friends, it's simple truth really, come to him. And as Christians, we likewise need to keep coming unto him, to direct our prayers to him, to direct our thoughts towards him, to wear his yoke. Don't neglect the yoke, the responsibility, the roles that he's given us to occupy, the place of service, the opportunity to be close to him, to hear his voice, to receive his guidance in that united fashion of the yoke.

Don't pull away and seek to go your own path, but submit to the master, to the stronger one in the yoke, to cooperate with God.

[19:53] And then you'll find rest, rest, rest, unto your souls. Rest, refreshment, rest, comfort, rest, peace with God.

Rest. You know, we all at times long for that restful time, that restful place, in this striving, chaotic, dog-eat-dog world that we live in.

There is a place of rest still, and it's with our God, our Saviour. we read of wisdom's ways, in Proverbs 3, verse 17, wisdom's ways, are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

All her paths are peace. If we're looking for true rest, if we're searching for true peace, it's in wisdom, it's in Christ. though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me.

We read in Psalm 138, 7, even though you're in the midst of trouble, and numbers of folk are going through that, as we all can, from time to time, though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me.

[21:13] That is a promise from God for those who will grab it and make it personal, Psalm 138, verse 7. Even in the midst of trouble, if we yoke together with Christ, He will guide us through.

He will take us through that journey. He will be alongside us, speaking with us, guiding us as we submit to His direction. As we're in that yoke, He will guide us through those times of trouble, and He will be with us even through the valley of the shadow of death.

I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. He will be there. He will not leave your side. It is the Scriptures that give us comfort.

The Word talks of the comfort of the Scriptures, and it tells us in Isaiah 8, verse 20, to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

It's to the Scriptures that we must turn, and it is here that we learn of Him. We learn of the Lord Jesus. That's why fellowship is important. That's why study is important, whether at home or here.

[22:27] Take time to learn of Him. Learn of Him. And I'm glad there's folk here willing to come out on an otherwise unpleasant, cold and dark night wanting to learn of Jesus.

He wants you to learn of Him. He says learn of me. Learn of me. He says learn of my character. Learn of my nature. Learn of my truth. Learn of my meekness.

Learn of my humility. Learn of my heart. And that's found in His word. It's to His word that we turn for our source of all of that truth. And there's many benefits. There's rest to our souls.

Friends, in this world where many are restless and searching vainly for peace, it's only in Christ that we can find that. And it says in Psalm 19 verse 11 that in keeping of His commandments, of His truth, there is great reward.

There is great reward, not only in the hereafter, but in the here and now, as we know that there's a rest unto our soul. Friends, to recap, come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

[23:38] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

I challenge each one, whose yoke are you wearing today? Lay aside the yoke of sin, of Satan, and come to him tonight.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, we thank you that you invite sinful man to bend his knee still today.

Lord, that we might come at your invitation, that all who are labouring under the other yoke, that all who are weary and heavy laden and burdened down by sin would come to you.

Lord, we pray that every believer would know the freedom, the joy, the fulfilment of wearing the yoke that you would give to us.

[24:57] Help us, Lord, not to shake it off, not to shrug or turn away. Help us, Lord, not to shy away from the yoke, where it might mean we tread in steps that might challenge us, maybe through ways of trouble and testing.

Help us, Lord, to wear that yoke, to do your will, to follow in your steps, to walk side by side with you, to hear your voice and, Lord, to find that wonderful comfort, that rest for our souls.

Lord, we thank you for that privilege that we have tonight. And, Lord, I pray, Lord, for everyone here today that whatever faces us this week ahead will take heart in that truth.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. desde! desde! desde! desde desde Thank you.