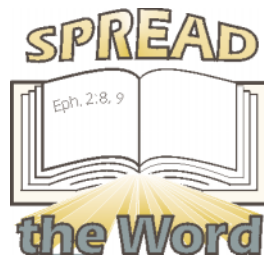


“MY YOKE IS EASY”

“Come Unto Me All Ye Who Labor”

taken from
Matthew 11:28-30

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“MY YOKE IS EASY”

We're at the very end of Matthew 11. We stopped last time at verses 28-30, the conclusion. We saw the principle in verse 28 of the invitation to the unbeliever, "*Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" It's a present tense of "labor" and "heavy laden," meaning this is the condition of the unbeliever. It means to have worked to the point of exhaustion in trying to save themselves. It means that they have tried anything and everything to save themselves. It's a perfect invitation to the Jews who are working to the point of exhaustion, using religion as their way of salvation.

"Heavy laden" is a word making reference to a heavy load. Heavy load is the religion that they are supporting and carrying. It's a perfect tense. It means that they have been burdened down with it in the past, and the religion keeps on burdening you. It's about to break their backs, is the connotation.

Then He says "I will give you rest." This is the rest of salvation. It's based on the fact **that you put your faith in Christ as Saviour**, which is the cessation of labor. No labor whatsoever. Notice, for "labor and burdens" He gives you **rest**.

In verse 29 you get the invitation to the believer. "*Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls.*" That's the Christian way of life. That's resting in the Lord, resting in the promises.

"*For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.*" Notice the words in opposition to "labor" and "laden" and "yoke." The opposite words are "rest," "light," and **now, that speaks volumes. If Christianity isn't a rest to you, if Christianity isn't light and easy, then you're not involved in Christianity.** If you're straining, if you're working, if you're prevailing through, there's something wrong. He's provided rest. (I'm almost falling asleep. Have you noticed? That's teaching by illustration.) **He's provided rest in salvation and the Christian way of life.**

I want to take up three concepts here. One, "*Come unto Me.*" Secondly, "*Take My yoke upon you.*" And thirdly, "*Learn of Me.*" Three principles from these two passages. "*Come unto Me*" is the voice of Grace. This is the invitation to the whole human race apart from Jesus Christ. This is in the midst of the world, which is demonstrated in Scripture as being evil. "*Come unto Me*" means that Jesus Christ still remains the sole, the **only** Revealer of the Father. "*Come unto Me.*" He doesn't tell you to go to someone else.

You ask yourself a question here, who does He call? And what does He promise to bestow upon those who come? Well, in Scripture here it tells us that He is calling all those who are weary and are heavy laden. In other words, this tells us that Jesus Christ knows the misery of the human race, and He knows that that misery, whatever it is, **the basic problem is separation from God.**

Notice, He doesn't take the individual miseries or problems and tries to solve them like a psychiatrist. But, He gets to the root of the misery of the human race by saying "*Come unto Me,*" which means that the human race and its problems result from separation from God. In other words, **it's a spiritual condition.** He knew that He and He alone had the only cure. That's why He said "*Come unto Me.*" It was direct. The recipients were weary and heavy laden, therefore, the objects of His heart.

Moreover He gave them rest. He just simply announced the fact of rest. "*I will give you rest.*" Period. Now, the love of God the Father, which in Grace, which is in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, always seeks out those who are weary, those who are heavy laden. And He promises to bestow rest, not merely salvation. That's included. But also rest on everyone that comes to Jesus Christ. Point of salvation you're resting in Christ for your salvation. After salvation you're resting in the promises of God. Then, when you're absent from the body and face-to-face with the Lord,

there is a rest in eternity. So, there are three basic concepts of rest.

He was the perfect revelation of the Father's Name to the heart of those who needed it. They had come to Jesus Christ because He undertook all and gave them rest. But there is much more than having peace with God, which is a synonym for rest of salvation.

When you have peace with God, the world presents many causes of trouble to you. This is to head off the person who says, "Well, all you have to do is accept Christ as your Saviour and everything will be fine." Then a person finds that everything isn't fine and then they doubt whether or not they are saved.

So, this principle says when you have peace with God, when you are saved, when you're resting in salvation, the world still presents many causes to trouble you. So, Christ calls all those who heard Him to "*Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.*" And that's the concept there of Christians living in this world.

"Yoke" is the concept of service, and "learning," which we'll get to in a moment, is the means by which you live the Christian way of life. In other words, you learn how to meet the troubles of life when you are, as the Scripture says here, "*meek and lowly in heart,*" which means Grace oriented. Content always to do the Father's will. Nothing can overthrow the believer that is in that particular point. This is the place of perfect rest.

The next concept is "*Take My yoke upon you.*" Let's go a little slow here because of the concepts here. "Yoke" is the word ZUGOS. Now, remember we're talking about the agricultural economy. This is being yoked with Him. "*Take My yoke upon you.*"

Why does God the Holy Spirit use the word "yoke" in connection with the word "rest?" If you put these two words together, rest and yoke, they almost seem antithetical. "Yoke" almost seems to connote work.

You know, if you're thinking about "yoke," you're thinking about work. If He suggests rest, why does He mention such words as "yoke" and "burden?" In other

words, is the Christian life an additional weight to add to the great woes of this life?

In other words, you have certain problems in life and now you become a Christian and now you have more. Like more burdens and more yokes. Is Christianity some extra duty? Some painful devotion to observances? Some heavy restrictions which trample all the joys and freedoms we have in this world? In other words, the words "yoke" and "burden" come over to most people to mean "isn't life hard enough and sorrowful enough without being chained with yet another yoke?"

You have to understand what the word "yoke" means. Taking up the word "yoke" in the ancient world, under an agricultural economy you have to ask yourself a question: Is a yoke a burden to the animal who wears it, or isn't it? You must have some idea of oxen, and cattle, and so forth, and they put yokes on them. So you have to ask yourself a question: Is a yoke a burden to the animal who wears it? The answer is **no**.

It's just the opposite. In other words, the **yoke makes the burden light**. When you attach a yoke to an animal, it makes the animal's job easier. But, attaching anything to the oxen in any other way than a yoke, makes it impossible for the animal to pull the plow. It would be intolerable. In other words, **work by means of a yoke is light**. Easy. That's why He uses those terms.

The yoke is not an instrument of torture, it's an instrument of Grace. In other words, **it makes things easier for you to serve**. It's not a malicious contrivance for making work harder. It's a gentle device to make hard labor easy. It's like a fulcrum. A yoke is not meant to give pain, but to save from pain.

So, the yoke of Jesus Christ is not slavery. It's Grace. So, don't feel sorry for Christians as objects of compassion, because they have taken on, as they say, the yoke of Christ. You know, "suffering great things for God." That's what comes over in the passage to a lot of people.

This one phrase here, "the yoke of Christ," has probably driven many away from the

plan of God. Instead of making Jesus Christ attractive, they have made Him a taskmaster, like Pharaoh.

Some people take this passage and they narrow life by petty restrictions. Some use the principle of self-denial where none is necessary. There is a whole segment of religion that takes a vow of poverty, for example. That's the same concept. That's the yoke of Christ as being something burdensome. Making misery a virtue under the plea that it is the yoke of Christ. Again, suffering great things for Christ.

Happiness to that person is criminal because it now and then evades to them the yoke of Christ. Some Christians are at their best victims of a depressing fate. They all have the sallow complexion and are just mourning themselves to death. Life is like a perpetual penance and their hope for the next world is purchased by a slow martyrdom, called the yoke of Jesus Christ. That's the way life is taught.

The mistake is taken from this word "yoke," as being under the yoke, or wearing the yoke in the youth. A lot of older people teach younger people to wear the yoke in their youth. But, this yoke here, is not a yoke in that sense, but the simple harness or an ox collar on an eastern animal, or some type of eastern custom.

In other words, it's a literal wooden yoke, which probably the Lord Jesus Christ was familiar with, and He knew the difference between a smooth yoke and a rough one, a bad fit and a good fit, because the difference that it made to the animal was important because the animal had to wear it. The rough yoke rubbed the animal. The burden was heavy. The smooth yoke caused no pain at all. And the load was lightly drawn. The badly-fitted harness was a misery and the well-fitted collar was easy. It's not hard. It's not harsh. It's not bitter. It can be used. It's pleasant. It's mild. And it makes the job easier.

What was the burden laid upon the Christians? It wasn't some unique infliction that He alone must bear. It was what all men

bear. Burdens. It was simply life. "*In this life you have trouble.*" Human life itself. It's the general burden of life, which all of us go through as we live here. Christ was looking at individuals and members of the human race who took life painfully. To some, life was weariness. To others it was a failure. To many life was a tragedy. And to most people it was a struggle and a great pain.

Now, how to carry this burden of life has been the whole world's problems. In other words, we all have difficulties. We all have problems. But how you handle them is what it being taught here. It's still the world's problem today, how to handle problems.

But here is Christ and He has a Grace solution. He says, "Just carry it as I do. Take life, for example, as I take it. Look at it **from My point of view**. Interpret life from My principles." In other words, "*Take My yoke and learn of Me. and you will find it easy. For My yoke is easy.*" It works easily.

To coin a phrase, it sits rightly upon your shoulders, and therefore, makes your burden light. In other words, whatever the Grace solution is to the problems that we face in life, it fits perfectly on our shoulders and **makes this life that we have to go through easy and light**.

There's no suggestion here that Christianity will absolve any man from bearing burdens. Because Scripture tells us that we have burdens and we are to bear our own burdens and we are to "*Cast our burdens on the Lord*" and we are to bear one another's burdens. So, wherever you look there are burdens. You couldn't absolve the burdens because that would absolve life, because life itself is a burden.

What Christianity does, what Grace does and what the Lord does, is that it proposes to make these burdens possible, easy, and light. In other words, Christ's yoke, then, is simply His secret for the alleviation, His prescription for the rest and the happiest method of living.

You know, men harness themselves to their work and to the stress of the world in

clumsy and unnatural ways. The harness they put on them is antiquated. In other words, whatever they do apart from this passage here is more or less a rough-fitted collar at best. They make its strain and friction that causes the burdens that are past enduring by placing it where the neck is most sensitive. And there's continuous irritation. It increases until the whole individual is full of sores.

In other words, the cure is to shift the yoke to some other place. **It's the beautiful work of the Grace of God everywhere to adjust the burden of our lives so that we are able to bear it.** In other words, He adjusts the load and harmonizes it with all surrounding things and restores those who are fatigued with the dust of this world to a new Grace way of life.

In other words, you face problems, and we all face problems, but the Lord adjusts the burdens so under His particular yoke so that it is easy to carry. It's the mere matter of altering the perspective of life and changing the proportion of things. It's function in lighting the care of man is altogether its own. In other words, you get a new scale of values. You have a new perspective on life. Grace makes this burden of this life weigh a lot less by making us a citizen of another world.

One of the principles is *"In the world you have trouble, but I have overcome the world."* And *"We are just pilgrims and sojourners here."* So, you change your perspective. What was a ton yesterday, through the remedy which we'll see in just a minute, is not even a half-ton today. If you continue to study the Word of God and make application of the Word of God to your experience, whatever was a ton yesterday won't even be a half-ton today. See, that's the yoke being adjusted so that you can carry it without rubbing your neck raw.

So, without changing your circumstance, all He does is offer a wider horizon and a different standard, and it alters the whole aspect of the believer's life in this world. That's the yoke.

The third one is how we do it. I want you to notice. It's very interesting. *"Learn of Me;*

for I am meek and lowly in heart." Notice the first invitation was "Come." **It doesn't say to change your behavior pattern or your circumstances or your personality or anything.** Just come. And whatever it is, He's going to make sure that you have rest.

Then, as far as a believer is concerned, service, put His yoke on, then whatever burden you have will be light and easy. Well, how do you do that? Tarrying in the closet? 10% before taxes? Whatever you want to put in they put in. They do it all the time. Revival? Rerevival?

This next phrase tells you simply. The only thing here in context, it's not even speaking in tongues. *"Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."* There it is. We must achieve whatever rest He has to offer, Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3, by learning about Him.

In other words, **we have to learn it. You don't come by it naturally.** You have to be taught it. *"Learn of Me and ye shall find rest for your souls."* I want to tell you something. Right there is **the secret to life.** Everybody wants tranquility of soul. Everybody wants inner happiness. Everybody wants peace in their day. But here's the formula. *"Learn of Me and ye shall find rest to your souls."*

So, you have two words here: Learn and Rest. And again we have the principle where they almost seem to be a contradiction. "Learning" is a dirty word today, especially in the 21st century. It's like hard work. Then, you have the opposite of that, "rest." But, **this passage tells us that rest is a thing to be learned.** Learning, for example, as you would a language. When you learn a language what do you do? **You practice it.** You practice this rest as you would practice a language.

We would never, humanly speaking, associate rest with learning. What is it that we must learn? What is it that if learned our souls will have rest? You don't have to get a dictionary or a concordance because it is right here. Christ answers' without the least bit of hesitation what it is by giving you two words: "Meekness" and "Lowliness."

Meekness and lowliness are not self-humiliation. Not acting like you're round shouldered, pawing the ground with your foot, woe is me, never use the first person singular "I." That's not it. It's Grace oriented. Both of these words are Grace oriented.

"Learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in mind." The word "heart" is mind. It's a mental attitude of Grace. In other words, you **receive Grace** and you **operate on Grace**. These two things are not chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ at random, but to these two things the result is rest. Learn these, in short, and you have already found rest. These are the direct causes of rest and it will be produced at once.

What are the causes of unrest? Well, if you know yourself you can answer that easily. **Pride** is the answer of unrest. See, pride is the opposite of Grace. Selfishness is unrest. That's the opposite of Grace. Ambition is the opposite also of Grace.

Unhappiness comes from personal trivial disappointments which life has brought about. In other words, the petty friction of everyday life that we associate with one another, the jar of business or work, the discord in domestic circles, the collapse of our ambition, the crossing of our own will, the taking down of our conceit which makes inward peace impossible, wounded vanity, disappointed hopes, unsatisfied selfishness. These are the universal source for the human race's unrest.

But to meekness and lowliness these things simply do not exist. **They cannot co-exist. Grace cures unrest by making it impossible.** If you're a recipient of Grace then you appropriate Grace and you live by Grace. It's impossible to have unrest. Grace remedy does not strive with surface symptoms. Grace always strikes at removing the cause. In other words, the self-centered life can be removed at once by learning meekness and lowliness. Whoever learns them is forever proof against it. In other words, you live a charmed life if you're Grace oriented.

Grace is a transfusion of healthy blood into a poisoned soul. No fever can attack a

perfect sound body and no fever, or unrest can disturb a soul which has breathed the air, or learned the ways of Grace, that are found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We often read books about how people are always looking for a utopia. Sometimes it's called Nirvana, sometimes it's called the seventh plateau. It's all according to the culture. In every one of these theories, the men who write them are sighing for the wings of doves that they could fly away to this never never land, this utopia. There they would find rest. But flying away won't help us. **The kingdom of God is within you.** It's not on the seventh plateau or Nirvana.

In other words, we try to get to the top of whatever it is for rest, **but rest lies at the bottom.** Some people feel that if they climb up the ladder of success and become the 32nd vice-president of Texas Commerce that they have got it made. See, they're climbing looking for it. It's sort of a lofty thing. But here it's different.

Water rests only when it gets to the lowest place. So do men who are oriented to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the lowly. A person who has no high opinion of himself can **never be hurt if other people do not acknowledge him.** You're only hurt when people don't acknowledge you if you have a high opinion of yourself. That's meek. That's Grace oriented. **If you're without expectation, you never fret if nothing comes to you.** You know, the "world owes me a living" type.

So, if the world doesn't give you a living, then you're not upset because you don't have that sort of expectation. **The lowly and the meek man is really above all men, and above all things. Grace oriented people are above everybody and everything.** That's the principle here. Don't forget that Jesus Christ said that He was meek and lowly. If He isn't above all and everything then I don't know what is.

You can dominate the world when you're Grace oriented because **you don't care for it.** Take it! It's all yours. Who needs it? The

miser, for example, Midas, doesn't possess gold. **Gold possesses Midas.** But, the meek possess it. What did Jesus Christ say about the meek, the Grace oriented? He says that they will inherit the Earth. **Inherit.** They don't buy it. They don't conquer it. They don't work for it. **They inherit it.**

There are people who go about this world looking for slights. They wear their feelings on their sleeves. And they are miserable people, for they find these slights at every turn, especially imaginary ones. Like "What does she say about me?" Grace really teaches us the art of life. The whole curriculum lies in one word "**Learn of Me.**" Unlike most educational systems, this is **always** purely personal.

You know, when you get into a classroom it's universal. It's not personal. And now you're graded on a curve per your peers and whoever else happens to be there. But, you see, God doesn't grade on a curve. He doesn't grade in a classroom. He grades personally. This type of education is not to be had from books, or lectures, or creeds. **It's a study from life.**

Christ never said much here in words about the Christian Graces because He lived them and He **was** them. Yet, we don't copy His art, as it were. We learn His art by living with Him. See, that's being yoked with Him.

You know, years ago when I grew up, old apprentices were yoked with their masters. I worked for some organization for three years before they let me be on my own because I had to be an apprentice for this guy for so long. So, we don't copy the person's art. **We learn the art by living with Him, by being yoked with Him,** like old apprentices with their masters.

Christ here in His invitation is to the weary and the heavy laden. It's a call to begin life over again upon a new principle, upon His own principle. In other words, He says "Watch My way of doing things. Follow Me. Take life as I take it. Be meek and lowly and you'll find rest." So, the Christian life to anyone and everyone cannot always be a bed of

roses. No educational process can be this. If you knew beforehand how much was involved in this simple expression, "*Learn of Me,*" you wouldn't have even entered "the school."

There's not only much to learn, **but much to unlearn.** In other words, **when you begin to study the Word and you study about the Grace of God, there are a lot of things that you have to unlearn.** People don't want to unlearn them. To learn simply what it is to be meek and lowly, when you have had no lessons of that in childhood, may cost you half of what you value most on Earth.

When you come to the Word of God, and you begin to study it, you almost have to throw away everything that you thought before. Your norms and standards change radically. When an individual enters himself as a pupil in such a school, it means there is much rest there, but there is also much learning.

True humility, Grace orientation, results in rest. But, **you can't make yourself humble to find rest.** You must be made humble, or gracious. In other words, you must go through the mill to rest.

Christ's life outwardly was one of the most troubled lives ever lived; tempest, tumult, waves breaking over it all of the time, until that warm body was laid in the grave. But, in the inner life of the Lord Jesus Christ there was a sea of glass. The great calm was there. **At any moment you might have gone to Him, and you would have found there rest, no matter what it was.** Even when the bloodhounds were dogging Him in the streets of Jerusalem, He turned, as you remember, to His disciples and offered them, as a last legacy He said, "*My peace I leave with you.*"

Never did anything for a moment break that serenity of Christ's life here on this Earth. Misfortune could not rain much on Him because He had no fortune. Food, raiment, money, fountainheads of half of the world's weariness, He simply did not care for. They played no part in His life. He took no thought

for them. It was impossible to effect Him by lowering His reputation.

You know, some people get upset if people malign them or perform character assassination. Their reputation is hurt. But, they couldn't do that to His reputation because He had already made Himself of no reputation. He was dumb before His insults. And when He was reviled, He reviled not again. In fact, there was nothing that the world could do to Him that would ruffle the surface of His Spirit.

Such living as mere living is altogether unique. It's only when we see what it was in Him, that we can know what the words "rest," "lowly," and "meek" really mean. It doesn't lie in emotions, or in the absence of emotions. It's not a "hallowed" feeling that comes over us in Church. It's not something

that is said by a preacher. It's not in nature. It's not in poetry. It's not in music. Though in all of these there is some sort of soothing.

It is the mind at leisure with itself. It is the perfect poise of the believer's soul. It is the absolute adjustment of the inner man to the stress of all outward things. It is the preparedness against every emergency. It is the stability of a short conviction. It is the eternal calm of an invulnerable faith, the repose of a mind set deep in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In rest there are two elements: tranquility and energy. This is what it was with the Lord Jesus Christ. *"Come unto Me all ye who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Because My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

This pamphlet was taken from a Bible class presented by Buddy Dano on April 1, 1986 from his series on Matthew.

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