

“The Perfect Yoke”

Matthew 11:20-30

Scripture Ref:

1. Years ago I owned this little Toyota 4WD truck, and I loved to go “four-wheelin”
 - a. Deep in the woods, into the mud – the muddier the better!
 - b. Up near Atlantic Beach there is a place “Radio Island” where people would take their 4WD, ATV’s and motorcycles
 - c. Huge hills, trails – but they had this one area that they pumped a bunch of muck that they dredged from the inlet,
 - d. It was nasty stuff, and if you went into that stuff – your vehicle would sink up to the frame –
 - e. I watched one guy try and make it through, he got half-way in and his truck suddenly went “plop” and sunk – he tried for an hour to get out - it finally took 4 trucks to pull him out!
2. Sometimes we can feel that way in life – like we are stuck up to our frame in muck, and no matter how hard we try, we cant make any momentum!
 - a. There are times in our lives that we seem to be ‘doing-doing-doing’, but we’re not getting anything done.
 - b. Times when we are ‘going-going-going’, but we just can’t seem to get any forward momentum.
 - c. And what if it is something we are doing “for the Lord” that we seem to be stuck in?
 - d. You feel like you have this big yoke around your neck, and you are right in the muck!
3. Question: During those times, do you ever stop and ask yourself “why am I doing this?”
 - a. Then, examine the answer:
 - i. Is it because you feel like you are ‘supposed to’,
 - ii. or someone ‘expects you to’,
 - iii. or even worse, you have no idea why you are doing it?
4. Today we will look at what it means to be “yoked” – but first a word about a few cities...

Woe to the Impenitent Cities

20 Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of

judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

5. This is a continuation of what Jesus said earlier –

Matt 11:16-17

"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.'

- a. In that previous statement Jesus was comparing the religious leaders of Israel to spoiled little children.
 - b. Yet not only did the religious leaders reject His message, several entire cities rejected His message!
- 6. Chorazon, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were cities where Jesus had ministered, Capernaum was considered “Jesus home”, where Jesus spent much time ministering (Matt 4, Jesus left Nazareth and went to Capernaum)**
- a. The miracles that Jesus had performed in chapters 8 & 9 had been done in these cities, and we saw that in each of these places, there was opposition to His ministry
 - b. Each of these cities rejected Jesus, and if you go to any one of these sites today, they are nothing but piles of building stones!
- 7. Now, is Jesus now mad at these cities because they rejected Him, and is going to smoke them?**
- a. No – that misses the point of what He is saying.
 - b. Jesus came to these cities early in His ministry, and He came bringing miracles, physical and spiritual healing, the very words of life were given to these places!
 - c. Yet because they didn’t receive what Jesus offered, they became dead cities.
- 8. It is a picture of the person who rejects the words of Jesus...**
- a. Jesus is at work all around us, and yet some people will stay say “I don’t believe all that Jesus stuff!”
 - b. Fine – but if someone doesn’t respond to the awesome works of God all around you, that person is a dead city.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

9. In other words – “Thank you Father for revealing the secret of life to people who are open, people who are not too smart to receive the things of God.”
 - a. I have heard it said that Christianity is a crutch for those who are weak.
 - b. ...something that people who are ‘really bad off’ have to embrace to survive
 - c. I see if from a different angle: Those who are not so preoccupied with themselves, those who are not so great in their own eyes
10. And check it out, I know that it is a hard and harsh world out there, and there are few places that you can come just as you are, and be received.
 - a. Yet with Jesus, you can come just as you are – you don’t have to have something to offer Him,
 - b. He doesn’t pick the prettiest or the smartest or the most athletic
 - c. He receives all who come to Him – even the simplest person, the poorest person, the most unattractive person!

26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

11. God’s plan is so incredibly awesome, yet so simple!
 - a. Our Milky Way galaxy is approx 100,000 light years across – that means if you were in space ship traveling 186,000 miles per hour (the speed of light), it would take you 100,000 years to travel across our galaxy.
 - b. And we now know that our galaxy is just a speck in the context of the universe
 - c. And yet Isaiah 40:12 tells us that God span’s the heavens in His hand!
 - d. How could we know such a God? How could we have a relationship with such a God? (It would be like you and I having a relationship with a bacteria).
 - e. Not only that, but God is holy, and He cannot fellowship with anything that is not holy.
12. So God did the one perfect thing, He became a man, to bring us the good news of the gospel.
 - a. And He became sin on our part, and then gave His own life to atone for our sin!
 - b. Then He tells us...

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

- 13. All of you who are burdened with your sins, who are carrying the weight of your sin, all who are weighed down with guilt.**
 - a. Where can you go? There is only one place where you can find rest – when you come to Jesus!**
- 14. You know what’s funny – Jesus didn’t say: “Come all you who are having a great time partying”, or “come all of you who are rich and famous”**
 - a. But rather come “all you who labor and are heavy laden”.**
 - b. Does that mean Jesus wants the losers? NO!...**
 - c. It means that it takes a certain level of self honesty and self awareness of our terminal condition.**
 - d. It is the person who brings their sin burden to Christ, and He will take it, and give you rest...**
 - e. Rest from guilt, rest from having to put up the façade every day to make it seem to everyone else that we are OK – when we’re not.**
- 15. I remember having a conversation with a young man once, and I was sharing what an incredible burden had been lifted from me just from the fact that I no longer had to put on a front**
 - a. I no longer had to cover my tracks**
 - b. I didn’t have to remember which story I told to which people, and try and keep them all straight.**
 - c. The freedom – the rest – found in Jesus is something that you must experience in order to realize what you were missing.**
 - i. Several years ago I took a certain medicine for a year. It has some undesirable side effects – but after a few months I got used to them.**
 - ii. It was only after I stopped taking the meds that I realized how bad I really felt – because all of a sudden I felt 100 times better!**
 - iii. That is exactly how the weight of our sin becomes in our life – we don’t realize how heavy it is, until it’s lifted off!**
- 16. But that rest is not only at salvation... there are times when we as Christians can allow ourselves to become weighed down.**
 - a. Perhaps we open to door to sin, which brings guilt and shame.**
 - b. Or, sometimes we set out on a path that might not be sin, but is simply not something that God has for us.**
 - c. In other words – trying to be, or do, or have, something that God has not ordained for our life.**

- 17. You know there are a lot of things that you can do “for the Lord.”
Many things. Many good things. Many good, kingdom things**
- a. But the question we have to ask is “is it my yoke?”**

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

- 18. The Greek word “carpenter” used in Matthew 13 to describe Joseph refers to a finish carpenter, and there is a tradition that the carpenter shop of Joseph made yokes for oxen.**
- a. That may not sound like a piece that required craftsmanship, but actually it did.**
 - b. Ox were important animals in that time, they would spend long hours in the field, and the yoke had to fit perfectly**
 - i. A poor fitting yoke would rub and cause discomfort, and the ox wouldn’t pull for long – they would become strained from the uneven weight distribution.**
 - ii. But a well fitting yoke would allow the ox to pull and plow all day long**
- 19. So, check it out – if we take up a cause, or a calling, or a ministry, that God has not prepared for us, it will be a drag!**
- a. It will rub, and cause friction, and we wont be able to pull it off for long!**
 - i. So you better be careful – you look at another Christians ministry, and think “man I want to do that!”**
 - ii. But if that yoke was not made for you, you aint gonna like it!**
 - iii. It wont fit, you’ll strain under the load, you find yourself saying “Man, this is heavy!”**
 - b. But if you will simply seek the Lord, and ask Him, Lord, I want your yoke – He’ll give you His yoke, which will be perfect for you!**
 - c. You will find that when you put on a yoke that was hand-crafted for you by the Lord, that it will fit perfectly!**
 - d. It wont strain you out, or cause great discomfort**

Copyright © 2009 Pastor Clay Ritter. This data file is the sole property of Pastor Clay Ritter. It may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this data file must contain this copyright notice. This data file may not be copied in part, edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the written permission of Pastor Clay Ritter. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Pastor Clay Ritter, c/o Calvary Chapel of Wilmington, 2831 Carolina Beach Rd, Wilmington NC, 28412.