

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to St. Matthew (*Matthew 11:28-30*)

Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Christ's Yoke - Easy and Light

We are tired and over-burdened because of the yoke that we have made for ourselves. A simple yoke can be a wooden bar placed over the shoulders, that is designed to carry loads or buckets at both ends. An ox-yoke harness a pair of oxen together so that the two animals can be worked as a team. A yoke is designed for producing work. Spiritually, there are different types of yoke. There are those that we made for ourselves and those that the Lord designed for us. Very often we have our own ideas and plans that have a common objective - self-gratification. We pursue our desires and goals without thinking about what the Lord has planned for us. We end up chasing dreams that left us unfulfilled and burnt out even when we achieved them e.g. chasing after money and material success. Sometimes we do not achieve them despite spending all our time and efforts. We end up feeling weary and burdened. All because we place on our own shoulders the yoke that we have fashioned for ourselves – it was simply too heavy.

Invitation of Jesus to the weary and burdened. What do we normally do when we are weary and burdened? How many turned not to Christ but to some temporary but dangerous relief and distraction? How many are ensnared by drugs, alcohol and other self-destructive habits in their desperate search for something that can bring some measure of temporary but much needed relief from their hardships and burdens? Jesus invites everyone to real rest by taking on His yoke. His yoke will give true rest, and will be a perfect solution to the weary and over-burdened.

Taking on Christ's yoke, easy and light. To take Christ's yoke is to freely submit to the revealed will of Christ for our lives, to enter into a voluntary state of loving, confiding servanthood of Christ, our personal Saviour who gave Himself up for us. Christ's yoke is easy because it is entirely based on pure, enlightened divine love and designed for our highest good. Thus, Christ will not impose anything on us out of any interest for Himself but always for our eternal and highest good. His will for us is based on His infinite wisdom and enlightened love which dictate that we are not left to ourselves in running our own lives because oftentimes in our human weaknesses, we will choose something which will be injurious to ourselves or against the common good of others around us. The restraints of His yoke are not legal restraints because the subjection to His yoke is voluntary (our free choice) and all His actions are based on love. The restraints in this relationship are not based on legalism but actually constitute a love band.

Christ's yoke gives us freedom at the highest level. We are not driven nor compelled to enter into this relationship with Christ. However, we are persuasively called by His love. We accept to freely submit ourselves to God's will and we accept the restraints on us by this same Will. For those who genuinely love Christ, submission to Christ's will is an ideal choice of the exercise of the free will. It will constitute for us real freedom in the highest sense. Contrary to slavery to sin and evil, bearing Christ's yoke is the fullest expression of our free will to respond to the enlightened divine love of God and the exercise of our deep trust in God. We freely and lovingly submit to God because we trust in His infinite wisdom and love for us. We submit to God because we acknowledge that exercising our own free will can lead us to harm's way and the danger of growing in self love and self pride.

Christ's yoke is a sweet burden of love, giving peace and true rest for our souls. Apart from God's knowledge that we are returning His love, we do not expect any reward from taking on Christ's yoke as this is the sweet burden of love. On His part, however, Christ has always demonstrated that He does not give us what we deserve but always more than what we need. Therefore, those who find Christ's yoke difficult to bear are those whose love for their Saviour is wanting. Their motive for doing His will is not to please Him but for some other reasons such as fear of punishment or an unwilling fulfilment of their obligations. When these imperfect reasons are replaced with true love for God, Christ's yoke becomes not burdensome but a sweet burden of love. Our reward is Christ's peace in our hearts and true rest for our souls.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You said to me: I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). Oftentimes I have given myself grief by relentlessly pursuing my own dreams and desires. Consequently, I feel stressed, burdened, restless and unfulfilled. My heart is searching for something more. I know my true destiny and love rests only in You. Lord, I wish to surrender now at this moment my entire life to You. Humble my spirit and help me discern Your will for my life. By this, I will be walking on the true path on which I will find true peace and rest even when on the journey to my final eternal destination. Mary, Protectress of our Faith, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk