

righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Do you hear how Paul brings out the old way of life is hopeless and vain compared to the gospel way, the Christian way of life, and he pressed on in that way with joy and zeal against all odds even till his death! Are you convinced too that the Christian religion with its gospel of grace is the most kind and loving, gracious and helpful, and beneficial to mankind? There is no religion of true hope except the gospel message and way that the Bible tells us, the way of grace and truth, under the yoke of Jesus Christ the Lord. Anyone who will take the challenge to compare the reasonableness and riches, comforts and happiness of the Christian faith to all others will realize the gospel message is incomparable, outshining all other faiths infinitely much! This makes sense also, for the gospel message and way of the Bible is the one true religion from God Himself, whereas all others are from man's own sinful and blind imagination. Thank God for the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that believing on Him and following after Him we may and will find His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.....indeed, not only comparatively so, but think next how this is true concretely so as well and comfortingly so too, which we will look at next week.

Let me end this message proving from Psalm 100 that to seek God and serve Him is not something harsh but something happy, not something repressive but something liberating, not something depressing but enriching, not something frustrating but fulfilling, not something wrong but only always right. *"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."* Do you see how Psalm 100 fits in line with what Jesus says, 'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light'? The aim of this message is that the testimony of the psalmist be your testimony too and that you live realizing and reflecting the truth of what Jesus says in Matthew 11:30. May God so bless His gospel Word. Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



JESUS' NURTURING WORD [1]

In this message we consider what Jesus says in Matthew 11:30, *"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* Our theme is Jesus' nurturing word here. Jesus says this in the context of verses 28 and 29 about coming to Him and taking His yoke upon you. He says it to further encourage us to be sure to hear and follow up on His call. This is now a third message on Matthew 11: 28-30. With verse 28 we had the theme, Jesus' welcoming words, and with verse 29, Jesus' instructive word, and now, Jesus' nurturing word. Since the three texts, Matthew 11:28, 29, and 30 actually belong together as a unit you can remember the three main thoughts of each text with the word "win". If you want to win in life's race, and be more than conqueror over sin, Satan, death, and hell, take seriously Jesus' welcoming word, *"Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* And take seriously Jesus' instructive word, *"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."* And take seriously too, Jesus' nurturing word, *"For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."*

How can this last verse serve as an extra drawing for us to come to Jesus in true faith and devotion? Well, let us remind ourselves first what Jesus means with these words, and then we will concentrate on three ways this verse carries so much gospel weight. *"Come to Me...take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me"*, says Jesus, *"for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."*

Last week we already noted the word "yoke" in New Testament times was a symbol of submission. Seeing animals with a yoke on and so being guided by the farmer gave an everyday example of being under a yoke. Jesus calls here to come under humble submission to Him, and in verse 29 He already stated He is a gracious and lowly Master as opposed to a harsh and high minded taskmaster. And now when Jesus adds in verse 30, *"For My yoke is easy,* [literally, something kind, or something wholesome and serviceable], He is saying, 'Following My ways is something delightful for you, not something impossible and oppressive, but something beneficial and wonderful, really!' Indeed, *"My burden is light"*, adds Jesus, that is, what He requires from us in His ways is not something too heavy to bear and burdensome, but something God's people gladly follow after, and find so liberating too.

What Jesus all means here is, as William Hendriksen put it, "That simple trust in [Christ] and obedience to His commands out of gratitude for the salvation already imparted by Him is delightful. It brings peace and joy. The person who lives this kind of life is no longer a slave. He has become free. He serves the Lord spontaneously, eagerly, and enthusiastically!" Sure, following after Christ in truth and being under His yoke, there will be trials to be endured and battles to be fought, but the comforts of the gospel and the gospel way far outweigh any cross or difficulty met with. I like the way one person explained this verse: "Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird, not loads but helps to motion", yes, in living to our God and to His praise, and living life to the fullest in fruit to His glory and honour and for our neighbour's good!

To promote exactly this, I invite you to consider with me more Jesus' nourishing, encouraging word of Matthew 11:30 noting how this text speaks such truth comparatively so, concretely so, and comfortingly so.

"For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Jesus says this as all the more reason to trust and obey Him in life, initially and continually. And think of how these words are very true comparatively so. Compare the Christian gospel to any other way or religion in this world, and Jesus' way of grace and truth will outshine all! Here we should think about the different ways people live who don't trust and obey the gospel. Many, we know, live simply in sin and worldliness, following after their own ideas and desires. But the Bible teaches that means really still following after the devil and his ways. Any look around us will prove the world's ways and the devil's path is a road of misery, and a way of bondage and hopelessness. Both the way of sin and the wages of sin leads to death, the Bible teaches, and world history proves it.

How empty and vain, and plainly meaningless and hopeless too is life left to ourselves! Life as taught as a product of evolution, begun with a big bang somewhere some time ago and now headed to nowhere or who knows where and for what, leads to living in anxiety mostly, and trying to drown that out with pleasure and partying on the weekends as much as you can. Solomon, who for awhile had all the world and his flesh and the devil could offer, said *"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"*. [Ecclesiastes 1:2] To be brought under the yoke of Satan and this world, to live in sin and for self, is a yoke that is heavy and burdensome and that becomes more and more so as time goes on. While so much is offered and looks desirable from this world, yet very much offered proves so fleeting and more troublesome than wholesome so very often.

A relatively poor Christian living in a grass hut can prove, and has often proved, to be a person so much more happy and content than a godless millionaire with his several homes and countless toys and exotic outings. It is a fact of life, comparatively speaking, Jesus' yoke is easy, something kind, and His burden something light compared to the way of the

world and sin. Dear friends, have you observed and discovered this for yourself too and does this by itself draw you to Jesus as Saviour and Lord? Or could it be you observe the way of sin is hard and unsatisfying and unfulfilling, you see the evidence, but still you yourself will not turn from sin's path and come to the Saviour in true repentance and faith, could it be? When will you turn from the folly and bondage of sin to the only Saviour from sin Who invites all to come to Him also with this word, *"For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."*

Comparatively speaking, Jesus' word is so true, thinking not only of living in the world in the way of self and sin, but what about thinking of all the other religions, all the man-made religions of this world? All man-made religions are religions promoting salvation or good of whatever kind for us, somehow on the basis of our own deeds and devotion. But that is the great stumbling block with all these religions, for never can a person be as devoted and full of good deeds as he might and should be, with the result that always there is a life of bondage to achieve some goal, some level of devotion ourselves to gain acceptance and approval before the gods! If our human hope for acceptance and for the future is dependent on improvement of our human selves somehow, then our human hope is vain and hopeless! This is exactly what all the religions of man's making promotes, and these religions keep people in bondage to ceremonies and rituals that are senseless and useless, but all too many are caught up with these very things. Christianity tells about a gospel of grace from beginning to end, and that the Christian life is all a matter of thanksgiving to God for complete salvation for sinners like us, already all accomplished in and through Christ Jesus the Saviour, and it proclaims even whatever is needed in living the Christian life to God's praise that we also may and do receive through God's supply in humble dependency on Him. It is all about complete salvation and glory for us by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone....making it so wonderful from beginning to end.

To get at how verse 30 is comparatively true considering all other religions, we need to remember the context of Jesus' words. Jesus spoke His gospel message in a setting of Judaism and the countless rules and obligations that the scribes and Pharisees loved to burden people's lives with. Compared to their religion of so many impossible duties and cumbersome constraints, the message Jesus came to bring was and is truly liberating.

For evidence of this just listen to what Paul writes in Philippians 3:7-10a, turning from his life of trusting his own works to Jesus Christ, *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own*