MERCY'S MESSAGE

TEXT: Luke 7:48-50; I Tim. 1:12-16; Titus 3:5

Simon had given a supper in honor of Jesus While in this home a person whom the Bible calls a sinner came and expressed her love to the Lord in an unusual way. True love always sacrifices. John 3:16; II Cor. 8:9 "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich." Love responds to love. Love draws out of us our very best. That is, God's love, when accepted, draws out of us our very best in whatever realm of service he has called us to serve in. II Cor. 5:14 includes the words, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." The love of Christ is like a great magnet that draws out of us our very best. In this home there was the critical and the critical attitude was expressed. I once heard of a sleeping member who always slept through the making of the motion and the positive vote but would jump up on the negative vote and say, "I don't know what you're voting for, but I'm against it." Somebody said if anybody goes to sleep the preacher ought to throw a hymnbook at them but then someone answered that by saying if anyone goes to sleep in the pew, throw a hymn book at the preacher to awaken him. This critic thought this unusual demonstration of love was out of order. He was against it. We have the sweet, sweet assurance of a Saviour expressed to this individual. In Luke 7:48 he said thy sins are forgiven. To me the three sweetest words in the human language are love, grace, and mercy. This may not be in the proper order. Forgiveness by the love and the grace and the mercy of God have been assured to this individual. In verse 50 the Saviour gave this sweet assurance, your faith hath saved you. Go in peace. The Lord wants us to be saved. He wants us to know we are saved and enjoy knowing that we are saved. Peace comes from believing in God. Rom. 5:1 I'd rather know my sins are forgiven, that I am saved, that I am at peace with God as to know anything else that can be known.

In Isa. 55:6,7 we find the Saviour called to mercy. What a beautiful invitation. The Lord is merciful. Psalms 103:8 Remember what He said in the days prior to the flood, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." My daddy had a saying that we understood. We didn't have to have an encyclopedia to understand. When he would tell us to do something or tell us to stop doing something that was annoying him, he would say, "Boys, my can is about full", and we understood what he meant. He didn't go to sleep with a sore throat from re-
peating himself. God's word says that even though God is a God of mercy He will not always chide with us. He will not let us get by forever. His Spirit will not always strive with man, neither will He keep His anger forever. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins." Arent you glad? Nor rewarded us according to our sins. "For as the heaven is high above the earth so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." That's mercy! Lam. 3:22-23. Our God is a merciful God. He is a compassionate God and because He is that we have not suffered for our sins as we could have. His mercies are new every morning. God is merciful and because He is merciful He has provided cleansing from our sin and from all sin. I John 1:9

Mr. Webster defines mercy as "The disposition to show compassion or kindness in one's power to punish or rebuke. Mercy implies compassion so great as to enable one to forbear, even when justice demands punishment, or to give help or comfort even to the lowliest and most undeserving." King Hezekiah said in Isa. 38:17, "Behold for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." The Apostle Paul said in I Tim. 1:13,16, "I obtained mercy!" In I Cor. 15:10, "By the grace of God I am what I am." In I Tim. 1:14, "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and LOVE which is in Christ Jesus."

At a time in my life when I needed it I received much help from fellow believers who LOVED and EXRESSED it. I received religious books, religious tapes, religious cards, etc. Among the helps came a tape with three very special and challenging messages to me in song by Tammy Baker. They were "You Can Make It", "God Isn't Through Blessing You" and "Mercy Rewrote My Life." Mercy has rewritten many lives. Mercy rewrote Hezekiah's life. Mercy rewrote David's life. Mercy rewrote the sinner's life. Mercy rewrote the Apostle Paul's life. Mercy rewrote the Apostle Peter's life. Mercy rewrote D.B. Wright's life many times over. Mercy can rewrite your life! Mercy rewrites, revives, recommissions, and restores. Psa. 3:3a

I. Mercy writes "Forgiven" to those who come to the Lord in humility and confession.

Jesus said, "Thy sins are forgiven." Dr. Charles Allen, the great Methodist Minister, in Houston, Texas, tells how his father on his death bed asked him if he knew what the sweetest word in the human language is and Dr. Charles said, "No dad, what is it?" He said, It is forgiven. I'd rather know that all the sins that I've committed in the past 62 years are forgiven than to know anything else. That I stand before God in Christ Jesus clean by the blood of Christ, that my sins are forgiven. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." In the Old Testament there is an illustration of what I am trying to say at this point, the "He Goat" offering. If you were not able to afford a lamb or ram, you could take two he goats to the priest if you had committed sin. Confess your sin, lay your guilty hands on the head of one goat. It's throat was slit; it's body was placed on an altar and burned picturing Jesus Christ going to Calvary and suffering, bleeding and dying for us. Then he placed his guilty hands on the head of the other goat and that goat was given to a stranger to take it into the wilderness never to return to the site of the guilty sinner. That's mercy! Mercy writes forgiveness, forgiven, our sins taken away, behind the back of God. Find out where the back of God is and that's where our sins are when we confess them to God and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 4:32 challenges us to, "Be ye kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." When the guilty hell-bound sinner comes to God by faith in Christ, mercy writes forgiven, not because of any merit on our part, but for Christ's sake. Did not Jesus our loving, sacrificing Saviour, pray from His cross, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

II. Mercy writes "Forgotten" for all who are forgiven.

Hebrews 10:16,17 states the principle, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." King Hezekiah had this assurance that God had cast all his sins behind His back. Isa. 38:17 The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. I John 1:9

III. Mercy writes "Free Indeed" by those who receive Jesus into their hearts by faith.

Sin enslaves us. Sin kills. Rom. 5:12 Our sin marks us before God. Jeremiah 2:22 reads, "For though thou wash thee with niter, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me saith the Lord." Jeremiah 13:23 teaches that we are helpless to change our sin situation. Prov. 5:22 reveals that we are held with the cords of our own sins. Apart from forgiveness we are dead, lifeless and helpless slaves to our own sin.

Light has come. Jesus is the true Light who lights everyone who comes into the world. John 1:9 "God who commanded light to shine out of darkness has shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6 Jesus went to the Samaritan woman to tell her how to be saved. Jesus looked up the ex-blind man and told him how to be saved. John 9 A light from heaven attracted the attention of the Apostle Paul before he was saved.

Those who have received Jesus Christ into their hearts by faith enjoy spiritual freedom.
July 1987

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of sin. Gal. 3:13 When Jesus frees us we are free indeed. John 8:36 God wants us to enjoy this freedom. Gal. 5:1

IV. Mercy writes "Family Member."

Salvation is a Spirit birth by which one becomes a child of God, member of the family of God with eternal life. I John 5:1; Gal. 3:26 Those saved are blood bought servants of God. I Cor. 6:19,20. The psalmist David describes the family member as a blessed saint. Ps. 1:1-3 Such family members are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Eph. 1:3

V. Mercy writes "Friend" to the faithful believers

Proverbs 17:17 says a friend loveth at all times. Proverbs 18:24 includes the words, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." His name is Jesus. Jesus recognizes the faithful believer as "my friend." John 15:24,25 How timely are those two beautiful hymns, "What a friend we have in Jesus" and "There is no other friend to me like Jesus." What an honor to be called friend by Jesus.

VI. Mercy writes "Forever" relative to these five spiritual blessings.

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Mercy writes forever forgiven. Hebs. 10:17 Mercy writes forever forgotten. Psa. 103:12 Mercy writes forever free from the penalty, power, and punishment of sin to those forgiven at the point of faith in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8:1; John 5:24 Mercy writes forever a member of the family of God to the believer. John 10:28; John 6:37,39 Mercy writes forever a friend of Jesus to the forgiven. David lamented, "yea mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted which did eat of my bread hath lifted up his heel against me." Psa. 41:9 This will never be said of mercy!

Sinners who repent of sin and put their heart faith in Jesus Christ are "forever saved, forever sealed and forever safe in the hand of both the Son and the Father. We are now saved and kept safe by the living Saviour who holds the keys. John 10:28; Rev. 1:18 Blessed be the sweet, sweet Spirit who seals the forgiven unto the day of redemption of the body. Eph. 4:30

Let us be careful to both praise and thank God for Mercy's Message! Should you as a reader of this article be one who has never been forgiven for personal sins, Will you allow mercy to rewrite your life? As one whose life has been rewritten by mercy, will you share Mercy's Message with others?

CONSECRATE YOURSELVES TO THE LORD

Charles Swilling

Text: Exod. 32:29

I. CONSECRATE YOURSELVES TO CHRIST.

A. Love Him. John 14:23
B. Live for Him. II Cor. 5:14,15
C. Labor for Him. I Cor. 3:9
D. Be loyal to Him. Matt. 6:33

II. CONSECRATE YOURSELVES TO HIS CHURCH.

A. To her work. Matt. 28:19,20
B. To her word. II Tim. 2:15
C. To her worship. John 4:24
D. To her war.
E. To her witness. Acts 1:8

III. CONSECRATE YOURSELVES TO THE COMMANDMENTS.

A. Conformed to instruction.
B. Convicted to illumination.
C. Concerned about importance.
D. Converted to ideas.

IV. CONSECRATE YOURSELVES TO CHRISTIANS.

A. To their friendship.
B. To their fellowship.
C. To their faithfulness.
D. To their fruitfulness.
E. To their fitfulness.

God's Forgiveness

1. It is a Fact. Matt. 9:5,6
2. It is Fervent. Luke 7:47
3. It is Full. Psa. 103:12
4. It is Fruitful. Psa. 51:3,12,13
5. It is Faultless. John 8:3-11
6. It is Freedom. Eph. 4:31,32; John 8:32
7. It is Frequent. Matt. 18:21-35

JESUS KEEP ME NEAR THE CROSS


I. A PLACE OF SUFFERING.
II. A PLACE OF SACRIFICE. John 1:29
III. A PLACE OF SELFLESSNESS.
IV. A PLACE OF SUBMISSION.
V. A PLACE OF SIN. II Cor. 5:21
VI. A PLACE OF SALVATION. Matt. 20:28
THE BENEFICIAL TEACHINGS OF CHRIST (PART 26)

SUBJECT: WALKING WITH THE LORD
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus said, "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 MEEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART: AND YE SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS. FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT."

One of the greatest needs in the "Christian world" today is for those who "know Him" and "bear His name", walk with Him. Too many are trying to split their lives into two segments: The SACRED and the SECULAR. They believe that the sacred segment deals with going to church, paying their tithes and offerings, witnessing occasionally, and singing in the choir. The secular segment of their life deals with everything else that "they" want to do or be involved in. People with this concept are ultimately expressing that Christianity is a religion. However, the Biblical concept of Christianity reveals that Christianity is a life. It includes a manner of behavior that is apropos in both segments. Christianity involves more than just going to church and being involved in all the ministries of the church. Christianity embraces being the right kind of father, husband, wife, mother, parents, children, employer, employee, and neighbor. When we begin to realize that Christianity is more than just a religion - its a life - then and only then will we begin to experience the power of God in our lives individually as well as collectively in our homes and churches. We're NOT talking about embracing a bunch of rules and regulations that are man made customs that tend to develop a bunch of religious misfits. We are talking about a relationship and fellowship with our Lord to the degree that we realize our Lord has given us the guide line in His Word concerning the proper manner of behaviour that He would have us to follow in all areas of our lives. It's a matter of responding through obedience to our Lord, realizing that whatever He has instructed us to do He will empower us with His Spirit, to accomplish it. It therefore becomes a matter of submissive ness to the Saviour and sovereign, not a self effort that tends to lead us out on some ego trip.

As we look at the text verses which deal with the subject of "Walking With the Lord", consider with me 3 main areas:
I. THE SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION.
II. THE SIMPLE ILLUSTRATION.
III. THE SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES.

I. THE SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION.

We need to understand and realize that this is an invitation from our Lord. This REQUEST is seen in 3 key words. Those key words are as follows: (1) "COME" - V28, (2) "TAKE" - V29 and (3) "LEARN" - V29. A good parallel passage that embraces the same concepts would be Phil. 3:7-14. Do you really want to learn about your Lord? This invitation deals not only with accumulation of Biblical facts but the application of those facts to our experiences in life. The RESULT of responding to this request and learning of Him is seen in the expression "YOU SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS". Are you and I resting in Jesus and His Word or do we find that much of the time our life is filled with unrest, uncertainty and anxiety? May all of us heed the admonition to come, take, and learn, and through our obedience to this call from our Captain, we'll find rest.

II. THE SIMPLE ILLUSTRATION.

A man went out to visit a farmer. He found the farmer out in the field plowing with a yoke of oxen. The thing which confused and confounded him was that one ox was strong, stout, and robust while the other ox was skinny, scrawny and sickly. He inquired about this and was told that the only reason the weak ox was used was to fill out the yoke.

The spiritual parallel of this simple illustration is certainly obvious. We're the weak one. He's the strong One. It's through Him, by Him, and because of Him that accomplishments are made. Notice the validity of this claim as evidenced in Phil. 4:13.

III. THE SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES.

Briefly, let me just call your attention to two examples: David and the Apostle Peter.

First, consider the example of David. His call is recorded in I Sam. 16:1-13. His walking with and dependence upon the Lord is evidenced in the revelation as recorded in I Sam. 17:1-58. WITH God, all things are possible in the light of revealed truth given to us in His Word which is relevant to the dispensation that we are living in. Another interesting reality is that if you're walking with the Lord, listening to and obeying Him, who be to anyone who lifts up their hand against you.

The other example is the Apostle Peter. His call is recorded in Matt. 4:18-20 and John 7:67-71. Peter had a hard time in the learning process because he thought he knew all
the answers. His plans, thoughts and ideas seemingly were always different than the Lord's. He had a problem with self-life. Study the following verses for verification of these statements. Matt. 16:21-23, Matt. 26:31-35, Luke 22:31-34, John 18:2-10 and Luke 22:54-62. Even though he was stubborn - selfish - and egotistical, the Lord still had compassion for Him and wanted him to learn. Compare Mark 16:7; I Cor. 15:3-8, John 1:40-42 and John 21:15-19. He had to learn how to put down self and depend upon, trust and believe the Lord. He had to learn that it really didn't make any difference what "he" thought. What really counts is what the Lord says. He learned this lesson and notice the changed man on the Day of Pentecost, as he stood up boldly and declared the Word of the Lord. He had finally learned and now he experienced the "rest" of the Lord.

May God help each of us to enter into that "rest".

TURN TRAGEDY INTO TRIUMPH

TEXT: Revelation 2:1-7

INTRODUCTION:
The word "church" is translated from the Greek word "ekklesia" which means "called out assembly". A New Testament Church is a called out assembly of saved, scripturally baptized believers who have covenanted themselves together to carry out the commands of Jesus Christ. The Lord's churches are local, visible assemblies commanded by our Blessed Saviour to carry out the Great Commission. Matt. 28:19,20. The New Testament Church began during the days of the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. Matt. 4:18-22. Christ Jesus is the founder and head of His church. Matt. 16:18.

If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and have linked your life in faithful and loyal service to Him, you are on the winning side. The Bible tells us how much Christ loved the church. Eph. 5:25. Nations may rise and fall, great causes may fail, but Christ and His church will endure forever. Eph. 3:21. The New Testament church should earnestly contend for the faith. Jude 3. We are to strive for soundness in doctrinal purity in practice, zeal and enthusiasm in evangelism and unity in fellowship. Many present churches are beset by the sins of unclean living, undeveloped vision, unconcern for the lost, unrepentant proud spirits, and unwilling to submit to discipline. Satan has intensified his efforts to hurt and to hinder the work of the Lord's churches today. Satan desires for church members to live ungodly, to have not vision for the lost, to be proud, and to be unfaithful and indifferent.

I believe there are some tragedies in the churches of today and with a burdened heart will mention some of these tragedies which ought not to exist.

I. THE TRAGEDY OF THE UNATTENDED CHURCH.

Heb. 10:25

I am told the majority of people in America are "church members", but the statistics show that precious few of these "church members" ever attend with any degree of regularity. Too many people today regard the church only as a crutch or convenience. Listen, the Word of God teaches faithfulness to the House of God. We are not to forsake the House of God. We are commanded to be a loyal people. I Cor. 4:2; Rev. 2:10. The least any child of God can do is be faithless. I believe you should attend Sunday School, Morning Worship, Baptist Training Course, Evening Worship and Wednesday Worship. Unfaithfulness is a sin that grieves the heart of God.

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ should march forward as a mighty army, but too often it limps and hesitates because of unfaithful members. The work of Christ is suffering because of many excuses being offered by church members. You let "Little Johnny" get sick and the whole family has to stay home to blow the poor kid's nose. An excuse is the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie. Friends, if I knew that I had just one year to live, I would want to be faithful. It is the will of God for His children to be faithful, and loyal to the work of God. Are you unfaithful? If so, turn the tragedy of unfaithfulness to the triumph of faithfulness.

II. THE TRAGEDY OF THE UNBOWED KNEE. Acts 2:42

A church can do many things but when the people of the church do not pray - that is a tragedy. When you try education, you get what education can do. When you try eloquence, you get what eloquence can do. WHEN YOU TRY FERVENT GENUINE PRAYER, YOU GET WHAT GOD CAN DO. Jer. 33:3; James 4:2; 5:16. A praying church will be a PRAISING CHURCH! You know why some church members gripe and complain? They are not praying as they should. PRAYER CHANGES THINGS AND PEOPLE. A praying church will be a PRODUCING CHURCH! Acts 2:47. A praying church will be a PREACHING CHURCH! Acts 1:14. Acts 2:14-41 records Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. There will be more POWER in the pulpit when there is more PRAYER in the pew. Praying pews mean powerful pulpits.

It was written of Daniel he prayed three times a day. Dan. 3:10. When was the last time you knelt to pray for the unsaved, the unchurched, your Pastor, and the ministries of your church? II Chron. 7:14. Have you become prayerless? Turn the tragedy of the unbowed knee to the triumph of the bended knee.
III. THE TRAGEDY OF THE UNREAD BOOK. II Tim. 2:15

We say we believe the Bible, but do we study the Bible and do what the Bible teaches? You let a preacher preach the Book today and some folks get hot and bothered. The Word of God is a lamp to our feet, a light to our path, the gate to heaven, the guide for youth, instruction for adults, comfort of the aged, food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, rest for the weary, and shows the way of salvation for sinners. We need to love the Book, learn the Book, and live the Book. There is gross ignorance of the Book of God today because many people do not have their heads in the Book and the Book in their heart. The Book of God should be in the hand, the heart, the head, and the home. We need to teach the Word of God to our children. Deut. 6:4-9; II Tim. 3:15. It is a tragedy for many children to leave home and go out into a hostile, unbelieving world without ever hearing their parents read the Word of God. Turn the tragedy of the Unread Book to the triumph of the Read Book.

IV. THE TRAGEDY OF THE UNCONFESSED SIN. I John 1:9

Unconfessed sin hinders and hampers the Spirit of God to work in the life and the ministry of the church. Unconfessed sin blocks the channels of the blessings of God. Do you have in your heart the unconfessed sin of jealousy, malice, pride, envy, hatred, and bitterness? Eph. 4:31-32. Turn the tragedy of the unconfessed sin to the triumph of the confessed sin.

V. THE TRAGEDY OF THE UNPAID TITHES. Mal. 3:10

Shame on you if you are robbing God! You are the loser if you rob God! Every Christian should give no less than a tenth of total earnings to God. Turn the tragedy of the unpaid tithes to the triumph of the paid tithes.

VI. THE TRAGEDY OF THE UNCONCERNED WITNESS. Acts 1:8

Witnessing is every Christian's responsibility. I am told that 95% of the church members never lead a soul to Christ. What a tragedy! God help us to become burdened for souls. Every 24 hours, 1,460,000 people die and most of them are without Christ. God uses saved human beings to win souls to Jesus. Turn the tragedy of the uninterested witness to the concerned witness.

VII. THE TRAGEDY OF THE UNEXPRESSED LOVE. John 13:35

Many years ago a shabbily dressed boy trudged several miles through the snowy streets of Chicago, determined to attend Sunday School pastored by D.L. Moody. When he arrived, he was asked, "Why don't you go to one of the churches near your home?" He answered simply, "Because you love a fellow over here." Turn the tragedy of the unexpressed love to the expressed love.

The greatest of all tragedies is to lose your soul in a devil's hell. The greatest of all tragedies is to reject Christ. Be saved today. John 3:16; II Cor. 5:2

Conclusion.

A. The Links in Preaching.
B. The Lamentations of Paul.
C. The Longing Plea.

Growing in Grace


I. THE LAYING ASIDE. V1

A. The meaning. Hebs. 12:1; Acts 7:58
B. The method.
C. The motive. Rom. 8:7; James 4:6, 7

II. THE LONGING.

A. The babe. I Pet. 2:2
B. The book. II Tim. 2:15
C. The becoming.

III. THE LEARNING. V3

A. The experience.
B. The education. Psa. 119:71
C. The edification. Rom. 2:4

IV. THE LIVING STONE. V4
A. A living stone. I Cor. 3:11
B. A disallowed stone.
C. A chosen stone.
D. A precious stone.

V. THE LIVELY STONES. V5
A. The examination.
B. The edification.
C. The exaltation.
D. The evaluation. Eph. 1:6

MUCH, MUCH MORE

L.H. Owen

TEXT: Romans 5:9-11

INTRODUCTION:
Paul may seem to you to be tedious at times. He does in careful detail and no doubt, planned repetition tell God’s plan for the salvation for men. There are many important things communicated through the Word. However, of first importance is that of salvation.

I. MUCH, MUCH MORE–BEING JUSTIFIED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.
A. Verse 9 does not repudiate verse 1.
   1. It is faith in Jesus Christ and the work done at Calvary. Rom. 3:25
   2. The shed blood, his sacrifice for sin makes it possible. Col. 1:20-22
B. In essence it complements verse 1.
   1. Without the blood there would be nothing to put faith in.
   2. There are those who make an out-cry about a bloody religion.

II. MUCH, MUCH MORE–WE ARE SAVED BY HIS LIFE.
Romans 5:10
A. The life in a physical body on earth was very necessary. John 1:14; Isa. 6:14
   1. There was the law of the kinsman redeemer. Ruth 4:3,7,8
   2. God in man was necessary to fulfill this law.
B. A perfect sinless life was necessary.
   1. All men were sinners. Rom. 3:23
   2. Jesus became man yet without sin. John 8:46; Hebs. 4:15
C. Also the resurrected life is necessary. Rom. 10:9; I Cor. 15:17
   1. Faith in the fact that God can and has raised Him from the dead.
   2. Faith in the power of Christ over death and sin because sin brought death.
   3. Faith in the resurrected Christ for intercessory power. Hebs. 7:25

III. MUCH, MUCH MORE–BEING SAVED FROM WRATH THROUGH HIM.

A. God’s wrath upon the sinner. Rom. 1:18; John 3:36
B. God’s wrath is great. Rev. 6:16, 17
C. The believer is given life. John 3:36; Rom. 6:23

TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU

Danny Chappell

TEXT: Matt. 11:28-30

INTRODUCTION:
A. Jesus used two great symbols for Christian commitment.
   1. The Cross - Seen on steeple of churches, worn around the necks of some people. Seen everywhere.
   2. The yoke - Never seen on steeple nor worn around anyone’s neck. Yet it, as much as the cross, is a symbol of commitment to Jesus Christ.
B. Jesus spoke of the cross when He said, in Mark 8:34.
C. Jesus spoke of the yoke in Matt. 11:19
D. The cross is an instrument of death; the yoke is an implement of toil. The cross is a symbol of sacrifice; the yoke is a symbol of service. The cross suggests blood; the yoke suggests sweat.
D. Put them together and you get an idea of what commitment is all about. Ready to die on the cross and ready to pull on the yoke.
E. Three things involved in taking His yoke upon us.

I. DECISION
A. The first step to commitment is to come to Jesus Christ and make Him our Saviour.
B. "Come" is one of the Lord’s favorite words. Mark 1:17, 10:14; Rev. 22:17
C. The invitation is to come to Jesus personally.
D. The invitation includes all and excludes none.
E. The invitation is to accept Him for who He claimed to be.
   1. He is not just a part of God nor just sent from God nor just related to God. He was and is God!
   2. He is the end for our search for God.
G. Coming to Christ is a personal and decisive act.

II. DISCIPLESHIP
A. Jesus not only invites us to come to Him, but He also tells us to take His yoke upon us so that we may learn of Him.
B. These two acts—coming to Him and taking His yoke on us—describe two separate stages of commitment which every believer needs to take. By taking His yoke upon us, we become His disciples.
C. The Yoke—a harness made of wool by which two animals are tied together to pull a load.
D. Submission to Christ's yoke is never easy. Submission is contrary to our fleshly nature. Isa. 53:6
E. True commitment is not measured by our activity in church but by our obedience to Christ.

III. DELIVERANCE
A. Christ promises to deliver us, if we depend on Him, from the weariness and frustration of empty lives.
B. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Matt. 11:30
C. He didn't say "Follow Me and I will help you lay your burden down". Instead He said, "Take my yoke upon you...and you will find rest." To those who were already wearied by the toils of life He offered the world's greatest symbol of rest.
   1. Real peace comes from commitment to Christ.
   2. We are created to do His will.
   3. When we follow Him in obedience it brings renewal to our minds. Rom.12:1-2
D. His yoke is well fitted. It will not chafe.
E. His commandments are not grievous.
   1 John 5:3
F. The rest that He offers is spiritual and not physical. "Rest unto your souls."

KEYS THAT OPEN THE DOOR TO HAPPINESS
Muncy Harris

TEXT: Psalms 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION:
A. A Common Misconception.
   1. Man can only find temporary satisfaction. Fame flies; Wealth fails; Knowledge falters; Recreation fizzes; Drugs fall short.
   2. Man feels it is impossible to find an everlasting euphoria.
B. A Constant Motivation.
   1. Man can be happy.
   2. Man can be at peace.
   3. Man can be joyful.
      a. It all comes through a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
      b. Notice, now, the keys that open the door to happiness.

IV. KEY NO. 4 - DON'T LARGUISH LIKE THE WORLD.
V. 2
A. The world says the Bible is out of date and so they are slow to believe, they languish, they're listless, they're sluggish, they linger, and then, it's too late.
   1. The Saviour says. Mark 13:31
B. Happy is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord. Psa. 119:11; 77
C. Happy is the man who meditates on the law of the Lord. John 8:31-32

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