

GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

32 - A Beautiful Paradox

Announcements:

6/7 @ 6:30 -

Women's
Bible Study

6/8 @7:00 -

Corporate
Prayer

6/9 @6:30 -

Grace Group

6/12 @8:30 -

Sunday School

6/13 @6:30 -

Men's
Discipleship
Chapter 16

ICE BREAKER: If you could write any book, what would it be about?

READ: Matthew 11:25-30

One of My commentaries says of verses 28-30 that they are “some of the most memorable verses in all of Scripture.” I would argue that this bold statement might actually be a bit of an understatement. In this passage we have many beautiful thoughts all coming together to minister to our hearts. Here we have Jesus claim of the divine role of peace-giver. Jesus claims that he will be there for his people. He offers them a solution to something that has been causing strife and pain since the fall of Adam, and all that is just the easy stuff to see! With a portion of Scripture one could never hope to mine all the beauty that is there. You could probably write a whole book on only one portion of one half of one of these verses (for example, that Jesus is... *gentle and lowly*...). And so today, I would like to do just that. We are going to dive deep into just one portion of one of these verses: “Take my yoke upon you”.

The first point that I would like to make is that we are to take a yoke. Not only was this the tool that was used to control or guide the animal, but also it is the tool by which a work animal actually gets to work! It holds them either together, or to the thing that they are pulling (usually both!). It is therefore a symbol of work, and labor. So just the idea of a yoke shows us that to submit to, and follow, Jesus is to submit to a life of service unto him. Many of us have heard the thought of coming to Jesus as “fire insurance” but what Jesus is proclaiming here is certainly not that. In Luke, Jesus would say “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62) and here the same thought is implied. Being a christian requires WORK!

DISCUSS: In what ways must a christian work? In what ways should we be careful in this matter?

The next thing I would like to note about taking his yoke upon us is that Jesus here is giving us a bit of a paradox. If we take out the parenthetical insertions in verse 29 it could read: “Take my yoke upon you and you will find rest.” But this makes no sense! He is literally saying: in working you find rest. But how does this work? Well, here is the beauty of the paradox. Just like we trade our ashes for beauty, our mourning for rejoicing (see Isaiah 61), so too in the divine economy we take a burden and receive rest. We see this playing out in other ways in our life, like the rest that comes from a hike through God’s creation or the peace that comes in the chaos of time with family, but what Jesus is offering us here far eclipses any comparison we might make. For though we labor and strive to serve him, Jesus offers us eternal and perfect rest in HIS work!

DISCUSS: Have you ever experienced the “rest in working” in service to Christ?

I would like to end with a thought: this idea of resting in the yoke of Christ is one that we will spend our whole lives learning and treasuring. As Spurgeon says: “Oh for grace to be always coming to Jesus, Always free yet always bearing his yoke; always having the rest once given, yet always finding more, this is the experience of those who come to Jesus always, and for everything. Blessed heritage; and it is ours!”. We must ALWAYS bear his yoke to find the rest of knowing *he* is ALWAYS our rest. This is a blessed paradox!

DISCUSS: Why is it so important for us to be reminded to take up our yoke? Why must we be reminded that he is our rest?