

THEME: WHO I AM IN CHRIST.

TOPIC: I AM YOKED.

TEXT: MATTHEW 11:28-29; EPHESIANS 5:2

Introduction: A yoke was a wooden frame placed on the backs of oxen to make them pull in tandem. The simple yokes consisted of a bar with two loops either of rope or wood that went around the animals' necks. More elaborate yokes had shafts connected to the middle with which the animals pulled plows or other implements. Often the burden the ox had to bear was so heavy that it would cause them to stumble and fall under it, but Jesus promised that the burden of His followers would never be that heavy.

1. Obedience and the acceptance of responsibility.

The *yoke* is intended to ease the discomfort of carrying a heavy load. It is symbolic of obedience and the acceptance of responsibility. Usually, a younger, weaker or ignorant oxen is paired with an older one so that the younger oxen follows in the steps and in the direction that the older oxen goes in. The older oxen would bear most of the burden.

Q: How does obedience and acceptance of responsibility apply to us being yoked with Christ?

2. Jesus invitation for us to come – Isaiah 55:1-3

"Come to me" is for the weary (literally, exhausted from labour) weighted down with burdens such as worry, sin, or sorrow. We can come to him for rest, for pardon. His yoke is easy. When we join him in union, we learn from him and we can become like him. Coming to Jesus does not relieve us of the responsibility or accountability, but it frees us of the *burden* of that responsibility if we just follow Him.

Q: How often are we meant to yield this call to 'come to Him'?

3. We are Yoked with Him to commit to His Father's Will – Matt 11: 28-29

Jesus commits himself wholeheartedly to his Father's will—and invites us to do the same. Those who are tired of life, or weighed down by dead religion, can come to him for rest. Like a skilled and careful carpenter shaping a yoke, he will fit us with the gentle, liberating purpose of God. Our yoke goes across his shoulders too, for he shares it with us—setting the direction of our life and taking the strain.

Q: What really is the significance of being yoked with him?

4. We Are Yoked for life support – Luke 11:27 NLT

The Greek term *bastázo* means to “bear,” “carry,” “lift up,” “support.” It is used for a person who bears a burden and for a beast which supports a person. It refers to a womb that bears a child, suggesting the nuance of nourishment, life-support, or that upon which one is utterly dependent.

Q: What should our response be to life challenges when Jesus is our bastazo?

5. Grow in the Knowledge of His love – James 1:17, Ephesians 5:2

Do you hesitate to completely trust God? The only way to grow in trust is to grow in the knowledge of his love. Ask him daily to open your eyes to his love for you and teach you how to trust him more.

Conclusion

When we are yoked with him we have the privilege of experiencing in the true sense that promise that every good and perfect gift comes from above **James 1:17**.

He will consequently direct your path and lead you in the way of His purpose – *And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.* **Isaiah 30:21**