

# Yoked With Christ

by Stephen Kaung

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*The yoke of God is a light and easy burden that requires obedience and surrender to His control, and it is through this yoke that we can fulfill His purpose and be used by Him.*

**Duration:** 1:04:53

**Scripture:** Exodus 3:7-8, Exodus 16:2-3, Exodus 20:1-2, Numbers 14:1-4, Deuteronomy 30:19-20, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28-30

**Topics:** "Freedom In Christ", "Sin And Redemption"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the heavy burden that the Israelites carried while wandering in the wilderness. He compares their physical burden to the burden of sin that all people carry before finding rest in Jesus. The speaker emphasizes the relief and freedom that comes from surrendering to Jesus and having the weight of sin rolled away. However, he warns against misusing this freedom and living for oneself, highlighting the importance of choosing to be under the yoke of Jesus for true freedom. The sermon draws on biblical references, such as the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, to support these teachings.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to Matthew. Matthew chapter 11. We'll read from verse 28 through verse 30.

These are very familiar verses. These are very familiar verses. Matthew 11, verse 28.

Those who are weary and burdened, come to me, and I will give you rest. Look upon you, and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Dear brothers and sisters, this afternoon we would like to consider together on this matter of yoke with Christ. Now when you hear the word yoke, when you hear the word yoke, what is your reaction? Probably our first reaction will be, that's bad. We do not want to be under yoke.

We have experienced the heaviness and the impossibilities of under iron yoke. But you know, the word yoke itself is neutral. Yes, a yoke means a burden.

A yoke means control. And a yoke means service or servitude. It can be good, or it can be bad.

If we are under the yoke of sin and of death, now that's terrible. But if we are under the yoke of God, that's beautiful. The yoke that comes to us from the enemy is heavy.

But the yoke that comes from God is light and easy. If we are under the yoke of sin and death, we are hopeless and helpless. But if we are under the yoke of God, then the will of God in our lives can be fulfilled.

So I hope that at the very outset, we are not prejudiced against this word yoke. So I hope that at the very outset, we are not prejudiced against this word yoke. When God created man, He created man free.

He gave man a free will. In other words, man is free to make his choice. And since God has given us a free will, He will not interfere with that.

He allows man to make his own choice. He allows man to make his own choice. This is what happened in the Garden of Eden.

You remember how God planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil You remember how God planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life in the midst of the garden. And we all know that God put these two trees before man. That man can make his own choice.

And we find our forefathers Adam and Eve, how they made their choice. Now of course, they were tempted by the enemy. But on the other hand, we find that they made the choice.

Now instead of choosing the tree of life, they chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now why did they do it? I think probably one of the main reason is that they want to be free to be themselves. Even though they were created by God.

And yet, they wanted to be independent. They did not want to be under any control. They did not want to be under any authority.

Since they are free, they want to be free. They want to be independent. They thought that by choosing that, then they will have a life without any yoke.

Now to their surprise, that the result was just the opposite. But to them, it was very strange. They want to be free, but they were bound.

They were bound by the law of sin and of death. They were under high yoke. They had no way to get out of it.

Now if they should choose the tree of life, in one sense, it meant that they would live a life of dependence. They realized that they themselves were not enough. They needed to depend upon God.

They needed God's life. In order to fulfill God's purpose for them. Now brothers and sisters, remember this.

God created man free. He created man according to his image and after his likeness. But man was free.

In other words, God gave man the freedom to choose. Even though according to the purpose of God's creation. Now the work of God's creation, he created man free.

But behind that work, there was God's purpose. And God's purpose was to use man. God's purpose was that man might serve his purpose.

And if man should serve God's purpose, he must be under God. You know, as you read the Bible, even though the Bible did not come out right away and say, why did God create man? Even though God did not tell right away the reason for the creation of man. And we all know man is the masterpiece of God.

Because only in creating man, God created him in his own image and after his own likeness. So there must be some reason behind it. Because God wanted man to serve his purpose.

God had an enemy. The archangel rebelled against God. Now it was quite easy for God to put that archangel away.

But if God should do it, there was no glory to God. For a big man to beat a little child, there was no glory there. For God himself to deal with Satan right away, there was no glory to God.

So God, for his glory's sake, he created man a little lower than angels. He used David to beat Goliath. Now if you read Psalm 8, you know there is a beautiful verse there.

In Psalm 8 verse 2, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established praise because of thine adversaries to steal the enemy and the avenger. Now here you find God used the baby and sucklings to establish praise. Now for what reason? Because of his adversaries.

To steal the enemy and the avenger. So you find that behind the creation of man, God has a purpose to use man for his service. And by that God will get glory.

And his enemy will be defeated. And for that reason, you find man have to put himself under God. Because outside of God, he couldn't do it.

And if a man will choose to be under the yoke of God, then God's purpose will be fulfilled. Then God's glory will be manifested. But unfortunately, our forefather did the opposite thing.

He thought that by doing that, he will be completely free to do whatever he likes. Not knowing that he was deceived. He was put under the yoke of Satan.

And there was no way for him to get out. So dear brothers and sisters, before we believe in the Lord Jesus, after we were born, we were all born out of Adam. So Adam, when he was created, he was free.

But when we were born, we were not free. We were under the bondage of sin and of death. We were under the dominion of the enemy of God.

We were children of wrath. There was no hope in us. In other words, we are those who labored and are heavy laden.

You know, during the wartime, during the Sino-Japanese War, I was in the interior, China. I was in the interior of China. In the provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan.

In these provinces, there were many mountains. We had no cars like we have today. Because there was no gasoline.

And you find they just used charcoal. The charcoal to run the bus. And these bus would climb the mountains.

And you sit there and very fearful. But while you were traveling, while you are traveling, you would notice some men. From Yunnan, they started from Yunnan to cross the mountain to Guizhou and Sichuan.

And at their back, there is a basket above their head. And it was filled with salt bricks. Because Yunnan has salt.

But Sichuan didn't have salt. So salt was a necessity. So how did they transport salt from one province to another? Carry it on the back of people.

And people have to help them to put that bag on their back. And they have a stick in their hand. And they just walk crossing, passing the mountains.

When they were tired, they had to rest. But they couldn't take off that load. So what did they do? They put that stick under that basket.

And they stood there resting. When our bus passed by, I felt so pitiful about these people. They are really heavy laden.

They were under heavy labor. And their whole life was just doing this. There was no hope.

Now, this cannot be compared with the heavy laden that all of us had before Christ delivered us. But thank God. Our Lord Jesus said, Come unto me, all your labor and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And isn't it marvelous? We who are so heavy laden, our sins were above our heads. And there was no rest. But when we come to our Lord Jesus, and we find the whole load rolled away, I still can remember the day that my load was rolled away.

Brothers and sisters, that was our experience. Now, after we are delivered from that iron yoke, our Lord Jesus breaks the iron yoke. Now, how do you feel? You feel free.

And you try to maintain your freedom. You want to have your own life now. You think that that was the reason why our Lord set you free.

He set me free that I may be free. Brothers and sisters, think of the children of Israel. God sent Moses to Egypt to set his people free.

And God told Moses to say to Pharaoh, let my people go. Why? That they may serve me. They served Pharaoh.

They were under the heavy yoke of Pharaoh. Not only they were doing all these hard labor, but there was no hope for them. Because all the baby boys had to be thrown into River Nile.

And they cried to God. God delivered them. They came out of Egypt.

They were free people. God brought them to Mount Sinai. And God said, if you keep my covenant, if you keep my law, you will be my people.

And I will be your God. And God supplied them every need in the wilderness. God was leading them into the promised land.

But you know what happened. God set them free. And they misused their freedom.

They really wanted to be free. Free from God. Free from the law of God.

Free to murmur. Free from everything. Dear brothers and sisters, that was not God's reason for setting them free.

And how often we find we did the same thing. Now after we were freed by our Lord Jesus, now how did you live from then on? Do you think that now you are free to live for yourself? Do you think that you can do anything that you want to? You can live for yourself? If we think that way, we put ourselves once again under heavy yoke. You see, when the children of Israel get out of Egypt, but in the wilderness, Egypt was still in them.

Whenever they met any problem, they thought of Egypt. And that's the same thing with God's people today. We want to have a free sailing through life.

Whenever anything happened against our will, we murmured. And we rebelled. We wanted to have our own way.

We wanted to return to the world. And we were under the bondage of the world and under the bondage of our flesh. Again, we find ourselves under heavy burden.

How can we get out of it? And here you find our Lord Jesus called us. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest to your souls. Brothers and sisters, we need to realize one thing.

Our Lord Jesus delivers us out of the heavy yoke of the enemy. Our Lord Jesus set us free that we may choose Him that we may choose to be under His yoke. Because this is the only true way to freedom.

Do not think that if you can have your own way then you are free. You will find if you do that you are under the tyranny of yourself. Martin Luther said one word.

I am not afraid of all the popes and the cardinals. I am not afraid of them. But I am afraid of one pope.

Myself. Brothers and sisters, when we are under our own bondage that is an iron yoke. The Lord set us free that we may choose the right choice that we may choose to follow Him.

Now what is a yoke? I wonder if young people know what a yoke is. Because you use tractor today to till the ground. Now in the old days when you try to till the ground you put an animal an ox or a horse, a mule and you put a wooden bar upon its neck.

You know the neck is very important. When you rebel you have a stiff neck. So you find you have to have a board upon your neck.

That you may be under control. And you will plough the land. You remember when that young man Saul was on the road to Damascus he was going to Damascus to seize the Christians.

But while he was near the city of Damascus a light shone upon him and he was smitten by that light to the ground. And he heard a voice saying to him Saul, Saul why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the gods. You know the horse or the mule or the ox has its own will.

So you find that even under yoke they try to go their own way. So whenever such thing happen the farmer has a sharp instrument called a go. And he will gently use that goat to touch the leg of the animal.

But the ox or the mule or the horse will kick back. And when it kicks back it hurts. Now the farmer does not want to hurt that animal.

Just to remind that animal you have a master. You are doing my work. But the animal doesn't understand.

And it gets hurt. And after many hurts it learned the lesson. Now that's exactly what we are.

Do you know that God created you for his work? Do you not know that he set you free that you may serve his purpose? Do you know you have a master? You have his work to fulfill. Now often times we don't even have that kind of mind. We think we are free.

Free to do whatever we want. But remember you are not created for that reason. And you are not saved for that reason.

You are saved that you may really fulfill God's purpose of creating you. But he will not force you. He will warn you, yes.

But he will not force you. He wants you to voluntarily take his yoke upon you. And this is what consecration really means.

Do you know why a believer must consecrate himself or herself to God? Now in the old days when I was saved even the minister did not understand the word of God. They thought consecration is just for a few people. Only those who want to be preachers, pastors, Bible women, then they need to consecrate their lives.

Ordinary believers you don't need to do that. And the result was only a few served God. And all the brothers and sisters could live their own lives.

Now all you need to do may be give your tithing. And that's all you need. Now it's a wrong teaching.

Every believer, everyone who is saved the Lord calls you. Come and follow me. You remember when our Lord was on earth how he called his disciples.

He said, deny yourself. Take up your cross. Come and follow me.

And I will make you fishes of men. Brothers and sisters, the Lord is calling us to take his yoke upon us. A yoke is a burden.

But his burden is light. His yoke is easy. He calls us to be under his authority.

Put ourselves under his control. That is the only way he can use us to complete the purpose of God in our lives. And brothers and sisters, have you done that? Are you constrained by the love of Christ that you no longer want to live for yourselves? You want to live for him and for his will.

You are willing to put yourself on the altar allowing him to make you a vessel of honor and to serve his purpose. Now our Lord Jesus himself shows us what is under yoke. You know he who was with God.

He was equal with God. And yet he emptied himself. He took upon himself the form of a born slave.

He took himself the fashion of a man. He came into this world to demonstrate to us the man of God's heart. The man that God really wants.

So you find throughout his life he put himself under the yoke of his Father. And because of this God's purpose for the world was fulfilled. And now our Lord Jesus says take my yoke upon you.

You know brothers and sisters whenever we talk about this matter of denying yourself take up your cross and follow the Lord you find that it's too hard. Now how can I do it? It's impossible. And that's true.

So far as we ourselves are concerned we do not want to be under yoke. We do not want to deny ourselves. We do not want to be under control.

We do not want to be under any authority. We do not want to serve anybody but ourselves. It's impossible with man.

And yet you find the call is there. Now how can we respond to that? Where do we have the power the strength to do that? Thank God. We are not called to take up the yoke of God by ourselves.

We are called to take up the yoke of Christ. And that is to be co-yoked with Christ. You know in the old days when a farmer wants to till the ground he used more than one animal.

He would maybe use two oxes or two mules so that the work can be done quicker and better. And what he usually did was he would yoke a trained ox with an untrained ox. It's a double yoke.

Now why is it so? Because the trained ox has learned obedience. So he will follow faithfully the guidance of the master. But the untrained still has his own will.

His will is not broken yet. So even in the yoke he wants to go his own way. But the trained ox is stronger.

And will pull him back. And gradually, gradually he learned the character of the trained ox. And that is the way to fulfill God's eternal purpose in your life.

So the Lord does not only call us now come and take up the yoke of God. The Lord said come and take up my yoke. Co-yoke with me.

You are not trained yet. But I am trained. I am meek and lowly in heart.

Meek? What is meekness? You know the Bible said Moses the meekest of all men. Now in our mind Moses was very masculine. Very powerful.

Very strong. How can he be meek? But the Bible said he is the meekest of all men. Why? Because Moses has complete surrender and obedience.

Moses was a person who obeyed God in a tiny little thing. You know he was a trained architect. Because Egypt at the time was famous for the pyramids.

And when God asked him to make a tent my, that's too easy. And yet God told him that he couldn't do any little change. Every little item he had to obey God.

That really humbled him. But he was faithful. He was the meekest of all men.

Brothers and sisters that is our Lord Jesus. How meek he was. He said I couldn't do anything by myself.

I couldn't even say anything. To him is absolute obedience to his Father. That is a character that must be built up in our lives.

Before we can talk about service our character has to be built. Because God's emphasis is not just to do a work. God's emphasis is the right person to do the right work.

So what is the meaning of under yoke? The first and primary meaning is the training of character. Naturally we were not fit to serve God. No matter how clever we are.

No matter how capable we are. No matter how much charisma we have. We were not fit to do God's work.

We cannot defeat the enemy. Only the character of Christ defeat the enemy. So it has to be built up in our lives.

And the only way to have it built up is yoke with Christ. When we try to rebel we look at Christ. He pulls us over.

Meek and lowly in heart. Now what is lowly? Lowly simply means he never thinks of himself. It is not inferiority complex.

You know inferiority complex is still self-consciousness. But he completely is not conscious of himself. He is only conscious of his father.

That is lowly in heart. So dear brothers and sisters thank God. The way that we can really be used of God is to be yoked with Christ.

Put it another way. It is deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow the Lord. And that will enable us to be characterized with the character of Christ.

And when that character is built then God's work will be done. Spiritual ministry is based on character not on teaching. It is not the awkward things that really will bring down the enemy.

That will bring in the kingdom of God. It is the character of Christ that will defeat the enemy and build up his kingdom, God's kingdom. You remember in the letter to the Philippines.

The church in Philippines was a good church. And God was really using them. But unfortunately there were two sisters there.

They were leading sisters. And they were used of God in the gospel. But either way there was a rivalry between these two sisters.

And they tried to be higher than the other. Higher to have more influence with the sisters. Now how can this problem be solved? It is not a matter of knowledge.

They knew it. And you remember what Paul did? He asked his yoke fellow to help them. Now we do not know who that yoke fellow Paul referred to.

But thank God there was a yoke fellow there. One who had learned Christ. And because he had learned Christ he was able to help these two sisters.

Now that is real service. So dear brothers and sisters one thing I hope you remember there is a yoke that every child of God must learn to take up. It will not be forced upon you.

The Lord said take my yoke upon me. He asked us to take it on our initiative. Yes he uses love to constrain us.

But he wants you to take the initiative. Are you willing to be yoked with Christ? Are you willing to learn of him? Are you willing to fulfill God's purpose in your life? Are you willing to serve God in his way? And this is the real thing. So may the Lord help us.

Let's have a little prayer. Dear Lord how we praise and thank thee because your thoughts are higher than our thoughts and your ways are higher than our ways. We thought that we wanted to be free but we praise and thank thee.

Thou knowest better and thou has called us to take your yoke that we may be yoked together and learn of you. Oh Lord do teach us that we may all be usable in the hand of God and it is all for your glory. We ask in thy precious name.

Amen.

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