

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at [pastorpat@waukeshabible.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabible.org).

**Date:** February 10, 2019

**Sermon Title:** The Yoke of Rest is through the Way of the Cross

Sermon Series: Matthew

Text: Matthew 16:24-28

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Date: February 10, 2019  
Title: The Yoke of Rest is through the Way of the Cross  
Text: Matthew 11:28-30; 16:24-28  
Theme: The only way to find the rest God wants you to know and experience is found in Jesus the Christ. **The way to Him is through death, burial, and resurrection.** Nothing else will do and nothing more can be done (vv. 25, 26).

What God designed us for is only recovered and secured through the person and work of Jesus Christ. What we did in our rebellion, Jesus undoes in His substitution.

### Introduction:

What we have in our passage are three statements that are in synonymous parallelism. This might strike you as “new” only because it is not our typical gospel invitation. We read this as a “three step process,” but nothing is further from its intent. Jesus is not calling His disciples to higher levels of holiness or commitment or sacrifice or obedience. Jesus is telling them and us that unless and until we abandoning self-salvation, we cannot be saved.

And, as we often stress, the same gospel you believe at the front end is the same gospel you believe today. The act of dying is daily. The act of dying is seeing yourself for what you are. You can't, but God can, and Jesus did.

If you were to research the topic, “How to become a disciple of Jesus or five steps to spiritual growth or how to become a mature Christian,” the hits would be in the tens of thousands. There is no shortage of pundits who are “peddling their wares.” Unfortunately, when we think of discipleship, we default to formulas and lists that are contrived by humanity to guide the pupil to the greater goal of spiritual growth and maturity. Yet, I believe this default removes us from the rather simple idea as found in our passage. Discipleship is nothing more or less than following Jesus. **We define the path of a disciple by what they do rather than who they are.** Let us remember to allow the biblical text to define for us how we shape and explain these ideas. We just noted how “nothing you do can make you unclean no more than what you do can make you clean” (Matt. 15:1-20). This “power” to change is only sourced in God. If this is true, then you do not become a disciple of Jesus by what you do. You are a disciple and this is what you look like regardless of your “role” in life. Following Jesus is not what we do. Following Jesus is what we say. As a consequence of this confession, we begin to live selfless lives.

Disciples do not love their neighbors to gain salvation or sanctification. Disciples are not trying to prove to God or others how much they love God. Disciples are those who confess Jesus as Savior and Lord and who speak of their love for Him even though that love is fragile, partial, tested, and tainted. Yet, this partial and frayed confession does not stop the disciple from perpetually and persistently confessing Jesus is Lord. Disciples love their neighbors *because* they love God.

I would like to talk about discipleship today, but I would like to allow the biblical text to define this for us rather than impose on the text our preconceived ideas.

### 3 Steps to Following Jesus - Matthew 16:24

Posted on AUGUST 12, 2013 by MATT BROADWAY

Do you want to follow Jesus? I don't mean, "Do you want to go to church?" "Do you want America to be a more Christian nation?" "Do you want to feel better so you can live your life?" or "Do you want to conform to your family's religious heritage?" I mean, "Do you personally want to be a follower of Jesus Christ?"

Before you answer, here's what doing so would look like according to Jesus in Matthew 16:24: *Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

#### Visuals

1. The cross with a Matthew 11 banner hanging from one side and a Matthew 16 banner hanging from the other side.
2. How many times have we said or heard, "I don't want to." But unless and until we do, we cannot have what is promised.
3. Have a ladder with three steps labeled: deny, take up, and follow
4. It doesn't make sense.
  - a. A yoke with rest written on it
  - b. A cross with life written on it
  - c. Pretty ugly
  - d. Liquid gas
  - e. Jumbo scrimp
  - f. Genuine imitation leather
5. Sticking your hand in a bucket of water filled with ice. Sooner or later you will pull your hand out because it is freezing. Why? Because a bucket of ice water is cold. You cannot separate the two just as you cannot separate the cross from salvation.
6. Take to tea towels, dip one in red dye and the other "pretend" to dip but don't (Matt. 7, did we not say and do"). The dyed towel cannot be changed. The other one is only pretending; it isn't real. Have a bucket with a red cloth in it instead of dipping the cloth into dyed water [less messy ☺].
7. How much would you pay to save your life? How much would you pay to save the life of a child or grandchild? [John Paul Getty and the kidnapping of his grandson].

This text is in a larger context where the religious establishment offers a competing idea. They are talking of a life that bypasses death. They speak of healing and health that excludes brokenness and inability. They reject the thought that they can't, thus dismissing their need for salvation. The ideas of this text run counter to the prevailing theology of His day and of ours.

There is a contrast between what was being taught by the Pharisees and Scribes and what is being taught by Jesus. The Pharisees and Scribes teach an autosoterism means of justification and sanctification that is synergistic. Jesus teaches "by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone." Those who oppose monergism, oppose Jesus.

If Jesus is the Christ, then grace reigns. If Jesus is not the Christ, then all chances of deliverance from sin's debt are removed. The two ideas are so antithetical, that the blending of either is an abomination to both. Synergism or a syncretistic amalgamation of the two is a hybrid of damnation. It is nothing but the finding of fool's gold on the streets leading to hell's gate.

### The Wheel

1. Why should you do this?
  - a. You cannot be saved unless and until you do this.
2. What do I need to do?
  - a. You need to reject any hope of saving yourself through your own efforts.
3. How do I do this?
  - a. You reject yourself as having any ability and accept Jesus as Savior and Lord.
4. What can I expect when I do this?
  - a. You can expect to know and experience the rest of God.

1. What is the **author's structure** of this passage? Please a) show sections with verse references, b) state the *author's emphasis*, and c) explain what *strategies* you used to see this structure.

#### I. The Pathway (v. 24)

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Our passage is a paradox. How can He speak of rest and easy and light, when He is speaking of yoke, cross, deny, and death? Yet, this paradox is life through death, rest through denial. It might come as a cold slap, but for those who are weary and heavy burdened, this is good news.

I want us to see how Matthew 11:28-30 is saying the same thing as Matthew 16:24-28. The yoke of rest is the way of the cross. As paradoxical as this appears, it is the only way to Him and it is through the cross and empty tomb.

When we fail to make this discipleship, churches build programs and platforms to appeal to the demographic or felt need. Churches offer rest, happiness, joy, amusement, entertainment, discipleship, and Christianity without the cross, without death, without burial, and without resurrection. Friends, what we attract them with is what we attract them to. No matter what else we might do structurally, missionally, or "practically," if this Jesus and the gospel are not at the center and driving every decision, then we have denied the very thing we claim to confess and love.

**Tell me how we can make the cross comfortable and I will tell you how we have denied Jesus before His accusers. If you are new to this fellowship, let me tell you straight and open, we preach Christ crucified, buried, and risen. That's it. Nothing more, and nothing less.**

There is no coming apart from this and there is no following apart from this. There is no plan "B" or an alternative to this. You will either come the Jesus way or you will not come at all.

The gospel is counterintuitive. We do not expect life to come out of death, nor do we think suffering and burial results in resurrection. Nonetheless, this is the gospel and until we accept this, we cannot be saved, we cannot know and experience His rest.

### A. Deny Himself

“The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. If he does not so deny himself, he is in danger, as Peter was (it is significant that the same word is used in both instances), of denying his Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

If any man be willing, no one is forced. But if any will be a Christian, it must be on the following terms:

### B. Take Up His Cross

### C. Follow Me

#### A CHRISTIAN IS

- 1a One who has said no to self,
  - 1b accepted the claims of Christ,
  - 1c and is now following Him.
- [Synonymous Parallelism]

In the absence of this, you can no more be a Christian than we can have . . .  
Dry rain, fresh mud, or warm snow.

Q - What happened? How did Christianity become cross-less?

A - We have failed to read and understand the Word of God. The gospel is not what you do for God, but what God in Christ has done for you.

Q - In the absence of this text what do we end up with?

A - Matthew 7:21-27

When you and I fail to come the Jesus way, we create our own way. Our way is made up of rules and regulations. His way is marked by death, burial, and resurrection.

Three reasons or motives are given as to why one should listen to Jesus.

## II. The Motivation (vv. 25-27)

### A. 1<sup>st</sup> Motivation (v. 25)

<sup>25</sup> For [gar] whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

### B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Motivation (v. 26)

<sup>26</sup> For [gar] what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

### C. 3<sup>rd</sup> Motivation (v. 27)

<sup>27</sup> For [gar] the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

The day of His coming will be a day of judgment and of separation. The “done” in this text is that of confession, of acknowledging Jesus is KING.

### III. The Transition (v. 28)

<sup>28</sup> Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

This verse ties us to Matthew 17:1ff and the Mount of Transfiguration. What He says we are to obey, “Listen to Him.”

BOTTOM LINE - Accept who He is; obey what He says!!!!

#### Author’s Emphasis:

The only way to find the rest God wants you to know and experience is found in Jesus the Christ. The way to Him is through death, burial, and resurrection. Nothing else will do and nothing more can be done (vv. 25, 26). The entire enterprise rises and falls on Him. The “success” of the mission rises and falls on Him, not on us.

#### Author’s Strategies:

2. How does the **context inform the meaning** of this passage? Answer this question using a) the *literary context* (the passages on either side), b) the *historical context* (circumstances and culture of the audience), and c) the *biblical context* (connections to other places in the Bible).

#### Literary Context:

#### Historical Context:

This event is pivotal in the ministry of Jesus Christ. He confronts the unbelief of the religious establishment and their place in His coming death. Jesus shares for the first time His coming death, burial, and resurrection. Wow. The idea that the Christ would die was repugnant to the disciples. Peter voices what the others are thinking. What Peter did not understand and Jesus did was the larger *Story* found in the Seed Promise of Genesis 3:15 and 3:21. The seed of the serpent would do whatever was necessary to stop the fulfillment of the Seed Promise. The Seed Promises fulfillment would culminate in a blood sacrifice (Gen. 3:21). Regardless of rejection the Seed Promise would be offered up as a substitution and blood offering for the sins of people. No matter what might happen it would be the outworking of God’s overarching *Story*.

Although the hammer blow brought upon the disciples by the words of Jesus were heavy, Jesus repeatedly strikes the anvil by noting that all who follow Him must come the way of the cross. Not only must we know the gospel *Story*, but we must become identified by the gospel *Story* and then imitate the gospel *Story* by walking/living in newness of life (i.e. resurrection). The words of Jesus in this paragraph can be nothing less than the gospel and the appropriation of it by those who would follow Him; anything less than this is leaven.

This is the first time in Matthew's narrative Jesus announces His death, burial and resurrection. Although it is the first time He announces His death, burial and resurrection it is not surprising or new. The death of the **Seed Promise** is spoken of in Genesis 3:15 and pictured in Genesis 3:21. His death is not a consequence of Israel's rejection. Their rejection of Him does not postpone the establishment of His kingdom no more than Adam and Eve's fall thwarted God's *Story/Plan*. Both are part of God's triumphal march forward for the immediate and ultimate glory of His wonderful and beautiful name.

### **Biblical Context:**

This passage parallels what He said in Matthew 11:28-30. The two are not saying anything different from one another. Those who are "weary and heavy laden" will find no difficulty in "denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following Him." Only the wise and understanding will repudiate and reject the way of the cross / the yoke of Jesus.

**3. In light of the emphasis of this passage in its context, state the author's main idea for his audience (in one short sentence).**

The only way to find the rest God wants you to know and experience is found in Jesus the Christ. The way to Him is through death, burial, and resurrection. The life we seek is through death. The rest He offers is through the cross. Nothing else will do and nothing more can be done (vv. 25, 26). The entire enterprise rises and falls on Him. The "success" of the mission rises and falls on Him, not on us.

**4. What parts of this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ? What particular facet of the gospel is in view? [What are its Christological / Christo-centric contributions?]**

For the first time Jesus discloses His death, burial, and resurrection (16:21-23). This idea will be restated in Matthew 17:12 and 22, 23.

**Q. How does this descriptive in this chapter contribute to and advance our Christology?**

**A.** In order for the Seed Promise and Blood Picture to be completed, Jesus would have to die.

**5. In light of your gospel connection, what argument (one short sentence) will you make to your audience? What applications from this argument will you make for the believer? The unbeliever?**

**To the believing:** What we came through, we continue in. This isn't an action step for the victorious Christian life. This is the Christian life. What gets you in, keeps you in.

**To the unbelieving:** Unless and until you are willing to die to self-salvation, you can never be saved. Will you give up to gain? Will you die to self in order that you might live in Christ?

### **WHAT'S NEXT?: (Shepherding the Sheep)**

Many get involved in church thinking it will be like Netflix. Netflix conforms to your individual preferences as you choose the shows and movies you like. It learns your tastes and presents options tailored to you. However, Christianity is not like Netflix – it's like a cross.

Some reading this may be frustrated because their church is not conforming to their preferences. It never will. Nothing in Christianity is about our preferences – it's about our death. It's about Christ's life filling us and changing us.

So, instead of getting involved in church motivated by personal preferences and expectations, follow Jesus. Be a self-denying, cross-carrying Jesus follower.<sup>2</sup>

## **6. What is your preaching outline?**

### **Drilling down with Simeon Principles**

1. How does this vision of Christ expand on our understanding of Him in this Book, Testament, and Canon?
2. Where is the surprise in this text? You should expect the text to surprise you.

The Christ life is tied inseparably to Jesus.

3. What is the unique contribution this text, passage, chapter make to the Book as a whole?

What Jesus asks of those who would follow Him is to do exactly what He does.

4. Always look to link the pieces to the whole.
  - a. How is this text informed by the melodic line?

Those who become the subjects of King Jesus must follow Him through death, burial, and resurrection. It only in dying that His subjects will know and experience His rest.

- b. How does it contribute to the melodic line?
5. Can we trust the A.I.M. of the text to be relevant, applicable, and creative / profitable?

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<sup>1</sup> Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on Matthew 16:24.

<sup>2</sup> <http://dulinsgrovechurch.org/thebody/2013/08/12/do-you-want-to-follow-jesus-matthew-1624/>