

## **The Easy Yoke (How to Become Irresponsibly Response Able)**

Matthew 11:16-30

#16 in our series "Jesus Stories"

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### **Message**

[Peter enters the sanctuary with the beam of a cross-strapped to his arms and weighing heavily upon him.]

Last week I gave an emergency sermon on Romans 12:1

*"Present yourselves as a living sacrifice."*

So I'm doing that. [Peter preaches while continuing to "bear his cross."]

Mathew 10:38

*"Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."*

This is what that looks like. They'd strip you naked, flog you, and then they'd put one of these on your back and march you through a crowd. Then they'd nail you to the wood and lift you on to a timber (or a tree) and watch you die.

Look at me! I'm pretty impressive, don't you think? Just look at the cross I'm carrying. Just look at how humble I am.

### **Pray**

Father I pray, help us to preach your Word. Lord Jesus, would you invade our hearts and help us to see who you really are, and that in seeing you we would maybe even see ourselves? In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mathew 11:16-19

This is where we ended in our last "Jesus story" sermon two weeks ago.

*But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon." The son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds (children).*

We're supposed to weep with John the Baptist and dance with Jesus the piper.

[Peter moves the cross around on his shoulders a bit, trying to get more comfortable. The act visibly hurts him.]

Weeping makes some sense, but how do you dance with one of these strapped to your back? Well, last time when we ended with this verse, I read to you a story by Robin Gunn, how she

once watched a down's syndrome girl dance in the autumn leaves and then began to weep for herself.

She wrote, "I weep because I will never know the severe mercy that frees such a child and bids her come dance in the autumn leaves."

"I will never know." And we said, "Don't be so sure. Maybe there's a severe mercy that can free your inner child."

Mathew 11:19-24

*...wisdom is justified by her children (Her dancing children). Then he (Wisdom incarnate) began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes (wept and then danced). But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the Day of Judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted into heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."*

Wow! More tolerable for Sodom than Capernaum.

Capernaum was Jesus' adopted hometown—his neighbors.

Does Jesus love his neighbors?

Well, imagine the burden Jesus must've been carrying! Imagine how heavy and hard it was for Jesus to speak these words! Imagine how hard Christ's labor was and how heavy the burden.

Two things I've learned from carrying this cross.

1. It's not easy.
2. It's a heavy burden.

Mathew 11:25-27

*At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. (It's a gracious will) All things (that would include Capernaum and Sodom) have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."*

Knowledge of God is not the result of our choice to labor. Knowledge of God is the result of Jesus' choice to reveal his Father. I wonder to whom the Son chooses to reveal the Father:

Matthew 11:28-30

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Does Jesus ever confuse you? [Peter removes the cross from his shoulders.]

You know some people will say, "I'm sorry, I can't wrestle the Word of God – because his yoke is easy and his burden is light." "I'm sorry, I can't leave my possessions in Egypt and follow you into the desert – because his yoke is easy and his burden is light." "I'm sorry, but no, I will not pick up a cross and follow him – because his yoke is easy and his burden is light." "I won't attempt anything that looks hard or heavy – because his yoke is easy and his burden is light."

I want that yoke (the easy yoke), and I'm not yoking!

Well, what's a yoke?

[Image of two oxen side by side equally sharing a yoke]

In Jesus' day, a yoke was a wooden beam usually placed over the backs of two oxen, which was then attached to a burden, like a plow. In this way, the oxen's labor would be fruitful. They'd plow the hard ground so it could receive seed, and produce a bountiful harvest. The yoke was attached to the oxen's neck with a collar and if the collar fit well, the yoke was said to be "easy."

Here's a video of what I just described:

[Two men are plowing the hardened soil of their fields with old-fashioned hand plows. The oxen are in front of them. The process of digging furrows into the ground goes quite quickly and easily.]

Now, where have we seen the same sort of thing in the life of Christ? How about here?

[A video of Jesus bearing His cross and being whipped by Roman soldiers is shown. The image looks similar to the ox with a yoke on him.]

You know that's how God, the great farmer, plowed the hard ground of this earth and our hearts, seeded it with body broken and blood shed, and produced the bountiful harvest of this earth: men and women created in His own image.

How could his yoke be anything other than a cross? What else does He carry, that He also asks us to carry? He says in Luke 9:23, *"If any would follow, let him take up his cross daily,"* every day.

How could his yoke be anything other than a cross, and yet, I haven't read one commentary that says His yoke is a cross. I suppose that's for an obvious reason: crosses do not appear to be "easy" and that burden does not appear to be "light." Well, a yoke is labor, and yet his yoke gives you rest. A yoke is bondage and yet his yoke sets you free.

Does Scripture claim that His cross gives you rest and sets you free?

How could his yoke be anything other than a cross? And yet, how could a cross be easy? How could a cross be easy and light?

Clip from *Monte Python*

[Brian is hanging on the cross with several others, also hanging on crosses surrounding him.]

Man on a cross next to Brian: *Cheer up, Brian. You know what they say. Some things in life are bad, They can really make you mad. Other things just make you swear and curse.*

*When you're chewing on life's gristle, Don't grumble, give a whistle! And this'll help things turn out for the best... And...*

*(the music fades into the song)*

*...always look on the bright side of life! (whistle)  
Always look on the bright side of life... If life seems jolly rotten, There's something you've forgotten! And that's to laugh and smile and dance and sing, When you're feeling in the dumps, Don't be silly chumps, Just purse your lips and whistle -- that's the thing! And... always look on the bright side of life... (whistle)  
Come on! (others start to join in)  
Always look on the bright side of life... (whistle)*

How about denial? [Peter whistles.] That's often what we seem to teach. That's what the world thinks our "Happy Clappy Christianity" is all about. Well, we know that Jesus sang on the cross. He sang Psalm 22

*"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"*

It was anything but denial. It was embracing the pain and shame of an entire Goddamned world.

[A clip from *The Passion* with Jesus saying, "*My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*" is shown]

I'm just saying Jesus wasn't into denial – He chose to bear the sin and sorrow of the whole world. You don't bear the sin and sorrow of the whole world, but you have sinned and been sinned against and you are commanded by God to forgive, and you do know sorrow – don't you?

Jesus said "pick up your cross. . ." "Come to me and learn from me..." "...my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

How could His cross be easy and light?

That's a question to ponder for the rest of your life, so we'll just scratch the surface today.

How could His cross be easy and His burden light? Well, maybe because He bears it in love. You know Jesus knew something that none of us truly know, and yet all of us think we know, and that is love. God is love. But Jesus just said: "No one knows the Son except the Father

and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.” So maybe we’re beginning to know love, but it’s not because we take knowledge of love. It’s because Jesus gives us knowledge of love from His tree, saying, *“This is my body broken and blood shed.”* John wrote, *“In this is love.”* So we’re just beginning to see love.

Well, I’m just saying that when you do things in love (even our broken and deluded understanding of love) it makes yokes easy and burdens light. You know, if someone were to ask me: “Peter in all this world, what is your most binding yoke and your heaviest burden?” Upon reflection I’d have to say, “A woman named Susan, four young people named Jonathan, Elizabeth, Rebekah and Coleman.” Honestly, for 37 years that woman has been right next to me making demands on me constantly. For over 31 years I have not cashed one paycheck. Every paycheck has gone directly to her. Then she has distributed the fruit of my labor to those 4 young people and to herself. And, if there’s any left over, she hands a little to me saying, “Here’s some money for lunch.”

That’s quite a yoke and quite a burden. But if you asked, “Is it hard and is it heavy?” I’d have to say, “Well, maybe sometimes... when I view it as an obligation or law, but most of the time, no. In fact, my greatest joy in this world is being yoked to that woman. And I think we’d gladly die for each one of our kids - a light burden.

And if you said, “Wow that’s really impressive!” “You are a very responsible husband and father.” I’d have to say, “I’m sorry, but maybe you don’t understand. The yoke is easy and, believe me: it fits. She fits – body, soul, and spirit” – “The yoke is easy and the burden is light.”

See? I didn’t have to make myself love my wife and kids. It’s more like Love made me love my wife and kids. It was more like the Piper was playing, and I heard the music, liked the music and just started to dance. If you can’t hear the music ... Well, then you won’t dance or understand what’s happening when others do.

Maybe bearing a cross is like a movement in a great dance and maybe Jesus heard music that we don’t hear. You know, a dance is bondage (like a yoke) and a dance is labor (like bearing a heavy burden), but “the yoke is easy and the burden is light.” Dance is bondage, you’re bound by the music and yet it feels like freedom.

If you consciously force yourself to perform the steps in a dance, you’re not dancing and it feels like bondage. But if you lose yourself in the rhythm of the dance, you’re bound to dance, and the bondage feels like freedom.

A dance is bondage that is freedom.

And a dance is labor; (you will burn calories). Dance is labor that feels like rest. Aerobics feels like labor because your self makes your self dance in order to lose weight. But, if you just lose yourself and dance because you love the music, you burn just as many calories and it feels like rest.

Susan and I dated for 5 ½ years and during that time we went to a lot of dances. I remember dancing so hard and so long that my shirt would just be soaked with sweat. My pulse was way past the aerobic zone. I’d be moving to the beat – lifting her in the air and not once did I think, “What a difficult yoke! What a heavy burden!” No, I’d look at Susan and this is what I’d think. (Maybe not in these words) – but I’d think, “I just want to plow her field, plant some seed and harvest some fruit. I just want to yoke myself to her for life and bear her burdens.”

Maybe Jesus looks at us and thinks, “I just want to plow her fields, plant my seed and harvest some people in my image. I just want to covenant myself to her. I want to bear all her burdens.” “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Why? Because Love wants to.

Nothing constrains Love. God is Love and God is a great dance, three persons, one substance, and the substance is Love and nothing constrains love. But Love constrains, upholds, creates, and animates all things. God is Love and Jesus is His word. Jesus is the Piper calling us to come dance. To surrender to the dance is to be created in His image. To refuse the dance is to un-create yourself and create a false self.

Well maybe Jesus looks at you just like I looked at my future bride in 1978, at the sock hop at Heritage High School, while the band played “Love me tender, love me long – never let me go.” Maybe Jesus looks at you like that and thinks, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” And you look at Jesus and immediately think of your self. You immediately think, “I can’t dance like He dances! And: “Oh my God, he wants me to dance! What a horrible yoke and what an unbearable burden!” And: “I wish they’d turn down that music. I can’t concentrate and I really need to concentrate, because I’m desperately trying to dance!”

Once, humanity took fruit from the tree. Adam and Eve knew about the Good, but no longer knew the Good, for when the Good called to them, in the cool of the day, inviting them to come down to the garden, they hid themselves in fig leaves and the trees. And they knew about the Music, but they could no longer hear the Music. They had become self-conscious.

They knew about the Music-Law describes the Music, but they couldn’t hear the Music. And Love is the Music. The Hebrews used to refer to the law as a yoke, the yoke of Torah. It was an impossible burden to bear – the knowledge of good and evil.

Well, I’m just saying, maybe love makes the yoke easy and the burden light. Maybe love is like music that’s constantly playing and upholding all things. We know about the music, but can’t hear the music because we’re self-conscious. God is Love and His Word is the Music, but you can’t dance if you can’t hear the Music. So Jesus said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” “Take my yoke upon you...” “Take up a cross and follow me daily.”

Well, when Jesus said that, no one knew that He’d be crucified on the tree and rise from the dead. No one knew that God was like a dance, three persons and one substance called Love. No one knew that Jesus was the Bridegroom and we were the Bride, and He was calling us to come join the great dance. But, everyone knew what it meant to pick up a cross. It didn’t mean that you were going on the church mission trip. It didn’t mean that you had just purchased a new piece of jewelry. It didn’t mean you were the best Christian at church. It meant you were the worst citizen in town. It meant you were condemned and that day – you would die.

So this week I thought, “What would it mean to me if, in 30 AD, I were to pick up a cross?” Well, first and foremost, I would think, “I’ve been judged,” not just by the emperor, but by God, for Scripture says, “*cursed is anyone that hangs on a tree.*”

I would think, “I’ve been judged and condemned,” so all my attempts at justifying myself have utterly failed and will utterly fail. So, there is no point in trying to justify myself now. My self is dead.

Samuel Johnson once said:

*The prospect of being hanged, concentrates a man’s mind wonderfully.*

If I picked up a cross, I would realize that all my deeds in the past had added up to nothing. I would have to release them all. *Aphieme* is the word in Greek. It's also translated forgive. I would have to release all my supposed merit and release all my supposed debt and debtors. I would have to surrender all my judgments to the judgment I had just received.

My past would add up to nothing and, you know, your past really is nothing – It's a mental construct that you have created in your own mind. It's actually a very limited and twisted recollection of what actually happened.

Well, you see, picking up a cross wasn't impressive – but just the opposite. It did not mean you worthy of life, but just the opposite: you were totally unworthy of life. Jesus said, "*Unless a man pick up a cross and follow he is unworthy of me.*" In other words: "You're only worthy of me once you admit you're entirely unworthy of me, and I am Life."

Well anyway, if I picked up a cross, I would be sacrificing my past—all my pride—all my accomplishments and failures—all my shame and unforgiveness and bitterness- all my attempts at justifying myself. I would sacrifice my past and I would sacrifice my future, sacrifice all my attempts to justify myself in the past and all my hopes of justifying myself in the future. That's what our hopes are. I'd give up hope of making something of myself. I'd give up all hope of saving me, redeeming me, or creating me, or saving you, redeeming you, or creating you. I'd give up all my hopes, that is all my drivenness, anxiety, and fear. I'd give up my future as "my future."

But you know your future doesn't really exist.

It's a mental construct that you have created in your mind.

If I picked up my cross, I would be admitting that I had been very irresponse-able in the past and will be utterly un- able to respond in the future. That is, I had failed to love in the past, could not make myself love in the future. I had failed to dance in the past and could not promise to dance in the future.

If I picked up my cross,

I would have no past and no future,

only an infinitely small burden called NOW.

NOW is not an illusion.

NOW is real, and NOW is the "day of salvation."

NOW is free. NOW is the point where potentiality becomes actuality.

NOW is the point of creation. According to philosophers, theologians, and physicists...

NOW is the point that eternity touches time.

NOW is the point that *Logos* invades chaos and *Chronos*, where meaning fills time.

NOW is the place decisions are made.

"Decision is the awakening to the eternal." writes Kierkegaard.

In other words, now is the place we hear the music, and now is the only place we can dance.

If I'm thinking about my dancing in the past, or the moves I need to make in the future, I won't hear the music now and won't dance now. I'll be unable to respond, thinking about me. That's why self-conscious people and proud people make very poor dancers.

If you sang a dirge, they wouldn't weep, and if you played a pipe they wouldn't dance. They wouldn't be able to respond to the music, for they think they are responsible for the music. They cannot respond to the rhythms of Love, for they think they're responsible for love

But little children they'll weep at the drop of a hat, and they'll dance at the hint of a tune. "The wise and the learned" can't catch the tune, but it is not kept from the little children—the tune catches them. In other words, little children are able to respond; they are response-able. And scribes and Pharisees are unable to respond, for all their responsibility.

Little children weep and dance because they're not self-conscious. And they're not self-conscious because they don't have much self to be conscious of.

And what is a self? Most folks think a self is constructed of one's successes and failures in the past and one's hopes for the future, which would mean I am a mental construct in my brain, which doesn't actually exist. I am an illusion of my own creation – a false self that can't dance, for it doesn't exist ... NOW. That false self is not able to respond to love, for that false self believes it is responsible *for* love. To dance, that self must die.

Perhaps the greatest novelist that ever lived was Fyodor Doestoyevski. For a hundred years, people have wept with him and danced with him, and yet it wasn't always so. As a young man, he was a militant revolutionary determined to create the kingdom of love until one day he was forced to surrender to the King of Love, the Lord God who is Love.

He was captured by the Czar (who is not...). Doestoyevski was condemned to death by firing squad. He didn't know that the Czar would often torture his prisoners in that way. The Czar would have them blindfolded, give the count down, speak the order and his men would fire. But the rifles would be loaded with blanks.

It felt torturous and yet, years later, Doestoyevski claimed it saved his life and turned him into a novelist – in or on that day he was condemned to die, having surrendered his past and his future, he claims that something absolutely liberating happened. As he marched to his death, in the courtyard, he felt the sunlight as he never felt it before. He heard sounds as he had never heard before. After they removed his blindfold, he said he saw people as he never had seen them before, as if he heard music he never had heard before, music that had been playing all his life, but, until he surrendered his life, it was music that he could not hear.

In Mathew 16:24 Jesus says it again:

*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life (psyche) (That's my mental construct of me – my psyche – my soul.) will lose it and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel, will find it."*

And who is he? He is Love. And what is the Gospel? – It's the proclamation of Love, the music that creates and sustains all things. Well, I can't dance to the music, if I can't hear the music and I can't hear the music when I'm pre-occupied with me.



I'm ashamed of me, because I'm proud of me. I'm worried for me, because my hope is in me. I know I'm called to love, and I've learned all about love. But the harder I try to love, the more I worry about me, so the harder I labor at love – the less I *do* love. When I labor at love under the yoke of the law, it's like my labor is cursed and my self is condemned.

*"In pain you shall labor," and "By the sweat of your brow you shall eat your bread." "You are dust and to dust you will return,"* said God in the garden.

Do you understand? Me, my self is my own impossible yoke and unbearable burden.

Don't you ever just get sick of yourself? Aren't you ever tempted to just kill yourself? The problem is: You can't kill your self with your self with your self, it's just more self yoked to yourself in outer darkness—the unbearable burden that is your self.

"Oh wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

Listen to our text one more time to our text.

Matthew 11: 28-30

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (psyches). For my yoke is easy (it fits), and my burden is light.*

Do you see? He's offering to help you die to your self. It's your self that keeps you from hearing the music (like flesh grown over your ears and your heart that needs to be circumcised, cut away). It's your self that keeps you from dancing (dancing is losing your *self* in the music). It's your self that keeps you from loving (love is losing yourself in another). Your self is your own uneasy yoke and unbearable burden, and your self can't help your self relieve your self of self. You need Jesus! And where do we meet Jesus?

Brennan Manning writes:

*Probably the moment in my own life when I was closest to the Truth, who is Jesus Christ, was the experience of being a hopeless derelict in the gutter in Fort Lauderdale, Florida....Paradoxically, such an experience of powerlessness does not make one sad. It is a great relief because it makes us rely not on our own strength but on the limitless power of God. The realization that God is the main agent makes the yoke easy, the burden light, and the heart still.*

You see, it's at that moment when we realize that we've utterly failed at love. It's at that moment when we have to confess, "I'm not responsible for love" that we can finally see: Love is responsible for me. It's when we finally pick up our cross that we meet the One who has been bearing it all along. It's there we meet the *Logos*, The Word of Love, Love incarnate—the Lord of the dance.

[Simon helps Jesus carry His cross.]

Simon: *Almost done. Almost done.*

[Simon looks deep into Jesus' eyes as He hands over the cross to Jesus.]

Roman soldier: *Get away now; you're free to go. Go on! Go on!*

[The soldiers pull Simon away from Jesus and the cross. Simon continues to look deeply into Jesus' eyes as they carry him away. Once he's at a distance, the soldiers push him away. He still turns back, looking at Jesus. He is deeply moved and chokes back deep, heart-felt tears. He then runs down the hill covering his mouth as he sobs and begins to weep.]

Clip  
from  
*The  
Passion*

If we weep with Him at the tree of law, we'll forever dance with Him, at the tree of life. We die with Him and rise with Him –now. The dance is NOW. We can know about Him in the past and about Him in the future, but we can only *know* Him NOW, pray NOW, worship NOW, dance NOW.

You realize that Jesus was crucified on one very painful day, and yet He bore His cross every day. And so He danced every day. He wasn't stuck in the past or worried about the future. He wasn't captive to shame or fear. He had no false self, to justify. He had no pride to defend, so He lived each moment and loved each moment. He did only what He saw His Father doing and His Father is Love and so Jesus' life was a dance...

Actually, Jesus is Life and He's asking you to dance and so he says,

*"Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden..."*

(Isn't that all the children of Adam who labor under the curse?)

*"And I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

So, how could a cross be easy and light? Well, maybe it could be easy and light if it was carried in Love, which means surrendering to Love, which means responding to Love, which means I'm not responsible for love (The lie of the snake in the Garden was, "I am responsible for love), Love is responsible for me.

Love makes me dance – I'm *not* responsible for Love, but able to respond to Love when free of my old self. The cross is the severe mercy that frees me of my self, and bids me to come dance in the autumn leaves.

So, several years ago, I prayed with a woman that wanted to die. She was horribly ashamed of her past, in the things she had done, and she despaired of her future—of becoming the respectable Christian woman she longed to be. She desperately wanted to die, but knew she couldn't kill herself with herself. I said, pray, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

She did and immediately she had a vision: she saw her old depraved and licentious self nailed to a cross. Then she saw the church lady she hoped to be nailed to the same cross. Then she saw Jesus nailed to that cross and over them both. She watched as they all died. Then, suddenly, she saw her true self standing at the foot of the tree dressed in a brilliant white wedding gown. I doubt I'll ever forget her wonder and her joy.

And this would be my advice to her and my advice to you, bride of Christ:

Every morning pick up that cross.

Every morning, picture your old self, your successes and failures.

Picture that self nailed to that cross

There is no point in defending that self or punishing that self – you cannot justify that self.

And then picture the self you're trying to create also nailed to that cross.

You can't create yourself no matter how hard you try. Surrender your past and your future. Surrender your shame and your fear. Surrender your achievements and your hopes. Then listen to the music – now – The Word of Love, Jesus. You must know Him now in order to dance. Eternal life is now. He is your righteousness – He is your true past and He is your true future. Your hope is in Him. Hope isn't an illusion in your future, but a presence with you now. He is your life, and you are His body. Forget yourself and listen to the Music and when you find yourself dancing, you will have found who you truly and eternally are.

### **Communion**

He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given to you; take and eat, and do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way, after supper and having given thanks, He took the cup and said, "This cup is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me:

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

"And you are my Bride; you are my body, so let's dance. Life is a dance. My life is a dance."

In Jesus' name believe the gospel and live the gospel.

[Several worship songs are sung.]

### **Benediction**

Paul writes, *"For the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded that One has died for all, therefore, all have died. And He died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised."*

This reminds me of a vision a friend of my once had up at Look Out. He explained it something like this: "In the service, people who heard Jesus word were crucified in the sanctuary. They were up on crosses crucified, and then Jesus went through the sanctuary taking them down." He said, "There was one girl there who had Down's Syndrome, (He knew who she was) Jesus went up to her and she didn't have to be crucified. Together they went and took the others down.

Then he said, "The weird thing was that there were some people who would not come down off of the crosses. They would say to Jesus, 'No, I'm going to stay here.' They would stay up on the crosses and wouldn't join the dance that was happening at the foot of the cross."

For years I've been wondering, "Why don't those people get off the crosses? Why wouldn't I come down off the cross? Am I one of those people? Jesus, who are those people, and why won't they come down off the cross?" Then it hit me this week: They don't know they're dead. Right? If you take someone down off a cross they're dead. The cross has done its work.

What is the problem with all of us? We don't realize that Jesus died, and we died with Him, and we keep trying to give ourselves life, but He's the One that gives us life.

So, may you believe Scripture this morning: His yoke fits. His yoke is easy and His burden is light, and He will give you rest. In Jesus' name believe the gospel. The gospel is that the Lord God is your Creator, and you are not His creator. That's incredibly good news. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*