

CHRIST'S YOKE

- What does it mean to take Christ's yoke upon us?

In Jesus' time rabbis had different sets of rules based on their interpretations of scripture. When a person chose to follow a certain rabbi, he was taking up that rabbi's yoke. The intent of having a yoke was two-fold:

1. to interpret the words correctly and
2. to live them out.

Every once in a while – but rarely – a rabbi came along with a new understanding – a different take on scripture than what had come before. Jesus was such a rabbi. He was a rabbi, but a lot more than that. He was God's son and came to sacrifice himself for us, to save us from our sin – to give us everlasting life. He showed us what God is like – what God's love looks like.

As a rabbi, Jesus was a radical, bringing us a new interpretation of scripture and a revolutionary kind of thinking. To take on Jesus' yoke is to follow his way of thinking and to follow his example and teaching.

Jesus said that his yoke is easy: *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* (Matthew 11:29-30)

The yoke suggests bondage, and it is that in a way. By taking on Jesus' yoke we let God take control. We give ourselves over to him in obedience.

HOW CAN WE LIVE OUT CHRIST'S YOKE?

- Attitude:

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death." Philippians 2:5-8

- Relationships:

"...in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." Matthew 7:12

"You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:43-44

- Obedience:

"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do." 1 Peter 1:14-15

- Following Jesus:

"Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self." Matthew 16:24-25 (The Message)

- Serving God:

"Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what's coming to you in this kingdom. It's been ready for you since the world's foundation. And here's why:

*I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me."*

"...I'm telling you the solemn truth. Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me – you did it to me." Matthew 25:34-36; 40 (Message)

- Loving God and others:

Jesus said, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."* Matthew 22:37-40