

Ordinary 14A - 2023

"I'm afraid they're all wondering where I went."

An elderly woman at the nursing home received a visit from one of her fellow Church members. "How are you feeling?" the visitor asked. "Oh," said the lady, "I'm just worried sick!" "What are you worried about, dear?" her friend asked. "You look like you're in good health. They are taking care of you, aren't they?" "Yes, they are taking very good care of me." "Are you in any pain?" she asked. "No, I have never had a pain in my life." "Well, what are you worried about?" her friend asked again. The lady leaned back in her rocking chair and slowly explained her major worry.

"Every close friend I ever had has already died and gone on to Heaven," she said. "I'm afraid they're all wondering where I went."

(bounce-jokeseveryday-1807004@ripple.dundee.net)

Jesus' hand carved Yoke

There is a wonderful legend concerning the quiet years of Jesus, the years prior to his visible ministry. The legend claims that Jesus the carpenter was one of the master yoke-makers in the Nazareth area. People came from miles around for a yoke, hand carved and crafted by Jesus son of Joseph.

When customers arrived with their team of oxen Jesus would spend considerable time measuring the team, their height, the width, the space between them, and the size of their shoulders. Within a week, the team would be brought back and he would carefully place the newly made yoke over the shoulders, watching for rough places, smoothing out the edges and fitting them perfectly to this particular team of oxen.

That's the yoke Jesus invites us to take. Do not be misled by the word "easy" for its root word in Greek speaks directly of the tailor-made yokes: they were "**well-fitting**." The yoke Jesus invites us to take, **the yoke that brings rest to weary souls**, is one that is made exactly to our lives and hearts.

The yoke he invites us to wear fits us well, does not rub us nor cause us to develop sore spirits and is designed for two. **His yokes were always designed for two**. And our yoke-partner is none other than Christ himself.

Running throughout all scripture from the beginning to the end is the theme that ours is a burden bearing Christ. He is not just a Lord whom we burden, and we do,

but a Lord who actually solicits our burdens. I want to think with you this morning concerning that thought. He who would be effective must first be free from his burdens. And, it is Christ who frees us. Frees us from...

1. The burden of sin,
2. The burden of self-righteousness,
3. Our burdens, so we can bear the burden of others.

Being yoked with Jesus means that he is on one side of the yoke, and I am on the other, and we pull the load together." What immediately came to my mind was a scene from a very old series, Ma and Pa Kettle.

They had a "team" of horses, a big black horse and a little white pony. They'd go down the road with the big horse just walking along steadily, and the little pony jumping and leaping in the harness to keep up and pull its share of the load.

Guess which one I think we humans are!

A Contented Man

A story is told of a king who was suffering from a malady and was advised by his astrologer that he would be cured if the shirt of a contented man were brought to him to wear. People went out to all parts of the kingdom after such a person, and after a long search they found a man who was really happy...but he did not possess a shirt. (by David Leininger from *Ask the Average Person* at www.eSermons.com)