

"I'm not in a hurry to be like Jesus"

ET (Sunday school 6/6/21)

- 2019-2021 change in my lifestyle/focus: "Take my yoke upon you..." (Mt. 11:28-30)



- **journal 9/11/19:** A couple more inquiries about my life...Wish I could answer the "what" I want to do or "where" I want to go, but I only know "how" I want to go, yoked up with Christ. I believe He will show me/us. As I have been meditating on this passage in recent weeks, several things have come to mind:
 - (1) **His yoke is only EASY if I don't pull against it.** My natural tendency as a type A person (or "1" for you Ennea folks) is to rush out ahead, make plans, "make it happen," make a chart (those who know me know this is me for sure), organize it, etc. etc. So for me to NOT PULL on the yoke has been a daily spiritual discipline for me. As you know, the "strong ox" in the yoke is the one who leads the two of them. So I must not pull against the pace of the big ox, but continue to walk the field at the pace of the one leading. At the proper time, the "big ox" will turn and I'll see, "Oh, we are plowing this row or this field now." And all I need to do is follow.
 - (2) **His burden is LIGHT only if I pull it WITH HIM, and not think that I have to pull it on my own.** So staying with Him, LEARNING OF HIM--His gentleness, His lowliness of heart, so that I can emulate His character and be like him as we plow the field, is what will make the burden light.
 - (3) The context of this invitation from Christ is **remarkably paradoxical**. In the few verses before "Come unto me," Jesus describes the amazing relationship between the Father, the Son and those to whom God is revealed (Matt 11:25-27). One would think that such a relationship would provide cause for Jesus boasting about power, yet He chooses to transition from describing the most awesome relationship in the universe to describing His character as "gentle and lowly in heart." He doesn't say in this context, "Come unto me...so you can learn power." Yes, of course we have spiritual power as believers filled with God's Spirit. Yet here, Jesus invites us to know Him--the One who is God incarnate--yet chooses to focus on His characteristics of being gentle and lowly of heart. As I walk in the yoke next to Him, it is not power (or position) He calls me to, but being like Christ in gentleness and humility.
 - (4) In addition to the above startling contrast (God-of-the-universe imagery set against gentleness and lowliness imagery), another remarkable contrast is that **this call to REST takes place in the context of WORK**. He mentions rest in v. 28, and rest for the soul in v. 29.

He juxtaposes "easy" and light" against "labor" and being "heavy laden" as well as against the labor-intensive image of the yoke--an agricultural tool used for oxen to plow a field. What startling contrasts here. So often in Scripture Jesus puts out such paradoxes: the first will be last, to be great be a servant, and so on. In this transition time, I am having to embrace paradox, to value this juxtaposition of imagery and thought through the words of Christ. Such words sustain my soul as I continue to labor.

- (5) So many people have expressed that they are "excited" to see what God has next for me, encouraging me that He has "great things in store," and that I have "so many gifts and talents" that God wants to use, and so on. I appreciate that hope and encouragement, and I know God is faithful to provide and will. Yet in this time, what I am compelled to hold onto is this invitation from Christ. THAT is what God has for me, to be next to Christ, to patiently walk at His pace even while in my present row of the field, to learn of Him, to meditate on His gentleness, His lowliness--this one to whom the Father has "handed over" all things--and yet He is lowly...? Here I find rest, and rest for my soul. The row of the field or what new field I will walk in is not the important thing; rather, how I walk next to Christ and whether I learn of Him in the process IS.

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| KJV | 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. |
| ESV | 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." |
| NIV | 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." |
| NASB | 28 "Come to Me, all ^[a] who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND ^[b] REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light." |
| MSG | 28-30 "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." |

- With my "full-time job" being to stay in the yoke, listen to God, do what's in front of me, I've been thinking about Jesus's relationship with the Father (listening to Him, seeking/doing His will, saying/doing/working only as he hears from the Father
- In this, I want to be "not in a hurry" in order "to be like Jesus."

• Because the "love of Christ constrains me" (2 Cor 5:14)

- NIV: compels us
- NLT, ESV, NKJV, NASB, NET: controls us
- KJV, ASV, WEB, YLT: constrains/eth
- AMP: controls and compels
- CEV, GNT: ruled by
- Douay-Rheims: presseth
- God's Word: guides us
- Weymouth: overmasters us

4912. **συνέχω** **sunecho**, soon-ekh'-o; from 4862 and 2192; to hold together, i.e. to compress (the ears, with a crowd or siege) or arrest (a prisoner); figuratively, to compel,

perplex, afflict, preoccupy: — constrain, hold, keep in, press, lie sick of, stop, be in a strait, straiten, be taken with, throng.

We usually hear this verse used in missions—because Christ has loved us and we love him, we go forward (are *compelled*) into obedience to Him. But let's look at the context...

2Cor. 5:1 For we know that if ¹the ^aearthly ^btent which is our house is **torn down**, we have a building from God, a house ^cnot made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For indeed **in this house we** ^agroan, **longing to be** ^bclothed with our dwelling from heaven, ³ inasmuch as **we, having put it on, will not be found naked**. ⁴ For indeed **while we are in this tent, we** ^agroan, being **burdened**, because we do not want to be **unclothed** but to **be** ^bclothed, so that **what is** ^cmortal will be **swallowed up by life**. ⁵ Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who ^agave to us the Spirit as a ¹pledge.

2Cor. 5:6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that ^awhile we are **at home in the body we are absent from the Lord** — ⁷ for ^awe walk by faith, not by ¹sight — ⁸ we are of good courage, I say, and ^aprefer rather to be absent from the body and ^bto be at home with the Lord. ⁹ Therefore we also have as our ambition, **whether at home or absent, to be** ^apleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before ^athe judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for ¹his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

2Cor. 5:11 Therefore, knowing the ^afear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are ^bmade manifest also in your consciences. ¹² We are not ^aagain commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an ^boccasion to be proud of us, so that you will have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. ¹³ For if we ¹are ^abeside¹ ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind,² it is for you. ¹⁴ For **the love of Christ** ^acontrols us, having concluded this, that ^bone died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, so that **they who live might no longer** ^alive for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

2Cor. 5:16 Therefore from now on **we recognize no one** ^{1a}according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ ¹according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is ^ain Christ, ¹he is ^ba new creature; ^cthe old things passed away; **behold, new things have come**. ¹⁸ Now ^aall these things are from God, ^bwho reconciled us to Himself through Christ and **gave us the** ^cministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that ^aGod was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, ^bnot counting their trespasses against them, and ¹He has ²committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2Cor. 5:20 Therefore, we are ^aambassadors for Christ, ^bas though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be ^creconciled to God. ²¹ He made Him who ^aknew no sin to be ^bsin on our behalf, **so that we might become the** ^crighteousness of God in Him.

¹ 1839. **ἐξίστημι** *existemi*, *ex-is-tay-mee*; from 1537 and 2476; to put (stand) **out of wits**, i.e. astound, or (reflexively) become astounded, **insane**: — amaze, be (make) astonished, be beside self (selves), bewitch, wonder.

² 4993. **σωφρονέω** *sophroneo*, *so-fron-eh'-o*; from 4998; to be of sound mind, i.e. sane, (figuratively) moderate: — be in right mind, be sober (minded), soberly.

Other References

[Matthew 26:39](#)

Going a little farther, He fell facedown and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will."

[John 5:19](#)

Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

[John 5:30](#)

I can do nothing by Myself; I judge only as I hear. And My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

[John 6:38](#)

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Me.

[John 8:28](#)

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on My own, but speak exactly what the Father has taught Me.

[John 12:49](#)

I have not spoken on My own, but the Father who sent Me has commanded Me what to say and how to say it.

[John 12:50](#)

And I know that His command leads to eternal life. So I speak exactly what the Father has told Me to say."

[John 14:10](#)

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on My own. Instead, it is the Father dwelling in Me, performing His works.

- **Initially I wanted to look through the four Gospels to see**
 - **where TIME is a factor**
 - **how Jesus RELATED to time**
 - **if He had any sense of hurry or urgency**
 - **what we can LEARN from that for how to be (like Him) in the world.**
- **Starting in Matthew, I seemed to find this on every page, every verse almost, and so we'll go through Matthew UP TO the 11:28 about the yoke.**

| Matthew | What's happening? | Details | What can we learn? |
|--|--|---|---|
| 3:15 | Jesus' baptism | Fitting for all righteousness | Everything in its time |
| 3:17 | " | God speaks, He is pleased w/what Jesus is doing | God sees, knows, is pleased |
| 4:1 | Jesus' temptation | He goes to the desert because He's <i>led</i> by the <i>Spirit</i> | Even Jesus followed the Spirit |
| 4:4 | " | He lives only by the words that come out of <i>God's mouth</i> | God's guidance is our very sustenance |
| 4:11 | " | Angels minister to Jesus | As we obey, God provides |
| 4:13-14 | Settles in Capernaum | To fulfill prophecy | |
| 4:18 | Walks by the sea | Sees the disciples and calls them | Ordinary/Extraordinary |
| 5:1 | Beatitudes | Sees massive crowds, climbs a mountain, sits down, begins talking | How would I react with a big crowd? |
| 5:23 | Teaching: at the altar | If you are at the altar and remember that you have to deal with a brother, go and do that first." | Spiritual priorities |
| 6:6 | Teaching: prayer | Go in your room, close the door, pray to the Father, and the Father who sees in secret will reward you | Intimacy of listening to the Father |
| 6:9-11 | Teaching: prayer | Our Father...hallowed...your will be done...earth-heaven...Give us this day our daily bread | Honoring the Father, listening to Him, trusting Him for daily bread |
| <i>God has literally provided DAILY bread ("manna from heaven") ever since I committed to trusting Him, leaving AGTS, working at home.</i> | | | |
| 6:18 | Teaching: fasting | The Father sees what is done in secret and will reward you | Our focus must be on pleasing God, not people |
| <i>I experienced making myself of "no reputation" as Christ has (no title, no promotion, no retirement, etc.)</i> | | | |
| 6:19, 24 25-34 | Teaching: money/work/worry | Store up treasures in heaven; cannot serve God and wealth; don't worry about your life—God will provide (He sees and knows) Daily – Don't worry about tomorrow; each day has enough trouble of its own | What does it truly mean to serve God and <i>not</i> wealth in terms of how I see my time and how I live my life? To seek him <i>first</i> ? |
| 7:11 | | God in heaven sees what we need and will give to those who ask | Am I asking? seeking? knocking? (i.e., listening??) |
| 7:21 | Teaching: Doing the will of the Father | As all the verses in John said, it is doing the will of <i>the Father</i> that makes all the difference. | My entrance into heaven depends on listening and doing! |
| 7:24, 26 | Teaching: Wise build on the rock | Hear and do – wise Hear and don't do – fool | Not enough to hear. I must do! |
| 8:1 | Healing of leper | Right after this big sermon on the mount, he comes down and is hit by a leper needing something. He says, "I am willing" and does it. | Example of how He handles a big crowd, ongoing pressures, opportunities, all with no tyranny of the urgent. |
| 8:5 | Healing of paralyzed (and tormented) Centurion's servant | Right after one healing comes another—as he's coming into town. When asked, He says, "I will come and heal him." Centurion's response. Then Jesus heals the servant from afar. | Sometimes we don't even have to <i>be present</i> in a situation to do what God has for us to do in that moment. |
| 8:14 | Healing of Peter's mother | Right after the Centurion conversation—He comes to Peter's house, and the situation presents itself to Him. | Do what is in front of you to do! |
| 8:16 | Healing of those possessed | The evening of that <i>same day</i> —as people <i>come to Him</i> (Don't you know my favorite show is on tonight??) He does it <i>to fulfill what was spoken</i> | Sometimes situations come to us, not us to them. |
| 8:18 | Crowd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scribe • disciple | He departs to the other side of the sea | The crowd does not mean we have to respond to it. |
| 8:23 | Jesus in the boat | He is at peace even when they are journeying, even when there is a storm | The storm does not mean we cannot be at peace |

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| 8:28, 9:1 | Gadarenes, two demoniacs, demons into the swine | All He says in this whole terrifying event is Go , and then even after meeting the “whole city,” He goes back across the sea to Capernaum. | Sometimes God wants us to make a big and dangerous journey for very little “stage time,” but look at the effect! |
| 9:2-8 | Healing of paralytic | He heals because He “sees their faith” and He forgives the paralytic’s sins as well. He even handles pushback from the scribes. | He does the work in the way He believes is right, has a clear response to pushback. His actions of obedience brought God glory, as ours can if we will obey. |
| 9:9-17 | Calls Matthew Eats with sinners Deals with gripes Teaches on fasting And wineskins | Jesus has already had a big day... | WHAT A DAY!!! How would I handle such a day? |
| 9:18-19 | Synagogue official’s daughter – need | He starts toward the synagogue official’s house... | |
| 9:20-22 | Woman bleeding | And stops to heal the woman who touched him | |
| 9:23-26 | Raises the daughter | Raises the girl, deals with mockery, news spreads | |
| 9:27-31 | Heals two blind men | Heals them, tells them to be quiet, news spreads | |
| 9:32-34 | Mute, demon-possessed man healed/delivered | Heals the man, accused of being a ruler of demons | |
| 9:35-10:42 | Compassion and Calling | Jesus sees needs and is moved w/compassion Gives others authority, calls the 12, gives them instruction, encourages them to “beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers...” v. 20 “For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. ” | (Mark H’s post week of 5/29 about opportunities to speak, request for prayer) If we listen to what God says and walk in obedience, He will give provision and peace. |
| 11:1 | Departs to preach and teach | He took time (above) to call and train them but then continues on to do the work the Father has called <i>Him</i> to do. | Sometimes we go with others, sometimes we go alone. |
| 11:2-19 | Jesus and John | John asks if Jesus is the Expected One, Jesus responds and also teaches about John | Jesus takes time to explain a curious situation |
| 11:20- | Denouncing of the Cities; Jesus prays | Even after such a rough “sermon,” Jesus turns His attention to His Father (acknowledging God’s pleasure, God’s purpose, and the way to know the Father” v. 27 “All things have been <u>handed over to Me</u> by My Father; and no one <u>knows the Son</u> except the Father; nor does anyone <u>know the Father</u> except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. ” | Jesus’s intimacy with the Father is clear here. How intimate am I with the Father? With the Son? Has the Son chosen to reveal the Father to me? This passage comes right before COME UNTO ME... |
| Matt. 11:28 “ ^a Come to Me, all ¹ who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ “Take My yoke upon you and ^a learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and ^b YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ “For ^a My yoke is ¹ easy and My burden is light.” | | | |
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Joel Lindsey, "When Jesus Hurried," July 2, 2015, Christian Living, accessed May 23, 2021, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/when-jesus-hurried/>.

Jesus was not one to be rushed. Though he is eternal, he came to us wrapped in flesh, and therefore bound by earthly limitations. He got hungry and thirsty ([Mark 11:12](#); [John 4:7; 19:28](#)), he got sleepy (Matt. 8:24), and even had to have someone help him carry really heavy things ([Mark 15:21](#)).

Jesus **knew his limits**. He **didn't try to be in three places at once** or **cram 30 hours' worth of activity into 12 hours of daylight**. Consider that Jesus didn't start his ministry till he was 30, and he didn't kick it into high gear even when a little girl and a good friend would have avoided death had he picked up the pace a bit ([Luke 8:40-56](#); [John 11](#)). Even when he used a form of transportation other than his feet, Jesus chose a colt not a thoroughbred ([Mark 11:7](#)). He accepted his limitations and lived life at a godly pace.

But **one time Jesus hurried**.

Jesus the Pacesetter

The scene is found in [Mark 10](#) and, ironically, the reference to Jesus's atypical burst of speed is easy to fly right by. Jesus has just taught on divorce, spent some time hanging out with children, and spoken with a wealthy young man who was trying to figure out his life. Then, it happens. Jesus, known for his easy pace, becomes the pacesetter:

And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and **Jesus was walking ahead of them**. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, **"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."** ([Mark 10:32-34](#), emphasis mine)

I grant that Mark doesn't describe Jesus sprinting ahead of the disciples, nor does he indicate Jesus is frenetic in any way. If anything, the image is one of **hard and fast resolve**, like the Servant of the Lord from [Isaiah 50](#) who **"set [his] face like a flint"** in the face of mockery and even danger.

Still, I cannot help but take note of the details included, striking in themselves given that Mark is the least annotative of the Gospel writers. It was important to him to note that **Jesus is out ahead of the disciples, and that the disciples are amazed at Jesus's resoluteness and, I believe, his pace—which frightened them**. It amazed and frightened the disciples that **Jesus was determined to give himself to those who would condemn, mock, beat, and kill him**. Whereas a stormy sea had scared them once before ([Mark 4:35-41](#)), now they feared the storm of sin-twisted religious politics that awaited their Master in Jerusalem.

But this time Jesus was not asleep in the boat. This time he was **fully awake, eyes wide open, moving quickly toward his cross**.

Repenting of Hurrying and Failing to Hurry

As I reflect on this passage, I am struck by **how different Jesus's hurrying is from my hurrying**. I often live as if **my limits don't exist**, trying to **do too much**, trying to **be too much**. The signs appear not only in my worn and wearied **body**, but in my anxious and weighed-down **heart** ([Prov. 12:25](#)). **I repent often of hurrying and worrying, something Jesus never had to do**.

What's more, this snapshot from Mark's Gospel reminds me it's not enough to repent only of my foolish rushing around; **I must repent even of failing to hurry**.

- When faced with an opportunity to own up to shortcomings, I often **hurry toward self-justification rather than repentance**.
- When faced with potential criticism from others, I'm tempted to **hurry away from words that might sting** rather than **move confidently and even quickly toward them with hope that the result might actually shape me more into the image of Christ**.

- When faced with situations and conversations where my Spirit-empowered absorption of pain and discomfort might serve the redemptive purposes of the gospel, **I often move at a snail's pace in order to avoid anything that looks like suffering.**

Imitating Jesus's Hurrying and Slowing Down

When faced with the cross, Jesus “set his face to go to Jerusalem” ([Luke 9:51](#)). The good news is that because he faced sin (not his, but mine), **because he faced criticism and suffering, I am now free to slow down and live within my limits.** Jesus finished the work so I don't have to. At the same time, I am free to **speed up** my

cooperation with the Holy Spirit,

hurrying toward repentance, criticism, and

even suffering

because these things are good for me ([Rom. 8:28](#)).

After all, Christ crucified and resurrected is my justification, so **I don't have to justify myself before God.** In addition, the cross tells me that God has given me the ultimate criticism—I am a worse sinner than even I know—so **I don't have to run away from those who may offer a fraction of the judgment I deserve.** And **I don't have to avoid pain, failure, or humiliation,** because those things are mere shadows cast by the suffering of Christ as he bore my ~~en~~ curse on the cross.

No doubt **I often need to slow down and relax in view of God's sovereignty.** But when it comes to the way of the **cross, I want to learn, like Jesus, to hurry forward.**