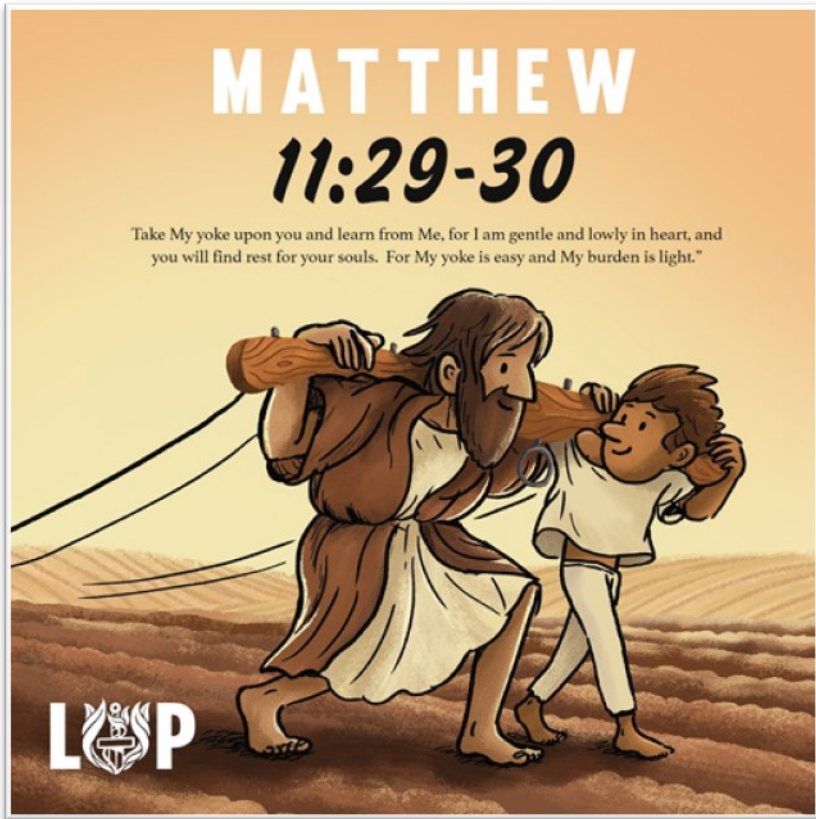




DEVOTION FOR THE WEEK

Equally Yoked and Rested...



[Read Matthew 11]

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.”

Dearest Brothers and Sisters-in-Christ,

Very recently, I attended a chaplaincy thanksgiving gathering organised by the Anglican Preschool Services (APS). During one of the sharings, someone mentioned being thankful that we are so ‘equally yoked’, meaning to say that we are a group of people bearing the same burdens together – APS, the church, and centre leaders moving together in reaching out to bless the children, teachers, and families of all the childcares and kindergartens under APS. The cooperative missional spirit was evident during the session, and I gave thanks for it too.

That particular sharing caught my attention, because we seldom hear the words ‘equal’ and ‘yoke’ put together in a positive expression. We are familiar with the ‘unequally yoked’ expression in 2 Corinthians 6:14. Comparatively, ‘equally yoked’ sounds more positive, smooth, and affirming. It led me to reflect and meditate on being equally yoked with Jesus.

Despite His mighty works, people were offended by Jesus and rejecting Him (Matthew 11:6, 17, 20). In such a context, at the end of Matthew 11, Jesus gave the call once again to all, to come to Him, to take His easy yoke, and to find rest¹ for their souls².

Nonetheless, in love, Jesus continues to call us to Him. He is the only way to the Father (Matthew 11:27, John 14:6). He knows that we can only find true rest when we come to Him, to the Father. He gives us rest (Matthew 11:28) by being ‘equally yoked’ with us.

¹ The word ‘rest’ in its original language is *shalom* (Hebrew, connoting ‘peace’) and *anapausis* (greek, note the ‘pause’ in the word). Give yourself some time to meditate deeper on what kind of rest Jesus is offering to you.

² The phrase ‘find rest for your souls’ was an intentional quotation of Jeremiah 6:16. Here, the Israelites also rejected the Lord’s call, “we will not walk in it”.

We are meant to experience being ‘equally yoked’ in two ways:

1. Jesus carries our burdens for us.

At the cross, Jesus has already proven that He is one who puts our well-being before His and carries our burdens for us. Therefore, we can be sure that when we are bogged down by all the weight of the world, when we come to Him, He bears it with us and for us. The yoke is easier, and the burden is now lighter.

2. Jesus leads us to carry only the burdens we were meant to carry.

Often, we carry more burdens than what God meant for us to carry. We try to control what we cannot control, change what we cannot change, achieve what we cannot achieve, fill the voids of others and ourselves, forgetting that God is the only one who can fill man’s insatiable void and make him whole again.

Therefore, when we come to Jesus, He leads us to put our trust in His sovereignty. We learn to trust Him and let go. We find rest and our burden is light. When we come to Jesus, he also leads us to the only burden He had meant for us to carry – His calling/ purposes for us in His kingdom. God formed us and knows us deeply and intimately. He knows our strengths, weaknesses, talents, giftings, and most importantly our purpose. When we lay down our own ambitions, and instead pick up His ambitions for us, our burden will be light, and in trust, we enter His rest.

Jesus matches our steps and leads us to match His steps for us, leading us in a loving and ‘equally yoked’ relationship. Let us allow ourselves to be ‘equally yoked’ with Him and receive His rest today.

In His Love,
Ps Joann