The Second Symbol - (The Yoke)

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Preacher: Joe Shenk

[0:00] Hey, good morning. Good morning. Yeah, thank you, Monique, for sharing there.! I think that goes well with what I wanted to try to share.

! And also the song, John, I decided to follow Jesus. Yeah, that truly, truly our commitment this morning, like James said.
It's easy, and we had a lot of good songs that we sang this morning, and it just made me stop and think. It's easy to sing these words, but is it really with us this morning?
And, yeah, I wanted to speak on this morning, and I have spoken on this before way in the past, and it's just been coming to me, and I wanted to share on this, for lack of a better word, the second symbol.
The cross, we see the crosses everywhere out there, especially like in the Catholic Church, everywhere. The cross, it's on steeple churches.
[1:11] It's on lapel pins, on jewelry. A lot of people wear the cross, and they like jewelry, and they wear it lightly.

They don't even, it's even tattoos. I mean, it's all over. We see the cross. And the cross is an awesome reminder of what Jesus did, but the way it's portrayed so often today is in a light way.
And Mark 8, 34, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. And I'm getting off on a little bit of a rabbit trail here, but I want to bring this out.
This is off a little bit of what I want to talk about, but he talks about here, if we want to follow Jesus, we have to deny ourselves.
And we see in this world today, we just see such, especially here in America, nobody wants to deny themselves of anything. I was listening to Spencer Smith, and I think it was, I think it's Kid Rock he was talking about, is doing this album halfway to Jesus.
[2:26] And it's just, this has been rolling around in my mind a lot. And it is so true what Spencer said, that halfway to Jesus is totally lost.

The Kid, in some of his comments he made, it's very obvious, he says, I do this and I do that, but I still believe in God.
He doesn't want to deny anything. He doesn't want to deny himself. But he's, you know, I still believe in God. Well, the devils believe and tremble, but they're still lost.
They're not saved. Just believing in God is not going to get us to heaven. But anyway, that's a little bit of a side trail, but denying ourselves is such a big thing.
But what I want to talk about is another symbol. And a lot of y'all, you know, this is familiar with what you know in the scriptures, Matthew 11, 29.
[3:26] Take up my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest in your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Jesus also used this other symbol, this symbol, the yoke, as a symbol of Christian commitment.
The yoke is a wooden harness tying two animals together to pull a load. The yoke, much as the cross, is a symbol of commitment to Christ. With the yoke, people of this world, we're going to be yoked one way or another.
We're going to either be yoked to Christ or we're going to be yoked to the world. Mike kind of brought that out already. There is no in-between, but that's what people, I want to be my person.
I want to do my thing, but they want to, well, I'm not a part of that. I don't want to be a part of the world, but I don't want to be, you know, truly yoked to Christ.
[4:29] It's one way or the other. We have to make choices. There is no in-between there. The yoke and the cross are two different aspects of commitment.

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The cross is an instrument of death. The yoke is an instrument of toil. The cross is a symbol of sacrifice. The yoke is a symbol of service.
The cross suggests blood. The yoke suggests sweat. To be truly committed to Jesus means we are ready for the yoke and the cross. And that's what so much in today's world we see.
People don't want to think of toil and service and sacrifice. And they don't want to think of that side of the commitment to Christ.
But Christ has made it clear that we have to take our yoke upon us that is yoke upon us. And I want to look at some different aspects of taking up our yoke.
[5:38] And the first one we're going to look at is submission. He says to us, take my yoke upon you. That would imply that we, of submission.

The Christian willingly submits to Christ as Lord and Master. And that's something that I just, I hope that our young people especially can truly, truly get this.
It was so, this was, in the setting I was brought up in, it was hard for me to get that when I truly surrender to Christ, that I want to, I willingly submit.
If I find myself not wanting to submit and rearing up, then I haven't truly surrendered to Christ. And that's where, for me, it was a lot of these things, anyway, that I had talked about it before, that I had to do.
But this is, a Christian will willingly submit to Christ as his Lord and Master, submission. in Jeremiah 10, and I'll turn it there real quick.
[6:50] He talks about, he talks about this, in verse 23, Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself.

It is not in a man that walketh to direct his steps. Jeremiah understood this, that a man left on his own, we cannot direct our steps.
We need to be in submission to Christ. Luke 22, Luke 22, verse 40, well, 42 is where I'm going to get to, but, I'm going to probably start reading a little earlier, about in 40.
And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Jesus, Jesus talking to his disciples, pray ye that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about his stones cast and kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if it, if thou art will, be willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And this was when he was about to be crucified. This was when Jesus, you know, his time was really short, coming up to being crucified at the cross.
[8:31] And what did he say? Here, Jesus is our perfect example in all these things. And here, submission, and there's going to be later on, we'll see other ways.

He's our perfect example. He said, you know, he asked God, the Father, God the Father, to, if it would be willing to remove this cup, but nevertheless, not thy will, but mine be done.
Can we be in that kind of submission to Christ, to Jesus? It just seems like so many people today, they want Christ, but then they want to, they want to like almost drag him around wherever they want to go.
And not to be in obedience and submission to Christ. Mike had been looking there, and James, I want to look here and just a little bit in James 4.
James 4, verse 7. Submit, therefore, to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
[9:37] We all, so often hear these people talking about, you know, that resisting the devil, or, or, you know, we're going to go out and us as Christians, you know, we're, we're going to really do something.

But what, what does the first part of the verse say? It says, submit yourselves to God. Unless we're in submission, and, and submitted to God, and, and yoked with Jesus, we can't resist the devil.
He, in the verse right before, talks about, he, says that, he, he, meaning God, giveth more grace. Wherefore, he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.
And, so we have to be in submission. We have to be in submission to Christ. If we find ourselves, and that's something that, that I've found so much over the years, you know, like, I, I find myself in failure, and the, the devil, uh, um, overcoming.
And, you know, you're, you're, you're questioning, like, what, what, what is wrong? And it's because I have come out of order, and in my submission to Christ, I have to go back to the cross, and, and, uh, be in submission to Christ again, because that is so important.
[10:49] Submit yourselves to God, um, and then we can have, um, we can have, uh, uh, we can have overcome the devil, but it's only through Christ, and our, uh, submission to Christ.

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Then, uh, another aspect that I want to look at, is, uh, that it would be obedience. Um, he says, in the verse there, um, he says, and learn of me, in the verses there in Matthew 11, he says, and learn of me, so that it's, it's obedient.
The yoke suggests submission to a master who must be obeyed, and this can be taken in two different ways. You can say, oh, you're, you'll be an authority, or whatever, this master must be obeyed.
But, if we look at it, on the right side, the right way we want to look at it, if I'm in a truly, submitted to Christ, and, and love God, I want to obey him.
It's for my good. He has my good at heart, and that's why, he must be obeyed. But, I have to understand it from that side.
[11:57] I have to understand it from the side of submission, and, and, and obedience in my heart, that, yes, he must be obeyed for me to follow, and to have victory.

But, it's not from the side that we, the world looks at it, that, well, you're just being, you know, religious, and being dominated, or however they want to say it.
But, we want to, we want to obey, the, the, the math, our master, which is Jesus, John, 14, John, 14, 15, if you love me, keep my commandments.
It's, it's so, so clear, it's, it's, if we love him, and we drop on down to verse 23, Jesus saith unto him, he was talking to Judas, if a man loved me, he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
Um, but, Jesus can't make his abode with us, if we're not obedient, if we're not in obedience. And, so often, that's where, so many, they, they find themselves empty, and can't understand, uh, why, they're, but they're living outside of, they don't want to be submitted, they don't want to take, take up the yoke, but, and then living outside of obedience, but he says, then, after, well, if we, if we love him, and we will keep his words, then my father, will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
[13:42] Um, 1 John, 1 John 2, and hereby do we know, that we love him, this verse, in verse 3, verse John 2, if we keep his commandments, he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoso keepeth his word, in him barely, is the love of God perfected, hereby we know, that we are in him, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and all, and all, and, and, and not obey, and not, and tell ourselves, and we might even trick some other people, but, into thinking that we do love God, and, and all, but, if we're not obeying him, if we're not in obedience to him, we're, we're just making ourselves, uh, out, uh, a liar, it, we have to, we have to live in obedience to Christ, and then, another aspect of this, and this is a, a very hard one for, for most of us,

I believe it is for me, is the part of service, he says, my burden is the light, but it gives the aspect of, of serving, of, of being of service, compared to the burden of sin, the yoke of the Lord is easy, and, we know that, well, Tony talked about that this morning, that was, uh, went right along with, that, it's, it's dark, it's, it's, um, there's just this emptiness, that, that goes with the, the yoke of sin, and it drag, keeps dragging, and dragging you down, and, part of the reason, that the yoke, of the Lord, of being yoked with Jesus, that his yoke is easy, is, he carries us, in the times, of trouble, if we can get that picture, in our mind, it's not that we're, yoked there, pulling this, a terrible burden, or whatever, but, he wants us to serve, to be serving, to be a servant, and, and obey him, and live in obedience, and submission, but then in the hard times,
Jesus carries us, he carries us through, and if we can, understand, and, and grasp, that part of it, is the, is the part of Jesus, carrying, and carrying us through, is part of what makes, the burden light, Christians are to be, ministers, and servants, not being self-centered, Hebrews, six, Hebrews, six, verse, 10, for God, is not unrighteous, to forget your works, and labor of love, which we have showed, toward his name, in that you have ministered, to the saints, and do minister, and we desire, that every one of you, do so, the same diligence, to the full assurance, and hope, until the end, these things, these ministering, these works, these things, that we do, of service, they are not, in themselves, to get us to heaven, our works, our things, service does not get us to heaven, but it's just, it's beautiful here, that he says, that God is not unrighteous, to forget, our works of labor,
God sees, when we truly, have that servant's heart, and to serve others, God sees, and knows that, Galatians 6, 2, bury one another's burdens, and so fulfill, the law of Christ, he's actually saying, in that, we fulfill, the law of Christ, that we bear, each other's burdens, and it's, in that, I care, about, when somebody else, has a burden, I, you know, I can't necessarily, take somebody's, burden like

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Jesus, can't take it, but that I care, that I try to, to walk with, and, and understand, I think that's a lot of times, where I go so wrong, in this thing of caring, bearing others' burdens, is trying to understand, I get my, preconceived notions, and whatever, I think we can go, a long way, in bearing each other's burdens, and trying to understand, each other, and, and, being caring, and compassionate,

Luke 22, we're starting, verse 24, and, and there was also, a strife among them, which, a one of them, would be counted, the greatest, this is the, the, the disciples, there, they were, you know, we think, back when I was a little boy, I thought of disciples, as perfect people, and, they did love God, but they, they had things, that they had, and here was, there was a strife among them, counted, who'd be the greatest, and he said unto them, the kings of the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority, upon them, are called benefactors, but ye shall not be so, but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that does serve, for whether it is, is it greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth, is it not he that sitteth at meat, and that is so true today, and as you see,

[19:30] I didn't read the last part of it, that is so true today, in today's world, that's what we see, I want to be served, I want to be the greater, the one that sits at meat, and serve, but what's the last part, of the verse he says, but I am among you, as he that serveth, Jesus is saying this, is he's our perfect example, of one that served, he poured his heart out, to serve others, and, but that is, our natural desire, I want to be, the one served, the one noticed, I don't want to, pour myself out, in our human nature, I don't want to pour myself out, to serve others, but here Jesus said, at the end of the verse, but I among you, I am among you, as he that serveth, so there Jesus was, is our perfect example, of a servant, of that servant heart, one that serves, and then, the last, aspect is,

I want to look at, our fellowship, he says, in the end there, he says, all you that labor, we're not alone, in, we're not alone, in Christ, but serving, alongside those, of light, precious faith, and, so that, we need that, we need, the fellowship, Mike talked about it, some of us, already this morning, we need that fellowship, with others, a yoke harnesses, two animals together, to pull a load, that neither could pull a load, in Galatians, well actually, I had, Galatians 6, 2, I already, had that, talked about that, but in bearing, one another's burdens, and then, in this thing, of fellowship, then too, of fellowshipping, together, 1 Corinthians 6, 14, we don't need, to turn it there, but he talks about, not being unequally yoked, and that's where,

I was talking about earlier, that we can't be, yoked to the world, and still, think that we're going, to be yoked to Christ, and, so we, we have to be, as a body, gathered together, to function, to fellowship together, we have to all, have that same, common desire, and goal, to be yoked with Christ, or, we won't be able, to fellowship together, as a, as a body, truly, fellowship together, as a body, 1 John, 1 John 1, I'm going to, start reading, up at verse 3, that we, that which we have seen, and heard, declare unto you, that ye also, may have fellowship, with us, and truly, our fellowship, is in the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ, so we can have fellowship, with the, God, and Christ, but, verse 7,

I want to skip down, to verse 7, and this is what, but if we walk, in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another, and the blood, of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses all sin, and that is just, such a beautiful picture, if we can get that picture, in our, in our minds, this morning, if we can all, together, strive, to walk in the light, as he is in the light, we can have fellowship, one with another, we can have, what Mike talked about, that beautiful fellowship, one with another, and the blood, of Christ, his Son, cleanses us, from all our sin, and, so that's just, what has, has been, going through, my mind, here recently, and, yeah, if we can, just as we're going, through the week, this week, that if we can, really, get that in our, our hearts, that, we truly, want to, submit to Christ, and, and, and live in obedience, and, also, that we can have, through that, then I believe, that, that servant heart, will come, and that, yeah, that we'll truly, want to, to serve, each other, and not, be, desiring to be, that one, that's sitting at meeting, and having others, serve us, and through this, then we can walk, in the light, and have that fellowship, one with another, thank you, that's welcome.

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