

WORSHIP NOTES

Sunday January 28, 2018 9:30am

The Mantle and Yoke of Christ

Guest Pastor Rev. Tyler Pettigrew will start by reviewing the story in 2 Kings of Elijah and Elisha. He will then compare that story to a narrative from his own life. Tyler will look at the two words "mantle" and "yoke" specifically, and draw a comparison between them and another garment that he will bring with him to worship. One of the main ideas he will ask the congregation to consider is, 'whose footsteps are you following?' and/or 'what kind of legacy or example do you want to leave?'

SONG---This song comes from Isaiah 64: 8. "But now, O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand." The Bible says that God is the Potter and we are the clay. When we are open to God's will in our lives, He molds, transforms, and sanctifies us as we walk with Him. When we come to the Potter, we need to surrender all to Him, all our imperfections and let Him be our Master. We need to let Him mold us and make us the vessel of honor that He wants us to be. For this to be accomplished, we need to have the knowledge of God's Word before He can start the process of molding us. As the potter places a piece of clay on a wheel he needs water in order to make it pliable and soft enough for him to be able to use it. Jesus is our Living Water and the Bible tells us "... that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." – Ephesians 5:26-27

Consequently, the very first step we have to take, if we really want God to mold and shape us into the kind of person He wants us to become, is to spend time in the Word so that we will become pliable and shapeable. The next step is that the piece of clay needs to be properly centered on the wheel. The reason for this is if a lump of clay is not properly centered on the wheel, it will eventually tear apart before the potter can finish the process. In the same way we have to be properly centered in Jesus Christ before God can start to mold and shape us. Being centered in Jesus is to have our life fully surrendered to Him where He is in full control. Jesus has to become both Lord and Savior in our life.

Just like the potter cannot mold the piece of clay into the piece of pottery that he is trying to make unless it is perfectly centered on the wheel, in the same way the Lord cannot begin to properly work with us unless we are perfectly centered in Him in full surrender. If we try to live our lives without Jesus leading and guiding the way, our lives will eventually fall apart and we will never reach and fulfill the divine destiny to which God has called us. This is why Jesus tells us in His Word that without Him we can do absolutely nothing: "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" – John 15:5. God also tells us that if we try to build our own houses without His direct guidance, that we will end up laboring "in vain" if we try to do it all through our own efforts. "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain." – Psalm 127:1

Once the lump of clay has enough water and is centered on the wheel, then the actual molding process begins. The wheel starts spinning and the potter's hand presses down on the top of the clay to create an opening and moves his hands deep inside the middle of the clay. He continues by constantly shaping it and molding it to result in the vessel he desires it to be. In the same way, God's own hand literally goes down deep into our soul and spirit where the sanctification work is actually done, molding and transforming us into the saints He wants us to be. Just as the piece of clay needs to fully trust the potter, in the same way we need to fully trust the Lord to mold, shape, and transform our lives. The clay is totally under His control. It has to be one hundred percent yielded to Him. The clay must yield to the potter's hand if it is to become something useful. For this reason, we need to yield to God by surrendering ourselves completely.

When we are in the Potter's hands, feeling His pressures, feeling the molding of His fingers, we can relax and trust Him, for we know that this Potter has suffered with us and knows how we feel, but is determined to make us into a vessel useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work: "In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work." – 2 Timothy 2:20-21

If we allow God to use His skill and His power to mold us into the people, and into the character that He wants us to be, we should all say along with Isaiah, "O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand."

Beautiful Lord, wonderful Savior, I know for sure, all of my days are held in your hands, crafted into your perfect plan. You gently call me, into your presence guiding me by, your Holy Spirit. Teach me dear Lord to live all of my life through your eyes. I'm captured by, your holy calling. Set me apart I know you're drawing me to yourself, lead me Lord I pray. Take me, mold me, use me, fill me. I give my life to the Potter's hands. Hold me, guide me, lead me, walk beside me. I give my life to the Potter's hand, the Potter's hand. You gently call me, into your presence guiding me by, your Holy Spirit. Teach me dear Lord to live all of my life through your eyes. I'm captured by, your holy calling. Set me apart I know you're drawing me to yourself, lead me Lord I pray. Take me, mold me, use me, fill me. I give my life to the Potter's hands. Call me, guide me, lead me, walk beside me. I give my life to the Potter's hand, the Potter's hand, the Potter's hand.

CALL TO WORSHIP Jesus' presence is with us this morning in worship as two or more are gathered in his name. He invites us to "Come unto him" and in doing so, (*as Phillips Brooks writes*) Jesus invites us to come out of the strife and doubt and struggle of what is at the moment where we stand into that which was and is and is to be---the eternal, the essential, the absolute.

Leader: If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest.

Take the yoke I give you. Put it on your shoulders and learn from me. I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest. This yoke is easy to bear, and this burden is light.

People: Christ calls us to come to worship to rest from the things that are troubling us, to learn what Christ can teach of life, to realize what we can offer to others and so to return into the world to serve. Let us worship God!

HYMN Our opening hymn “We Come, O Christ, to You” is a hymn of praise to Jesus Christ (based on John 14:6-“Jesus answered-I am the way and the truth and the life.”) who is the source of our life (stanza 1), the Way (stanza 2), the Truth (stanza 3), the Life (stanza 4) and the one we worship as Savior and King (stanza 5).

v1

**We come, O Christ, to you, true Son of God and man,
by whom all things consist, in whom all life began.
In you alone we live and move and have our being in your love.**

v2

**You are the way to God, your blood our ransom paid;
in you we face our Judge and Maker unafraid.
Before the throne absolved we stand; your love has met your law's demand.**

v3

**You are the living truth; all wisdom dwells in you,
the source of every skill, the one eternal True!
O great I AM! in you we rest, sure answer to our every quest.**

v4

**You only are true life to know you is to live
the more abundant life that earth can never give.
O risen Lord! we live in you: in us each day your life renew!**

v5

**We worship you, Lord Christ, our Savior and our King;
to you our youth and strength adoringly we bring:
so fill our hearts that all may view your life in us and turn to you!**

CONFESSION: This call to confession is based on teaching of Jesus from John Chapters 14 and 15. In chapter 14 Jesus states: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” How audacious! How gracious! How inviting! Jesus alone is the Son of Man, lifted up upon the cross for our salvation. He alone has taken our sin upon himself so that we might live in right relationship with God. No other way leads to the throne of grace. No other truth speaks as the Word of God. In chapter 15 Jesus states: “I am the true vine.” We know many other “vines” contend for our allegiance. But they promise what they cannot deliver. “Remain in me” says my job, “and you will find true success.” “Make us top priority” say my family “and you will find unmatched love.” “Stick with me,” says my religious tradition “and you will enjoy the deepest spiritual experiences.” All of these “vines” even those created for our good, cannot compete with JESUS. IN Jesus alone we find our rightful place in the world. Through Jesus strength alone will our brief lives count for eternity.

Leader: Lord, you said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

People: Forgive us our lukewarm love and our disobedience.

Leader: Lord, you said, "You may ask for anything in my name."

People: Forgive us when we think we need to solve our own problems.

Leader: Lord, you said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

People: We confess that our lives are often consumed by worry and anxiety.

Leader: Lord, you said, "If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."

People: Forgive us our barren lives, Lord.

Leader: Lord, you said, "You must testify, for you have been with me."

People: We confess, Lord, that we have been too often silent.

Leader: Lord, you said, "Love each other as I have loved you."

People: In this and in so many other ways, we confess our failures and shortcomings.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON This assurance of pardon is based on Matthew 11:28-30. A yoke is a heavy wooden harness that fits onto one or more oxen, attached to a piece of equipment the oxen are to pull. When an ox wears a yoke, it means that the animal is going to have a long day of hard work. The "heavy yoke" Jesus mentioned here could mean the burden of sin, the burden of the law, government oppression, weariness in the search for God. With Jesus yoked to us, he frees us from these burdens. The rest Jesus promises is peace with God!

Leader: Jesus said: Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 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.

People: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Glory to God! Amen!

SCRIPTURE/SERMON: Read 2 Kings 2:1-14 and Matthew 11:28-30. Elisha asked for a double share of Elijah's prophetic power. He was asking to be Elijah's heir, or successor, the one who would continue Elijah's work as leader of the prophets. His request was a bold one, but God granted it. Why? Perhaps because Elisha's motives were pure. His main goal was not to be better or more powerful than Elijah, but to accomplish more for God. When we ask God for great power or ability, we need to examine our desires and get rid of any selfishness we find.

FINAL HYMN: From John 12:26 *I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.* Jesus has already done his part! He IS shining! What can we do as we leave worship today to be sure WE are shining with Jesus love? Here are some thoughts from *Billy Graham: What does it mean to shine? Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.* —*Philippians 2:14-16, ESV (emphasis added)*

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is called "the true light, which gives light to everyone" (John 1:9). Throughout the New Testament, the followers of Jesus are called to be lights in the darkness. So,

what does it mean to shine? It means: **Being counter-cultural.** We live in a dark world, full of lies, hate and confusion. But God's Word tells us to "cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12). While others are chasing after physical pleasures and selfish gain, we're commanded to live a different way—to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Romans 13:14). **Putting yourself out there.** Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others" (Matthew 5:16a). He explained that no one lights a lamp just to hide it under a basket. A lamp is meant to be placed on a stand to give light to everything around it. Whether you're timid or outgoing, you're called to be a light to the people around you. That's only possible if you're taking time to interact with people and cultivate relationships. Are you the shy type? Here's some guidance. **Always pointing back to the light source.** When Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others," that wasn't the whole sentence. He went on to give the reason why it's important to shine: "so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16b). Our goal should never be to bring recognition to ourselves, but to bring glory to God. There's a fine line between being a light and putting on a show to get attention. It's a matter of the heart.

Vs1

Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,
set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me,
Shine, Jesus, shine fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word Lord, and let there be light.

Vs3

As we gaze on your kingly brightness, so our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me.
Shine, Jesus, shine fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word Lord, and let there be light.

SEE YOU IN WORSHIP ON SUNDAY!