

Ease the Yoke

2020-08-02 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on
Hosea 11:1-4

Welcome

- Welcome to Church in the Park: Week 5!
- Let's connect with God and with one another this morning.
- Hoodie weather and the mountains.
- Friday morning at Paramour Coffee
- Daily Psalm reading: Psalm 65 and abundance
- Let's sing together...and while we do, let's remember our beloved Josh Yarrow!

I'll Fly Away

Send Sprouts to join Miss Elisha.

Everyone needs a notepad and pen.

What are the burdens you bear today? Just list them out on one of these notepads.

List all the things you think you should do to be more spiritual. Or to develop your relationship with God.

Where do you hold tension in your body?

Pray as you go contemplative prayer app

- I've been enjoying a contemplative prayer app called *Pray as you go*. I've shared it with some of you before. On July 9th the day's passage was one I want to share with you this morning, Hosea 11:1-4.

Does everyone have a Bible? We have free ones that you are welcome to.

Hosea—northern prophet

- Probably from Samaria, whose prophetic activity was from 758-722 BC
- Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC
- Prophets did predict future events but more than that they communicated what has always been on God's heart in creative ways. They are those called by God to call God's people back to Him. This was a very difficult job back then and there. And it's a difficult job here and now to call people back to their Creator.
- Hosea was instructed to marry a prostitute and love her no matter what she did...and this was to serve as a visual aid to help us understand God's great love for us.
- Israel crossed the Red Sea 500-700 years earlier.

Hosea 11

¹ When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Have you experienced God as your Father?

Have you ever struggled to love God as your Father?

- If so, you're in good company.

God called His people out of slavery in Egypt.

*Father, help us to experience You as our loving Father.
Amen.*

Hosea 11:1 ² The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals (fertility god) and burning offerings to idols (anything we put in place of God).

- Human nature is very much unlike the rest of the animal kingdom. Animals generally do what they were designed to do.
- Humans, however, generally do exactly the opposite of what they were designed to do.
- Barna—*One in Three Practicing Christians Has Stopped Attending Church During COVID-19*
- "Those No Longer Attending Church Bear More Emotional Burdens"
- This pandemic has not produced an increase in spiritual interest or connectivity...like I was hoping and praying it would.

- However, look around you... We could be growing as a church.

In what ways have you gone away from God? Or stayed away from God?

- BTW, who else was called out of Egypt later on in the New Testament? The one who was the Son of God who never went away...
- If you are struggling to respond to God's call in your life...then look to Jesus. He will help you.

Father, help us respond to You when You call us. Amen.

³ Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them.

- Ephraim was one of Joseph's sons in Egypt and represents the northern tribes of Israel here in this passage.
- One of the things we lament due to COVID is not seeing the process of our babies learning to walk.

Can you see God's presence in your life...even in difficult times?

Can you see Him trying to help you learn to walk?

Can you feel Him trying to heal you?

Do you still feel like a child before your heavenly Father?

Father, help us see Your teaching and healing presence in our lives. Amen.

Now God's word to you through the prophet Hosea shifts from speaking to you as a child of God to speaking to you as a beast of animal, as a work animal. We're often depicted as sheep...but here we're depicted as oxen...who bear a yoke. That's another theme through Scripture, humanity, the pinnacle of creation as we talked about last week, becoming beastly and not living up to God's vision for humanity...but nevertheless...listen to the kindness and patience of God to you and to me... Are you ready?

⁴ I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them.

- So often when God is trying to lead us we're resistant. But His cords of leadership, where He Himself is guiding and directing you is always to green pastures and still waters.
- God goes from treating as a work animal to treating us as a beloved pet.

Look at your list of burdens.

- Ask God what burdens He wants to help ease today.
- **Psalm 38:4** For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.
- **Psalm 55:22** Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

- **Psalm 81:6** I relieved your shoulder of the burden; your hands were freed from the basket.
- **1 Peter 5:7** ...casting all your anxieties/burdens on him, because he cares for you.
- **Galatians 5:1** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.
- **Matthew 11:28-30** 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."

Look at the list of spiritual activities you think will help your relationship with God.

- Ask God how He wants to connect with you these next days, weeks, and months.

We want our church to be used by your heavenly Father to ease the yoke on your jaw in this season!

- When you think about church, when you think about our church, think how can this group of people help ease the yoke on my jaw?
- As we head into the fall of 2020 together, what's my role and your role in the life of our church.

What's my role as Lead Pastor?

- Religious leaders throughout history have heaped burdens up on the shoulders of those they lead.
- King Solomon—King Solomon increased the weight of the yoke. The old guys said, "Lighten the yoke that your father put on us." The young guys said to say, "My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs." See 1 Kings 12 and 2 Chronicles 10. 1 Kings 12:11 & 14 "And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy **yoke**, I will add to your **yoke**. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions."
- The Scribes and Pharisees—**Matthew 23:1-4** Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ² "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, ³ so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. ⁴ They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.
- Some of the Apostles and elders in the early church—**Acts 15:10** Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?
- Many of our stories in the church are marked by leaders placing heavy burdens on our shoulders that may not be intended by God to be there.
- I don't want to be that type of religious leader. I want to be an undershepherd, under the leadership

of the Good Shepherd, Jesus, who helps ease burdens and helps people connect with Jesus.

- **Isaiah 50:4a** The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.
- Jesus' words to Peter, "Feed my sheep!"
- **Colossians 1:28-29** For this I toil/strive... struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. To present each person in our church as mature in Christ.
- This isn't just my role. It's also the role of all leaders at Tallgrass Church and actually all of our role together, to build up the body of Christ together.

What's your role?

- **Psalm 46:10a** Cease striving, and know that I am God.

Strive

- To connect with God—**Luke 13:24** Strive to enter through the narrow door...
- In prayer—**Romans 15:30** ...strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf...
- Training for godliness—**1 Timothy 4:7b-8, 10**
^{7b} Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ¹⁰ For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

- To build up the church—**1 Corinthians 14:12**
...strive to excel in building up the church.
- To enter rest—**Hebrews 4:11** Let us therefore strive to enter that rest...

What's our church plan for the fall?

- Fall 2020 Vision for Community
- LIFE Group Vision!!!
- Who remembers what L.I.F.E. stands for? Shout it out!
- Central Gathering at the Park
 - People *need* a place to connect in person safely this fall. Let's be that place, church family. Invite people into *this*.
- Men's and Women's groups alternating on Tuesday nights starting in September
- Wednesday night LIFE Group with focus on Fellowship and Extending life to others
 - Fun for anyone and everyone!
 - Place for our kids to connect
 - Place to bring new people
 - What ideas do you have? Please let me know or drop them in the jar!
- 24-Hour Prayer the first Monday of the month
- Tuesday morning prayer each Tuesday
 - Drop prayer requests in the jar
 - Send them to me
 - Get your prayer requests before the Creator....somehow!

- Right Now Media is a resource available to you 24-7. Give us your email address and we'll invite you to it.
- Connect with one another.
- You're in need of constant communication with your heavenly Father.
- Next week Dave Geldart will preach on finding our rest in Christ.
- Have your burdens been lightened a little?
- Has your body eased up some this morning?

'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

How Great Thou Art

Pray

Chopping Block:

Put something like this on our Facebook Live Post:

TALLGRASS CHURCH CENTRAL GATHERING FOR
AUGUST 2, 2020

Welcome to Church in the Park and Online! Because God first loved us, we exist to love God and love our neighbors! Thanks for joining us this morning!

Please LIKE this post or text your name to 785-341-9863 to sign in.

You can help support our ministry by making a donation: tallgrass.church/give

Lots more on our website at tallgrass.church!

Passages:

- **Hosea 11:5-12**

⁵ They shall not return to the land of Egypt,
but Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.

⁶ The sword shall rage against their cities,
consume the bars of their gates,
and devour them because of their own counsels.

⁷ My people are bent on turning away from me,
and though they call out to the Most High,
he shall not raise them up at all.

⁸ How can I give you up, O Ephraim?

How can I hand you over, O Israel?

How can I make you like Admah?

How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

My heart recoils within me;

my compassion grows warm and tender.

⁹ I will not execute my burning anger;

I will not again destroy Ephraim;

for I am God and not a man,

the Holy One in your midst,

and I will not come in wrath.

¹⁰ They shall go after the LORD;

he will roar like a lion;

when he roars,

his children shall come trembling from the west;

¹¹ they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt,

and like doves from the land of Assyria,

and I will return them to their homes, declares

the LORD.

¹² Ephraim has surrounded me with lies,

and the house of Israel with deceit,

but Judah still walks with God

and is faithful to the Holy One.

- Yoke

- Jesus—Matthew 11:28-30; Luke 13:10-17; 14:5

- Isaiah 9:4; 10:27; 14:25; 47:6 (Chaldeans made the yoke exceedingly heavy on God's people); 58:6, 9 (the purpose of fasting is to undo the straps of the yoke, to break every yoke)

- Jeremiah 2:20; 5:5; 27:2, 8, 11, 12; 28:2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14; 30:8 (And it shall come to pass in that day,

declares the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off your neck...)

- Lamentations 3:27
- Ezekiel 30:18; 34:27
- Hosea 10:11; 11:4
- Nahum 1:13
- Matthew 11:29-30
- 2 Corinthians 6:14a Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.
- 1 Timothy 6:1
- Burden
 - Isaiah 9:4; 10:27
 - Matthew 11:30; 23:4 (Luke 11:46)
 - Acts 15:28
 - 2 Corinthians 1:8; 5:4; 8:13; 11:9; 12:13-16
 - Galatians 6:2
 - 1 Thessalonians 2:9
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:8
 - 1 Timothy 5:16
 - 2 Timothy 3:6
 - 1 John 5:3
 - Revelation 2:24