

Matthew 11:16-19, 25 - 30

Gospel Reflection

In today's reading Jesus speaks of the way he and John the Baptist were received by the people of his generation, particularly the religious authorities. John is judged as being possessed by a demon for not eating and drinking. Jesus is judged as a glutton for doing the opposite. In both cases they are judged by the people of that generation for not conforming to what they believe is the right way to observe Jewish religious customs. By doing this they miss the good news that John was sent to herald and what Jesus was sent to proclaim.

Jesus goes on to call everyone to come to him, all that are carrying heavy burdens, and he will give us rest from them. To lay our burdens upon him and take up his yoke. And what is his yoke? To obey his commandments and to follow him.

Some may think that is a heavy burden. To the people of his generation that judged Jesus and John the burden of conforming to the laws of God was heavy as they tried to conform to the minutest details of the 600+ commandments under the Levitical laws while failing to see the bigger picture. There is really only one commandment that we need to follow, the command to love.

Love God and love one another. And more than this, love one another as Christ loves us. Upon this command hang all of the laws and the prophets. When you do just this one thing, obey this one commandment, all of the rest will naturally fall into place. By following this one commandment you become right with God and live in harmony with your fellow persons and help to heal the brokenness of this world. By following this one commandment you don't carry the burdens that come with the judgement of others and yourself. You no longer have the burdens that are created when you lose sight of this and the problems that can come from mistreating others due to your blindness caused by getting caught up in the minutiae of the laws instead of focusing on the most important part. For you see, Jesus' yoke really is easy and his burden really is light.

Michael Brown