

“My brother and I have long held the practice of meeting regularly to share and meditate on the Word of God. To avoid distractions, we often leave busy places and go somewhere quiet where we can focus on Scripture and encourage each other in our Christian journey.

One afternoon around 7 o'clock, as we walked and discussed spiritual matters, we noticed three donkeys on the road ahead not far from us tied together and pulling a cart loaded with grass. A man was guiding them. What caught our attention was that there were three donkeys pulling the cart, when usually only two are used for such a load.

As we approached to get a better look, the donkey in the middle suddenly disappeared, leaving only two donkeys pulling the cart. We were puzzled by this. Then, when they reached a ditch that was difficult to cross because of the heavy load, the man struck the donkeys with a stick to encourage them. Despite the burden, they managed to get the cart across and continued on their way.

This prompted us to ask: What had we really seen? Was it merely

animals, or was there a deeper spiritual truth?

Matthew 18:20 (NIV) states:

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

This verse emphasizes the real presence of Jesus when believers come together in His name. The two donkeys symbolize us my brother and me while the third donkey in the middle represents the Lord Jesus Himself.

The load the donkeys carried symbolizes God’s law, which is heavy and challenging to bear alone. When two or more believers come together, God binds them with His yoke (Greek: *zugos*), a symbol of partnership and shared burden (see Matthew 11:29). Jesus is in the middle to help carry this load, making obedience to God’s commands lighter and more manageable.

Jesus’ invitation in Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV) beautifully echoes this:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, 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.”

Here, Jesus contrasts the heavy yoke of legalistic religious practices with His gentle, empowering yoke, highlighting the relational and supportive nature of discipleship under Him.

*To live a life counter to worldly values is indeed the burden of Christ, which He places upon His followers (Galatians 6:14). This burden is often misunderstood by outsiders as restrictive or heavy, but in reality, it is liberating and light because Christ is with us.*

*Ministry and service to God carry their own burdens, yet Christ empowers us, especially when we work together (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). This explains why Jesus sent out His disciples two by two (Mark 6:7), emphasizing the importance of companionship and mutual support in spiritual work.*

Therefore, brothers and sisters, it is vital to have companions who share your faith. When two or three gather in Jesus' name, His promise is fulfilled; He is there among them. This spiritual unity forms a bond, a yoke of grace and strength, making it easier to live according to God's commands than when you are alone.

Gathering with fellow believers invites a unique presence of God. Comfort, encouragement, protection, sharing, and revelation flow from such fellowship (Hebrews 10:24-25). This also diminishes the enemy's power to tempt us because we have others standing with us (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV) states:

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:

If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

May the Lord richly bless you.”

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