Nobody Said It Would Be Easy

Introduction: Whenever someone is struggling to manage or cope with a matter that they may have underestimated its difficulty...we may say or hear...“Nobody said it would be easy.” Can this be the case with living the Christian life? I think so...otherwise, why preach this sermon. **Nobody said being a Christian would be easy.**

But someone might be thinking... “But, Didn’t Christ say His yoke is easy and His burden light?” Yes, He did. Matthew 11:28-30 - *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*” — But, notice it is still a yoke around your neck...and it is still a burden, both of which we are to TAKE UP! If we are thinking that being a Christian involves no burden or yoke, whatsoever, think again. John says in I John 5:3 that God’s commandments are not burdensome or grievous, but they are commandments that may not always be easy, if by easy we mean they are a piece of cake. Or if by easy, we think that as a Christian all my struggles disappear.

1. **Christians are not immune to the hardships generally in the world.** - Romans 8:22-23...*For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* — Notice, the whole world is groaning, but so are Christians. Groaning...that doesn’t sound easy. Righteous folks suffer, too. Job once said, "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.” That is a super righteous man saying that. So do not think that turning your life
over to God removes all tribulations, all hardships, all struggles? Nobody said it would be that easy...and that includes God.

And may I admonish right here and now, something said about this in verse 24? This groaning life we live on earth is for our good...and so we ought to view it that way. God has made the world to groan on purpose in hope that it will help us hope...for if we are going to be saved, it will only be IF we hope for something better in the world to come and not be in love with this world. Amen?

2. There are even struggles with being righteous. - Remember what Jesus once said...”If they have hated me, they will hate you.” Hate? Hate?! I don’t need that kind of grief. But, friend, that is what He said. Be ready for that. — On another occasion He said...”I came to bring a sword...and a man’s foes will be those of his own household.” This due to one following Jesus. Family will turn against you...”But, I don’t need that!” But, friend, Jesus said, “if you love father or mother more than me you are not worthy of me. Take up your cross and follow me.” Cross? CROSS!? I didn’t sign up for cross bearing. Friend, this is a part of it. Nobody said it would be easy.

Just listen to these verses in the Bible...

Acts 14:21-22...When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Hebrews 12:3-6...Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard
lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. — You see, nobody said it would be easy. The Bible does not say the Christian life will be a breeze.

**Two Take Homes** - What am I trying to say in all this? To those who have yet to come to Jesus and surrender their lives to His will I say...**count the cost.**

Luke 14:26-33...*If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish. Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.*

Being a Christian is going to cost you something. Being a Christian MUST cost you something. That will not always be easy. The ones He mentions here...A diminished family loyalty - A denial of your own life or self - A willingness to bear a cross for Jesus - A willingness to follow Jesus. And there are others mentioned elsewhere in Scripture...ceasing all sin - putting on holiness - possible loss of worldly wealth, prestige or honor - faithfulness unto death, sometimes violently.
Now, I can imagine some of you thinking, “Whit, I don’t mean to tell you what or how to preach, but this approach you are using is not the best way to win people to Christ. You are going to scare people off. Well, if it were not for Jesus, I might say you are onto something. But, Jesus said, **count the cost**...and so I say, **count the cost**.

And may I add my own two cents though...Many things in life worth having come at great expense, effort, cost, hardship, etc. Education, health and fitness, income, business success, professions, etc. But, we don’t shrink back from the struggle. No. We are DOWN for the struggle. Amen? For the reward makes the effort all worth it. And so why not multiplied more so the reward of eternal life...though it is not easy, it is worth it all and then some, the discomfort some aspects of it might be along the way. Amen? Going to heaven is so worth it.

Second take home...To the Christian I say...**GET REAL**! If you were under the impression that being a Christian is a way to avoid all pain and sorrow, get real. If you thought it would put you on easy street to heaven, get real. If you thought it would be a rose garden...get real. Compared to the yokes and burdens of sin and the world, it is much to be preferred...it is a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light...but life with no troubles? Ain’t gonna happen. And it was never meant to be. God has made a time and purpose for everything under heaven and that includes some not-so-pleasant things.

And so, my Christians brothers and sisters, let me say this...let us not seek to water down our Christian life into one that is easy. Sure, what the Lord has invited us to take up is easy and light, and it is not grievous, if we have our hearts in it, but it is a yoke and burden nonetheless and let us make certain it is embraced that way. It is an offer from Jesus to better cope with all the hardships of life, and to escape the hardships of sin, and to bring us safely home to God in heaven one day, but it won’t be easy.
**Conclusion:** Nobody said it would be easy. But, easy is not always best. Amen?

* Let us pray.