

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Hard Kicking

(Jerry Fite)

Young oxen placed under the yoke often react by kicking, resisting the yoke.

A farmer used a single stick with a sharp end or a set of fixed spikes on his plough to prick the back legs of the rebelling ox or oxen. When the ox or oxen kicked backward they would kick against the sharp points feeling the sting. Through avoidance of pain, the ox or oxen would learn the hard way to plow ahead under the yoke.

Jesus, using this common experience, responded to Saul saying, “*Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad*” (Acts 26:14). Saul was kicking against or resisting the way of the Lord.

A great lesson in life is to learn that sin in the end is a hard way to go. At first sin is pleasurable (Hebrews 11:25) but its end is spiritual death (Romans 6:23, James 1:15). We may ignore the way of sin, but in the end we know the absolute truth: “*For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*” (Galatians 6:7). Sowing to the flesh will al-

ways reap corruption. But what does spiritual corruption and death feel like?

A person who satisfies his flesh with fornication, alcohol, and other drugs, often feels the consequent pain of lost friendships, an unhealthy body, self loathing and public disrespect. Feeling empty, alone, out of control and shame is what corruption and spiritual death feels like in this life. Missing the kingdom of heaven and experiencing Hell will be a “*weeping and gnashing your teeth*” feeling (I Corinthians 6:9, Matthew 8:9-10).

Sin in the end always hurts. Therefore kicking against God’s law in rebellion is hard. “*Good understanding giveth favor; But the way of the transgressor is hard*” (Proverbs 13:15). When we live according to God’s law, we will experience the favor of God and man (Luke 2:52). Throughout history, many a murderous dictator has experienced the hard way of the transgressor in his own violent death. Many a habitual liar has experienced the hard way of the transgressor in

having to remember the details of his or her fabrication, and to whom the lie has been told. Forcing crooked stories to be straight against the gravity of truth is a hard way to live. Feeling the guilt of sin in our conscience when we rebel against the acknowledged truth of God is not an “easy” feeling. It is hard. Such is the way of the transgressor.

But Paul, in persecuting the Lord by imprisoning and killing Christians, was not rebelling against his conscience. He thought he was serving God (Acts 23:1, 26:9). Yet, Jesus applies the imagery of kicking against the goad to him. Jesus states as fact to Saul that it was hard for him as he kicked against the goad. How was persecuting Christians making it hard for a sincere Saul?

Observing Christians suffering willingly unto death for the truth of the gospel of Christ cannot help impress upon Paul that maybe their way was the way of truth. Embracing Christ as the true way, Paul quit kicking against the goad and willingly plowed ahead under Jesus’ yoke.