

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Boulevard
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, Senior Pastor

“Bear One Another’s Burdens...”

Date: January 2006

OPENING PRAYER:

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Galatians 6: 2.

“Bear ye on another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (King James Version).

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (New King James Version).

“Carry one another’s burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

“You obey the law of Christ when you offer each other a helping hand.” (Contemporary English Version)

“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.” (New American Standard Bible)

“Share each other’s troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ.” (New Living Translation)

“Bear (endure, carry) one another’s burdens and troublesome moral faults, and in this way fulfill and observe perfectly the law of Christ (the Messiah) and complete what is lacking [in your obedience to it].” (Amplified Bible).

GOAL: To understand and practice burden bearing in Christian love

OBJECTIVES:

1. Recognize burden bearing as a Christian responsibility to fellow believers
2. Discuss the difference between the two types of burden bearing (Galatians 6:2, 6:5)
3. To discover and understand practical ways to help bear one another’s burdens

ESSENTIAL INSIGHT/QUESTIONS:

“Roll thy burden upon the Lord”; you have been bearing it all. Deliberately put one end on the shoulders of God. “The government shall be upon His shoulder.” Commit to God

“that He hath given thee.” Do not fling it off, but put it over onto Him and yourself with it, and the burden is lightened by the sense of companionship. Never disassociate yourself from the burden.

Chambers, Oswald, *My Utmost for His Highest*

LESSON INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

Time: About 48 A.D. **Place:** Syria, Antioch

This letter to the churches of Galatia is one of Paul’s thirteen Epistles written in the New Testament. These churches were established during his first missionary journey. Galatia is now modern-day Turkey. The book of Galatians has been called the “Christian Declaration of Independence: ¹

The primary purpose of this epistle is to defend the doctrine of **Justification by Faith** and the gospel of **Grace**. When this letter was penned, the Judaizers or Legalizers were undermining Christianity by teaching the observation of the Mosaic Law and ceremonial rituals (e.g. the Sabbath, circumcision, festival days) as a requirement for salvation. Paul stressed that believers receive the **Free Grace of God** through the death of His Son Jesus Christ and that they are justified and redeemed by His finished work.

The scripture Galatians 6:2: “Bear One Another’s Burden” and so fulfill the law of Christ, *which is love*. We as believers should be demonstrators of God’s love to a brother or sister who is under a very heavy load (difficulties, problems, tribulations. etc.). In doing this, we exemplify the love which is the fulfillment of the royal law (James 2:8 – “Love your neighbor as yourself”).

DEFINITIONS:

Bear: to support, *to bear weight*; to sustain; to carry
Webster’s Dictionary

Bear, Bastazo, signifies to support as a burden, of sufferings borne on behalf of others
Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary

Bear, bastazo, 941, *bas-tad'-zo*; perhaps remotely a derivative from the base of the Greek 939 (basis) (through the idea of *removal*); to *lift*, literal or figurative (*endure, declare, sustain, receive, etc.*): - bear, carry, take up.
Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance

Burden, Baros, denotes a weight, anything pressing on one spiritually, a burden of a transgressor
Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary

¹ Unger’s Bible Dictionary

Burden, baros, 922, *bar'-os*; probably from the same as Greek 939 (basis) (through the notion of *going* down; compare Greek 899 (bathos)); *weight*; in the N.T. only figurative a *load, abundance, authority* :- burden (-some), weight. This word denotes (1) á weight, anything pressing on one physically," Mt. 20:12, or (2) "that makes a demand on one's resources," whether (2a) material, I Th. 2:6 (to be burdensome), or (2b) spiritual, Gal. 6:2; Rev. 2:24, or © religious, Acts 15:28.
Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

Burden, Phortion, 5413, something carried, ones own responsibility, of that which will be the result, at the Judgment-Seat of Christ, of each believer's work, Gal. 6:5
Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary

The Law of Christ is love. Jesus said "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thus shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)

LESSON CONTENT (Input and Modeling): OUTLINE:

I. Identifying the Burdens

The scriptural passage, Galatians 6:2, exhorts us to bear one another's burdens. The context has special reference to the heavy and oppressive weight of temptation and spiritual failure. The law of Christ requires us to love one another rather than condemn, criticize, or judge another. This, Paul stated, fulfills (anapleroo, "to fill up, fill up completely") the law of Christ, that is, the principle of love (Galatians 5:14; John 13:34).

In Galatians 6:1, we find that the "spiritual" Christians are to do the work of restoring; "*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of gentleness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted*". The word trespass is translated: "a side-slip" in reference to a stumble, a blunder, or fall. In this context, the word "**burdens**" in Galatians 6:2, **represents spiritual weaknesses** that cause a fall.² Galatians 5:19-20 lists certain works of the flesh or sins that can cause a fall; adultery, fornication, idolatry, hatred, jealousies, drunkenness, wrath, envy, etc.

Paul stated that the one who is caught in sin is to be restored by "spiritual" Christians or mature, discerning, humble believers. The word restore is translated to mean "repair, mend, refurbish" with the idea of bringing something damaged back to its former condition. Offering encouragement, exhortation, developing a friendship, or helping our brother/sister to be accountable are some ways that we can help them bear their burdens.³

Pertaining to burdens associated with the consequences of sin, David graphically described his plight in Psalms 38:4; "*For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a*

² MacArthur, John F., *The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness*, Crossway Books, 1998, 158

³ MacArthur, John F., *The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness*, Crossway Books, 1998, 157- 158

heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness". The deep pain and agony of the chastening can only be borne by the individual who committed the sin, but we can encourage repentance for believers in this state and redirect them to the Word and the ways of the Lord. We can remind them of God's love for them and encourage them with our own experience in overcoming a similar weakness. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Jesus bore our sins, grief, and sorrows "*Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.*" (Isaiah 53:4-5) He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. (Matthew 8:17) He took on the penalty for our sin debt. As He traveled to Golgotha, Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26, Matt. 27:32) helped to bear the physical burden of His cross.

All believers can become involved in bearing burdens through prayers and encouragement. The Spirit-led believer empathizes with others, is sensitive to their situation, identifies with their burden, and seeks ways to effectively minister to them.

As growing Christians become more aware of their sin nature; they need the prayers and support of their brethren. They should not receive cold and heartless treatment. This would not please the Savior. Jesus, in bearing our sins and infirmities, did not regard us this way.

Burdens or weights can take many forms. Even a blessing can be a burden because of the responsibility that comes with it. Some burdens may be emotional, such as marital problems, a problem child, criticism, and depression. There are some who carry heavy burdens as a result of crimes against them such as assault, abuse, or molestation. Burdens may be physical, (sickness), social, (rejection), financial (debt), spiritual, (trials, persecutions), educational, (tests, papers, homework), material (adequate housing), or obligations (care of a relative, work assignments), and so on. Acts of transgressions can bring on some of these burdens. The weight of them can vary in difficulty, stressfulness, or heaviness. Loads of this type affect young and old alike and require the help of another in bearing them.

At some time or another, every believer will experience some type of burden. Some burdens may be ongoing while others are fleeting. The emotional effects of burdens can produce stress and anxiety heavy enough to cause one's heart to break. Some Christians may be unable to think or see clearly, and others may feel that they can barely make it. The burden can be so heavy, stressful, or agonizing, until one feels faint and barely able to stand under the weight of it all. This is why we need to identify with one another and offer spiritual support, to provide wise counsel, and strength to stand.

In contrast, Galatians 6:5 speaks of each one bearing his own load. This is not a contradiction. There are certain Christian responsibilities or burdens each believer must bear which cannot be shared with others. Here in Galatians 6:5, the word 'load' has no connotation of difficulty. It refers to life's routine obligations and each believer's

ministry calling (Matt. 11:30; I Cor. 3:12-15; II Cor. 5:10.)⁴ Some examples of routine obligations may be parenting or job duties, etc. Christians ultimately have the responsibility to carry their own burden, however we have the ability to identify with them and help them understand that we have come through a similar struggle. Just remember that we are yoked to the Savior, who shares the load with us. (Matthew 11:30) (A yoke couples two things together.) Jesus is under the load with us. What a comforting thought!

II. The Believers' Corporate Responsibility

In Galatians 6:2, we find that God is interested in a sense of, unity and community in carrying the loads or burdens of one another. Just as families rally together to care for a child, an elderly parent or a family member experiencing trouble, so God desires that His spiritual family bear one another's burdens.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, we find a man who risked his own well-being and hostility from others to bear the burdens of a man robbed and wounded by thieves. The Good Samaritan helped by carrying the man's burden by caring for his physical needs and paying for his room and board.

On Thanksgiving eve, the coldest night of the fall season, to this point, there was a modern day Good Samaritan who came to the rescue of a man that was wounded, stripped of clothing, and deserted on I75 Freeway in the city of Detroit. Other motorists looked at him from their moving cars and kept going. One man, though, said he "stepped out in faith", stopped, picked him up, gave him his coat, and took him to the hospital. He was indeed a twenty first century "Good Samaritan" who helped to shoulder this man's burden.

God chooses to work through us. He sent His Holy Spirit to guide us, to teach us, to comfort, and empower us. "We who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak". (Romans 15:1) With the Holy Spirit enabling us, we can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens us. (Philippians 4:13)

III. Bearing the Load

In sharing the load of others, we are to do it in a spirit of love and practical consideration. (Romans 15:1, I Corinthians 9:19-22, Philippians 2:2-4, Galatians 6:2). When we bear one another's burdens, motivated by a spirit of love, we fulfill the Law of Christ. Helping our brothers and sisters while demonstrating the Fruit of the Spirit (meekness, gentleness, kindness, love, peace, goodness, and patience) (Galatians 5:22) pleases God.

There are many ways to bear the burdens of others. Spending time with them in prayer is effective. Establishing a prayer partnership with them can enable them to make it day by day. Offering words of encouragement, scriptural passages, personal time, or a listening ear are appreciated. Phone calls, hospital and home visits, and spiritual counseling are

⁴ John MacArthur Study Bible, notes

additional ways to bear burdens. Sometimes, physical assistance, professional help, or monetary assistance may help to ease the burdens.

In bearing the burdens of others, we must stay connected to the Lord, attend church regularly, daily read the Word, and immerse the situations in prayer so as not to burn ourselves out. We must be sure to maintain a spirit of confidentiality; some things are not to be shared. There must be the spirit of meekness as we seek to help others bear their burdens.

SUMMARY/REVIEW/CLOSURE:

As we grow spiritually, we cherish the saints God sends to help with our burdens along the way. He gave us people who provided His support in a personal way when we did not know what to do and the burden seemed more than we could bear. There are people who need to know that God knows that we need compassionate people. Everyone needs someone praying with them and identifying with their burden.

God extends His grace as He chooses to work through believers. We share God's love as we help bear someone else's burdens. It is our act of gratitude for our salvation. Because we have been blessed, we are expected to extend this same love to others.

Jesus met people with burdens, and first healed their immediate need—then He ministered to them. People do not care how much you know about Jesus until they feel how much you care about them. Jesus gave us this pattern as a way to reach people and become His fruit bearers by helping others in their time of need.

Jesus taught that we would all have trials and our faith may falter, but remain steadfast. *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brother."* —Luke 22:31,32

Have you grown enough spiritually for God to use you in bearing someone's burden?

Are you available to help someone in his or her struggle to walk in the newness of life?

DISCUSSION/ APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1) In what ways can we make ourselves available to bear the burdens of others?**
- 2) Discuss some difficulties we may have in approaching a brother or sister experiencing a sin burden?**
- 3) What are some loving Christian ways to respond when a brother or sister is offended by overtures to help them?**

PRAYER: