

## THE BURDENS OF LIFE

Text: Galatians 6:1-5

One of the best techniques for teaching and subsequently one of the best ways of learning is repetition. Another way of learning is by illustration. We see our Lord was an expert at this. For instance our Lord would teach a truth by saying, "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man..." (Matthew 20:1). C. H. Spurgeon said, "Illustrations are the windows of the sermon through which we see the truth." And still another way of learning is by life experience. It is a powerful way of learning because you are actually living the truth. It has been suggested that there is such a thing as a "wisdom gene" that doesn't kick in until after the age of fifty. If this is true, it may not be as mystical as one may suppose. It may simply mean those things you learned by the Bible, books and sermons have been given ample time of longevity to make certain truths indelible.

In our text this morning, we have all three ways of learning working. You may think the rebuke of trying to live righteously by our works and conformity to the law is beginning to sound like the proverbial broken record, however, repetition is vital to our learning. Then we see the truth lived out by illustration. And this truth is lived through life experience as evidenced by these phrases in our text, "if a man," "such an one" and "every man."

### I. THE BURDENS THAT OVERWHELM OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Galatians 6:1, 2

At first, you notice two statements that would appear to be a contradiction, because in Galatians 6:2, it says, "Bear ye one another's burdens..." Then in Galatians 6:5 it says, "For every man shall bear his own burden." As we examine the word translated "burden" in both verses we discover that two different Greek words have been used: βάρος (baros) and φορτίον (phortion). Let's talk about our first usage, "Bear ye one another's burdens..." This "burden" is "baros" which is also used by Jesus in Matthew 20:12: "...unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." The Apostle Paul uses a phrase that incorporates "baros" in II Corinthians 1:8: "...we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life." The meaning of "baros" is a load that is unnaturally heavy going beyond our capability (within ourselves) to alleviate. Let me illustrate; I have lived in two areas of the country. One is in the deep south, specifically Florida, where sand abounds. The other area of the country is in the north where snow is

plentiful. With my automobile, I have been stuck in both. Whether you have lost traction and are stuck in the sand or snow, the results are the same. You get stuck. You accelerate. Your tires spin. Then you accelerate more and you go deeper into the sand or snow. Then you reach a point when you are so deep in the hole that you are not coming out without some help. Thank God for the man who arrives in a four-wheeler with a strong chain! The context of our Scripture helps us see that this is the condition of a person who has been overwhelmed in sin and not only needs help, but, by the grace of God, can receive help from a spiritually mature person.

We understand Galatians 6:2 by understanding Galatians 6:1, which says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness...." I cannot improve on the language of the eloquent Victorian preacher, Alexander MacLaren who commented on this verse: "The word 'overtaken' suggests that some sin, like a tiger in a jungle, springs upon a man and overpowers him by the suddenness of the assault. The word so rendered may perhaps be represented by some such phrase as 'discovered'; or, if I may use a 'colloquialism,' if a man be caught 'red-handed.' That is the idea. Here is a brother who has had an unblemished reputation; and all at once the curtain is thrown aside behind which he is working some wicked thing; and there the culprit stands, with the bull's-eye light flashed upon him, ashamed and trembling. Paul says, 'If you are a spiritual man'--there is irony there of the graver sort--'show your spirituality by going and lifting him up, and trying to help him.' When he says, 'Restore such an one,' he uses an expression that is employed in other connections in the New Testament, such as for mending the broken meshes of a net, for repairing any kind of damage, for setting the fractured bones of a limb. And that is what the 'spiritual' man has to do. He is to show the validity of his claim to live on high by stooping down to the man bemired and broken-legged in the dirt. We have come across people who chiefly show their own purity by their harsh condemnation of others' sins. One has heard of women so very virtuous that they would rather hound a fallen sister to death than try to restore her; and there are saints so extremely saintly that they will not touch the leper to heal him, for fear of their own hands being ceremonially defiled. Paul says, 'Bear ye one another's burdens'; and especially take a lift of each other's sin."

My summation of this verse then is, when a brother or sister in Christ are spinning their wheels in the sin, don't just leave them there and criticize them; pull them out! In comparison, consider II Corinthians 4:17: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The word "weight" is translated from "baros." God is saying, no matter what the problem on earth, God and glory has a greater and over-all compensating pull than earth's gravity toward sin. Romans 5:20b tells us, "...But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. "

## II. THE BURDENS FOR WHICH I AM PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE

## Galatians 6:5

Galatians 6:5 says, "For every man shall bear his own burden." Here the word "burden" is taken from the Greek word "φορτίον" (phortion). Another place in Scripture where the word "phortion" is used is Acts 27:10: "And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." Here we have translated "phortion" into English as "lading" (which is cargo). Therefore, the word for burden here is likened to the freight, load or cargo that has been assigned to a ship.

Does it ever seem that the load Christ gives you is too heavy for you? When Christ gives you your assignment in His will, He will also give you the strength to bear up under it. I Corinthians 10:13b reminds us, "...God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." If God calls me to do a job, with His blessing, I can do it! If I fail in God's will, it's my responsibility to confess my sins, take the chastisement and keep on going faithfully for Him.

## III. AN EXALTATION OF THE SUPREME BURDEN-BEARER

### Galatians 6:2a-4

Now we get to the root of the help this passage of Scripture offers us. Galatians 6:4 is a frontal assault to the psychology that blames all our ills on low self-esteem. The Bible declares in this verse, "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth him" (Galatians 6:3). This does not diminish the concept that we are created in God's image and we are of inestimable value to Him. What it does say is that we are fallen and as our only recovery is Christ's rescue by grace through faith, we must therefore give Him all the glory. It is Christ's everything for our nothingness. This brings us back to the reality of which Paul speaks of in I Corinthians 15:10a: "But by the grace of God I am what I am." Jesus said in John 15:5c, "...for without me ye can do nothing."

Paul said in Galatians 6:4, "Let every man prove his own work...." In another words, if you help someone else up, or if you were the one that someone else helped up, you eventually must admit that it is Christ that gets you up and it is Christ who keeps you up. When I help a brother up, I am doing it by the same power of Christ who delivered me from my sins. I am not who I am or where I am by comparing myself to someone else. I go to Christ, He alone is my measuring rod for any success.

In Galatians 6:2b it says, "...and so fulfill the law of Christ." Our Lord said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The phrase "heavy laden" comes to us from the word "phortion" meaning the personal burden you carry. When Christ tells you to take your cross, He is on the other end. Christ took the burden of our sin on His own body on the cross (Galatians 3:13) to relieve us from all our burdens. Now we, who are

recipients of His grace, can fulfill the law of Christ (John 13:34-35; James 2:8). Love performs what the law could never do.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.