

**Jesus—Your Burden Bearer**  
Matthew 8:14-17; Galatians 6:2  
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What a contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees! On the one hand, the Pharisees abused what authority they had unlawfully seized to break the backs of the people with burdens of many traditions of mere men (without the authority of God, Matthew 23:4). On the other hand, Jesus came to bear the burdens of His people (whether sin, problems, tears).

Here is an important test of godly leadership in the home or in the church. A godly leader seeks to remove unnecessary burdens from the lives and consciences of those he leads. A godly leader is a burden-bearer rather than a burden-maker. A loving and godly leader will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. He will come alongside and help the struggling brother or sister in any way that he can (beginning in his own home with his own wife and children).

Rev. James Wells, Moderator of the United Free Church of Scotland, in his book, *The Parables of Jesus* (1884), tells the story of a small-framed little girl carrying a little boy almost her own size. Seeing her struggle with the heavy load, someone asked if she wasn't tired. She replied: "No, he's not heavy; he's my brother." In 1969 a hit song came out entitled, "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother." One part of the song reads,

So on we go  
His welfare is of my concern  
No burden is he to bear  
We'll get there

For I know  
He would not encumber me  
He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

Let us learn what it meant for Jesus to bear the burdens of His brethren and let us walk in His footsteps in bearing the burdens of each other. Our main points are: (1) Jesus Bears the Burden of Peter's Mother-in-law; (2) Jesus Bears the Burden of Many Who Are Sick.

**I. Jesus Bears the Burden of Peter's Mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-15).**

A. According to Mark's Gospel, this miraculous healing occurs on the Sabbath after leaving the synagogue (Mark 1:29). Jesus proceeds to the home of Peter and Andrew for the afternoon meal.

B. Here we find that Peter was married, for it was his wife's mother that was severely ill (Matthew 8:14). Why is that significant? Because in discussing how Christ came to bear the burdens of His people, we see how the Church of Rome like the Pharisees of old has come to heap the burdens of man's tradition and man's mere authority upon the backs of people. For that harlot Church has burdened her priests and nuns with the tyrannical vow of celibacy as if celibacy is a more holy estate than marriage (which has led to countless scandals of immorality and even murder of unborn children to cover up the fornication). Yet here in Matthew 8:14 we find that Peter (whom Rome falsely claims to be the first pope) was married and had a wife (1 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Timothy 4:1-5). This is not burden bearing, but rather placing unbearable burdens upon the shoulders of many.

1. Whenever church leaders bind such burdens upon the consciences of those whom they lead by their own mere authority, they have become those who are making burdens rather than removing

burdens (for example, adding to worship that which is not authorized in New Covenant worship, such as the celebration of Christmas, the use of religious images in worship, the singing of uninspired hymns, or the use of instruments). Jesus has not given authority to rulers in the church to add to the worship of God what is not authorized in Scripture nor to add to the doctrine of God what is not in Scripture.

2. To add to or to take away from what Jesus has appointed in doctrine or worship is not lawfully using the authority of Christ, but is rather usurping His authority and tyrannizing the consciences of people just as did the Pharisees (antichrist). The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (20:2):

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith on worship.

3. Husbands and fathers, please do not miss this point in your callings—for in your leading you must not issue a mere arbitrary command for your own mere selfish pleasure or desire any more than a minister should. There must be a reason from Scripture, from love, from prudence, from good order, or from the light of nature for every rule or guideline in your home. Every rule or guideline must be clearly directed to the profit, benefit, and edification of those who are led. Every rule or guideline must be administered out of sincere love and fervent affection for wife or children with a clear explanation. Every rule or guideline must seek out the glory of God—not one's own glory or mere pleasure. Husbands and fathers, you are called to be burden-bearers (like Jesus) rather than burden-makers.

C. As we return to Matthew 8:14, we see that Jesus upon entering the house of Peter learned (Luke 4:38) that Peter's mother-in-law was very sick with a fever (Luke 4:38 says it was "a great fever"). This was apparently no ordinary fever, but a deathly fever which had seized her.

1. Dear ones, how often we demonstrate our lack of faith by not first seeking the Lord and continuing to seek Him in fervent prayer for ourselves and others in times of illness (2 Chronicles 16:12). We so often put our trust first in doctors, medicine, and supplements. Of course, the Lord uses such means to heal the sick (1 Timothy 5:23). However, Jesus is the Great Physician as He demonstrated here.

2. May our communion with the Jesus be so constant that when tragedy strikes, our first response is a prayer (however quick) to Him for His mercy and help; for our confidence cannot rest in the wisdom or strength of man, but in the wisdom and power of God.

D. Notice the compassion and gentleness with which the Lord bears away this heavy burden under which this woman suffered: "And he touched her hand." Nothing cold, sterile, or distant about Christ's burden-bearing (even with lepers). He could have healed from a distance without touching her. His burden-bearing is filled with tenderness and so should ours be as we tenderly help those who suffer (do unto others). He is touched with your infirmities (Hebrews 4:15). He's not distant or cold and neither should we be especially when there is illness or chronic illness in the family or church. It is such tender care on your part and mine that Jesus uses to remove the despair and hopelessness of those who are ill and to promote recovery. It is as necessary as medicine.

E. "And the fever left her. And she arose, and ministered unto them."

1. The miraculous nature of the healing is evidenced by the suddenness in which the fever left her. Whether by supernatural or natural means, all healing ultimately comes from the Lord. Satan may have designed this fever for the harm and injury of one of Christ's sheep, but the Lord (as in the case of Job) designed it for her profit and ours.

2. She did not complain to the Lord as to why He allowed the fever to come upon her in the first place. She did not get up and first feed herself. No, she was overcome with gratitude for the Lord's

mercy and grace. Let us not give reasons why we cannot serve, but rather let us remember God's mercy to us and let our thankfulness to Him move us to bear the burdens of others.

3. We who cannot spare the time or resources to help bear the burdens of brethren in need have not yet grasped the unfathomable burden which Christ has borne for us in bearing away the sin and condemnation which we justly deserved from a holy God and in bearing our illnesses and daily trials we face. Because Christ had borne away this great burden in her life, she immediately desired to bear the burden of Christ and His brethren. This is the way grace manifests itself in the life of a Christian. He ain't heavy, He's my brother.

4. Look around you to those brethren who are sick, discouraged, and needy; and like Jesus come alongside them and help bear their heavy burden (beginning in the home). Don't wait for someone to help you with your burden first. Head out to carry the burdens of others and in so doing you are likely to meet someone half way who is wanting to help bear your burden (Matthew 25:40).

## **II. Jesus Bears the Burden of Many Who Are Sick (Matthew 8:16-17).**

A. The good news concerning the compassion of Jesus and His power to heal the sick traveled quickly through Capernaum; for by that Sabbath evening there was a multitude of ill and afflicted people gathered about Peter's home. However, the physical illness of all these people pointed to an even greater problem—their deathly illness due to sin. Every healing Jesus performed was intended not simply to relieve the temporal misery of that affliction, but was intended to point to Himself as the sin-bearer for His beloved and chosen people.

B. Matthew 8:17 states that Christ's works of healing fulfilled the prophecy found in Isaiah 53:4. How did the Lord fulfill that prophecy in healing the sick of Israel?

1. Sickness is one aspect of misery that was brought upon man for his rebellion against God when Adam fell. When Isaiah prophesies that the Messiah would bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, he had in view not only these amazing displays of temporal healing, but more importantly the Lord's bearing all our sin and condemnation in His own body when He died on the cross. For by His death and resurrection, the Lord has healed us of our deathly, diseased soul. He did not become a curse for us so as to remove part of the curse from us (namely, illnesses and death itself), but in order to remove the whole curse (including the sin that brings the miseries of this life).

2. It is true that legally in God's heavenly court all our sins, illnesses, and death itself have been abolished. Yet outside that court, the Lord yet uses sin, sickness, and death in our lives to sanctify us, draw us to Himself, chasten us, and to give us a love for His coming when we will be forever set free from sin, sickness, and death (Revelation 21:4).

3. Beloved come to Christ today as your Burden-bearer (Matthew 11:30). Those who come to Jesus as their only hope of eternal salvation are not under the unbearable burden of God's Covenant of Works which can only condemn them for their sin in breaking God's Law, but are rather under the yoke of God's Covenant of Grace whereby Christ perfectly kept the law of God for them and God imputes to them His perfect righteousness and pardons all their sins. Jesus bears your burden daily in all your trials and afflictions in this life. There is no longer the curse in the burdens you bear as God's dear child. He carries you. Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress* has captured this very well when the heavy burden of Christian's sin falls off of his back through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Thus far did I come laden with my sin,  
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in,  
Till I came hither. What a place is this!  
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?

Must here the burden fall from off my back?  
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?  
Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be  
The Man that there was put to shame for me!

4. We who know that Jesus has carried our burdens ought likewise to carry the burdens of others in coming to their aid that we might fill up the law of Christ completely in not only mouthing brotherly love, but also in performing it to God's glory (Galatians 6:2). When others are so needy, it is so easy to complain and to criticize. It is so easy to forget how much of our burden Jesus has borne and daily bears for us. We easily get upset when we are inconvenienced or delayed because of the needs of others. Dear ones, four words, four words ought always to flow from our hearts and out of our mouths when others are in need, when they are sick, when they are overwhelmed, when they are discouraged, or when they are afraid: How can I help? How can I help and serve rather than criticize or do nothing like the Levite and the priest that passed by the injured Jew. Be a good Samaritan and stop and care for those beginning in your home, church, and community. That is bearing one another's burdens and in so doing you will be fulfilling the law of Christ.

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