Carry each other’s burdens

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2

We all have burdens to carry. The burdens that God has given you to carry may be of a different size or shape or kind than He has given to someone else. But every Christian has burdens to carry.

Some suffer the burden of temptation and the consequences of a moral lapse or spiritual fall. Others are faced with a serious physical ailment, mental disorder, or handicap. Then there are those whose lives are weighed down with a broken marriage or family, lack of employment, or the permanent consequences resulting from abuse. You could surely add to this list of burdens.

But Jesus came into this world to bear our burdens – all of them. He took our heaviest burden, the one under which we would have been utterly crushed, and He put it upon Himself. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).

He continually calls out to everyone who is loaded down by their burdens: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

You understand why the Lord Jesus was often so angry with the Pharisees. Remember what He said to them: “Woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them” (Luke 11:46).

What we do with other people’s burdens then, has eternal significance. Either we come to Jesus, who has lifted the burden of sin from us, and we start helping others with their burdens or we let other people suffer under their burdens, and thus indicate that we actually don’t know Christ at all, in spite of what we may confess.

I fear that sometimes we think and act as if true piety and true religion consists in letting others carry their own burdens. Especially when, in our opinion, they are carrying a burden of their own making. We might even think that because someone deserves the burden they’re carrying, they absolutely should not have our help to carry it. But when we think and act along these lines, are we really any different from the Pharisees who loaded people down with burdens that were impossible to carry?

Let us remember then, that Jesus lifted the burden from us, as undeserving as we all are. He lifted our burden through his death on the cross: “Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows” (Isaiah 53:4).

There is no better place to learn the law of sacrificial love than at the foot of the cross. There is no better person from whom to learn this law than from Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. And there’s no better way to display pure religion than to carry each other’s burdens – the undeserving helping the undeserving – for in this way we will fulfil the law of Christ.

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