

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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Burdens

"None knows the weight of another's burden." – George Herbert, Outlandish Proverbs

"Everyone thinks his own burden heavy." – French Proverb

"Weigh well what your shoulders can and cannot bear." – Horace

"Money and time are the heaviest burdens of life, and . . . the unhappiest of all mortals are those who have more of either than they know how to use." – Samuel Johnson

"The fellowship of true friends who can hear you out, share your joys, help carry your burdens, and correctly counsel you is priceless." – Ezra Taft Benson

Jesus gave a rather stinging indictment against the scribes and Pharisees. "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matt. 23:3-4). The tasks that they inflicted on others was absolutely ridiculous!

It is interesting to look at the Greek term from which *burdens* is derived in this context as it has a tie to the idea of freight. Many in that business today can tell you that what they handle at times is excessive. And Jesus even modified it in this passage by saying they were "heavy burdens." How unfair it was to inflict burdens on others when they themselves wouldn't even lift a finger to do anything.

When Paul addressed the churches of Galatia, he wrote, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. . . . For each one shall bear his own load" (Gal. 6:2,5). At first, this almost seems like Paul is contradicting himself. But in reality, there is a simple explanation that becomes all too clear to us.

There are those burdens which we alone must bear. We make daily decisions which others cannot make for us. But when things become too much for us, then we must turn to others for help.

When a boy, it was difficult to heft a 100 pound bag of chicken feed. Weighing a whopping 85 pounds, it could have easily pressed you flat. And there are burdens today which can press us flat. There is no shame in seeking the help of others when our burdens become too great.

Christians need to learn that we are like a family unit. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. When things become overwhelming, we should be there for one another.