

S. R. Feb 20, 77 AM

CELEBRATING BURDENS

Psalm 38:9

INTRODUCTION:

There are many uncertainties in life. However, trouble is not one of them. There are many electives that we might take in the school of life - just as a person does in college or high school. Young people are permitted to take a choice of certain studies. But this is not so in life.

In our text, the Psalmist says my groaning is not hid from thee. This past week, Oral Roberts suffered a tragedy. His daughter, Rebecca Nash was suddenly killed when the plane she was traveling in from a skiing trip in Colorado went down in Kansas in a wheat field. There were six people killed in that crash. One young man was a banker. Her husband, was the director of the bank. And the pilot of the plane was an aviation expert. The two engine plane was caught in a heavy rain storm. When the news came, and the plans were made - the evangelist Oral Roberts said "we will have a home-going celebration." One of victory for his daughter. Therefore, (celebrating his burden). He knows the power of God's grace. There are three children that are left behind in this family. And yet this is the way that he is going to bear this burden.

Harry Emerson Fosdick once preached a sermon on the high uses of trouble. He talked about what adversity could do for us - one by one. And usually, he said, the first business we go about is - how can I get rid of my trouble. This terrific incident or misfortune. And be happy.

We hear that over and over again. About the troubles we get rid of or can get rid of. And he reminded people that Paul said, "we also rejoice in our tribulations". And the Moffett translation gives it, we triumph even in our troubles.

And that is the essential element in the Christian Gospel. That somehow we learn to even celebrate our burdens.

Have you ever been to the hospital ^{last night} and look at the newborn babies. You look into their faces and you wonder who are their parents. Are they worthy of this trust. Are they Christian. What will be the educational opportunities. To what will these babies give their lives. As you look, you never wonder whether or not the child will face trouble or bear some burdens. Or face some dissappointments. Or go through some valleys of sorrow. These are all a part of life. But there comes to mind how will he face the sorrows. And the burdens of life. In what way will he use them.

A sultan commissioned his Scribes to record a history of the human race. After many years of faithful and hard labor, the Scribe completed his task. He had 500 volumes of historic lore loaded on the backs of 100 donkeys. And he brought them to the sultan. After one look at the mountain of material, the sultan requested and it be shortened. "Abridged, cried the angry ruler. "Sire, all these volumes - responded the Scribe, may be compressed into a single sentence. "They were born, they suffered, they died." Do you know any better way of describing the companions you have every day.

I. BURDENS POSE AN IMPOSSIBLE QUESTION

There is always a question that comes. I have known people that have experienced tremendous trouble, and tremendous sorrow. All along the journey. They have had a lot of joys. And when you stack them up together - I don't know which would out-weigh the other. Whether the joys would out-weigh the sorrows.

But this is a baffling thing.

I read about a young man who loved God from his childhood days. Who felt the call of God. Wanting him to preach and he responded. He went into the ministry. And it took him 7 long years to go through college and seminary. After all those years of struggle, finally he became the pastor of a church. In his first year, it was discovered that he had cancer in one of his vital organs. The Doctor told him that there was neither hope nor help, from his viewpoint. That his case was impossible. But in confident trust, the young man committed himself to God. A few months later, he passed through the door of death. He had a very brief stay on this earth. And as you and I look back on such a life - a young man, promising. Able to preach. Persuasive. There is a great need for men like him and others. To live a long time on this earth. How do we explain such a thing.

Who really is wise enough to give an answer to such a tragedy as this. I know there are lots of people who have a glib answer. Or some kind of pious ^{Plotkin} attitude that they might rattle off for us. But underneath there is a restlessness, that here was one in the prime of life. Yes, burdens sometimes pose us with an impossible answer.

Here is a young mother who goes to the grave where her young husband has left her. And there are three small children left. There is little bread. Perhaps enough money to pay for the funeral. But here was a good man, a loving man - loved his family. The children needed him, the wife needed him. How do we explain this. What kind of answer would we give to it.

Or here is a little child whose loved by a family. But overnight, she is lifeless. How do you explain this.

Many times I have visited invalids and I have remembered on different occasions, the statement - "I don't see why God just doesn't take me home. I am no good to anyone." Now I have thought about statements like that, thousands of times. But we say, God has a plan for your life to fit into. And you just keep on. And God has let you here for something - something he wants you to do.

Yes, as we review the burdens in life as the Psalmist did, going over the remembrance of his past life. He thought about his sins. He reviewed the memory of his sins of the past. Of the afflictions, of the enemies. And it awakened the conscience in him.

There is a poem that has good philosophy in it.

Not now, but in the coming years
It may be in the better land
We'll read the meaning of our tears
And there, sometime, we'll understand.

Then trust in God through all the days
Fear not, for he doth hold thy hand.
Though dark thy way
Still sing and pray
Sometime, sometime, we'll understand.

Quite often a pilot in a plane will change his course because of a thunderstorm or some turbulence. Now because he changes his course, which the storm causes him to do - he does not change his destination. And I think this is something like our burdens in life. They sometimes toss us about. But it does not disrupt our

destination.

We had a lot of desires in life - like the Psalmist. He desired that he might get free somehow of these burdens. Every man likes security. And we like security today. Men like to have financial security. But that is not absolutely necessary for God's purpose, for my life. All of us desire good health. But that really is not necessary for me to live a Christian life. And all of us would like not to have any burdens or sorrows. That would be our wish. But you and I can live the Christian life whether we are poor, in poverty, whether we are wealthy, have a plenty, whether we are sick, or in good health. The matter of burdens - there may be an impossibility to answer. For we recognize that this is going to be a part of living. And I think a man would be a fool to believe that he could somehow build up a wall here. And defend himself against burdens. John 16:33 - "In the world, ye shall have tribulation." We must face tribulations in life.

And of course, to get partial answers to it - Rom. 8:18 Paul says, "whatever we may have to go through, now is less than nothing - compared with the future. God has planned for us."

Where can we find the answer. And where we can cast our answer - so that we will not be destroyed on the rocks.

II. YOUR BURDENS ARE UNDER THE UNSEEN EYE

Remember with the Psalmist, he finally came to the point that after he talked about all of his desires to the Lord - that his burdens were not hid. That God knows our burdens, and God knows our sins. And God knows - Psalm 69:5 - "Oh God, thou knowest my foolishness. And my sins are not hid from thee. Now that may not

be a happy thought either. But it expresses just what God does in regard to our burdens.

Matt. 10:29-30 - Jesus reminds us, yet not a single sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. The very hairs of your head are numbered.

I have heard the old saying, wisery loves company. But I really do not feel that that is an accurate statement. Even though it may be comforting - for God knows all about my troubles. And somebody may say, well, that's nice. But what does God do about it.

For one thing, it tells us that God has not deserted us. That he still cares for us. *Help you Bear your Burden -*

III. THE EMPOWERING GRACE

The Psalmist had a feeling here - that his heart was panting for strength. He had a feeling that God was going to come to his rescue. Before life is over, every man is going to come to a river that seems to wide for him to cross. And that he'll not be able to reach the other side. And there will be a mountain out there that will be too tall for him to climb. But the only way to conquer this is with God's grace. And I think the sooner that we understand this, and come to know this, the happier we'll be.

I went to the hospital room of a man who most of his life had lived according to his desires rather than God's plan. He was critically ill. And his recovery was not assured. When all the lights of earth began to fade, it is easier to see

the worthy road of virtuous living. This man confessed his sins - and said, I want to live the rest of my life as God wants me to live. " Now he did not know - and I did not know how much time the rest of his life would be. But God would forgive him and I'm sure he did. And he had stumbled through life but this was the first time in all of these 60 years that he had found the strength to really carry his burdens.

Paul wrote, not that we are sufficient of ourselves. 2 Cor. 3:5. And later, he told about the thorn in the flesh. We do not know what that thorn was, but it was a heavy burden to Paul. He made at least three attempts to get rid of it through prayer. And Paul's answer to that burden was, my grace is sufficient for thee. 2 Cor. 12:9.

Yes, God helps us to bear the burdens. He empowers us. There may be some of you that are disappointed. Some of you who have sickness. Some of you who have recently had a death. Or trouble. But have left its mark. You need to say, I'll keep going. With God's help, I can carry this load.

When life comes to you and appears to be an impossible mountain to climb - when you think of Moses. God called Moses to lead the children of Israel and of Egypt. Moses did not think he was prepared. In his heart, he knew that he was going to fail. He said he had to have a lot of help to do it. When you look at your own life, you think of your own failures and you say it is inevitable.

Num 11:11 - Whyfore could not favour in Thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?

God simply said to Moses, Ex. 3:12 - I will be with thee. Think about that a moment. The same God who led Moses, and the Israelites out of Egypt - has promised to guide you.

Or think about Job - when sickness, sorrow come upon your pathway. Look a long time and you'll not find any man perhaps who has suffered as much as this Old Testament man. He gave up a lot but he was determined to bear that burden. And to celebrate his burdens.

You can just think about all the mental anguish and physical suffering that are yours. But then you remember that Jesus prayed in the garden. He stood before Pilate. He faced the angry mob. He staggered up Calvary's Hill. He was put on the cross. And Jesus had faith in the same God that will stand by you.

You can be strong against tribulation. While there is really no defense against suffering or trouble, there can be a victory within - there can be a celebration. Paul talked about the Christian army. Wearing of the breastplate of righteousness. The helmet of salvation. The sword of the spirit. And finally he advised these Phillipians, "my God, shall supply all of your needs."

with God's help we can bear our burdens -

IV. THE CELEBRATING

I come back to Oral Roberts. Who is going to celebrate his burden. The Psalmist said that his groanings were not hid from God. This tells me today, no life is hopeless. No life is hopelessly lost. That is in this service.

I remember one day, a man stopping by to see me. And he sounded very desperate. He drove up in a \$5,000 automobile. He wore a \$150 suit. And what he said is, I am at the end of the rope. I am at the end of the way. And unless somebody can help me, I am ready to just call it quits. After listening to that man talk awhile about his burdens, his personal burdens - and about his family situation, I could only suggest to him that no life is ever beyond transformation, in God's sight. And I could tell him that I did not have any magic. That I did not claim any super-natural powers. But I only knew one who could help him. If he would give his

life 100% to God. He would find a way to bear these burdens in the Christian life. He would never find a way in his own selfish ways. And I ask him, why not take this way.

Burden of Sin -

Isaiah - ch. 13:1 Burden of Babylon - Howl ye, for day of Lord of Lord -

14:25 - Come from North Judgment

15:1 - B - Moab - my heart cries out for Moab the pitiless

17:1 - B - Damascus shall be a ruinous heap -

19:1 B - Egypt shall - Behold the Lord sitteth upon a swift cloud

23:1 - B - Tyre - laid waste & forgotten 70 yrs.

Lord of hosts purposed this -

No Hope is Hopeless -

Give your life to God -

You are not beyond Redemption -