

# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



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Sunday Sermon

## **Bearing One Another's Burdens**

Do we have any weightlifters here today? I am not much of a weight lifter myself. But I have seen weightlifters and think there is something very important we can learn from them. If you have ever seen people lifting weights you would notice that they work in pairs. While one is lifting the weight the other is the spotter. The spotter's job is to stand behind the lifter and help him if needed. He might not need to do anything at all but just be there. His presence can give the lifter the needed confidence. Or he could at times give words of encouragement like "You can do it..." And if the lifter is really struggling the spotter will lift the weight for him. Then the two would switch places. The spotter becomes the lifter and the lifter becomes the spotter. This is a pretty good picture of what Paul instructs the church of Galatia in today's reading. He wrote, "bear one another's burdens, in this you will fulfill the law of Christ."

We are called to help each other. Many times, we don't even have to say anything or do anything. We just need to be there and let them know that we care. Just knowing that we are there may be all they need to give them the courage to carry on. A person may need someone just to empathize with them.

In Romans we are told to rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep. It is easy to rejoice when others are rejoicing but it is a more difficult task to weep with the weeping. Sometimes a person may need a shoulder to cry on and other times they need someone to cry with.

At times, our friend may need some words of encouragement. They may need for us to say, "You can do it! I believe in you! You can do it!" Those words of encouragement may be what they need. Paul writes in a letter to the Thessalonians, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up..." A word of encouragement at the right moment can make the difference between giving up and persevering. But sometimes a person has a burden so heavy that they may need for us to lift that burden for them.

We may lift that burden by providing direct assistance. For example if someone was burdened with hunger we can help by providing them with food. We can see direct ways to help bear one and another's burdens in Matthew 25. Jesus says, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

What is interesting about this list is that none of the listed acts require any special training. We all can do these simple acts of mercy.

We all have our own burdens to bear in life. Thankfully, we have been instructed to bear one another's burdens. As a family of Christians, we lift one another up and help each other through difficult times.

We all come here this morning with our own burdens. We may be carrying loads of grief, or pain. Some are weighed down by financial worries, or face unemployment. There may be an illness of a loved one. We may be taking on the extra burden by thinking that we must carry it all alone. You do not need to carry it all by yourself. But you have a family of believers to help to carry your load. You may have heard it said, "many hands makes light work."

This saying is exemplified by the Amish. If one member of the community is planning on building a barn, the entire community joins together to help. With the help of the community the barn is completed in only one day. At daybreak, the Amish buggies arrive at the farm where the barn is to be built. An experienced Amish carpenter is in charge and men are assigned to various areas of work. Often the framing is completed before the noon meal and in the afternoon the roofing is installed. Meanwhile, the women provide food and drinks for the men. Even the children pitch in and run errands. But beyond the occasional errand they see first hand the cooperation and sense of community that is being passed onto them. What a statement of brotherly love to work together to achieve a goal. We can learn a lot from the Amish about working together to help one and another.

Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear one another's burdens, and in that way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Earlier in Galatians we read. "The whole law is summed up in

a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." That love is shown when we bear one another's burdens, when we help each other.

Later in the reading we hear, "A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature will reap destruction, the one who sows to please the Spirit will reap eternal life." All of our actions have results, however they might not be immediate and we may be discouraged when we are always bearing another's burdens. We might think that our efforts are going unappreciated. We might not be getting the thanks or the recognition we think we deserve. We may not see the growth of what we have sown.

Painted on a wall outside Mother Teresa's home for Children in Calcutta read these inspirational words,

"People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered...  forgive them anyway

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives...  be kind anyway

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies...  succeed anyway

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you...  be honest and frank anyway

What you may spend years building, someone may destroy overnight...  build anyway

If you find serenity and happiness, people may be jealous...  be happy anyway

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow...  do good anyway

□ Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough... □ give the world the best you have anyway

□ You see, in the final analysis, it's all between you and God... □ it was never between you and them anyway”

Just like how we may feel we are always helping others and bearing their burdens we may get discouraged if they are not there to help us. I think the following is an appropriate addition. You may be bearing one another's burdens and feel like you are getting taken advantage of...

Bear one another's burdens anyway.

It is not about you and them it is between you and God. Amen

Just as we read that all the laws could be summed up, “To love your neighbor as yourself” this sermon could be summed up with that short sentence as well. May we be a body of believers that can show our faith through our actions. May we now sing together, “They'll Know we are Christians by our Love.” Found in your insert.

Benediction: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.