

Burdens, and What to Do With Them

by F.B. Meyer

F.B. Meyer teaches that true Sabbath-keeping involves casting our burdens on the Lord to achieve inner peace and spiritual rest.

Scripture: Nehemiah 13:19, Psalm 55:22, Proverbs 16:3, Isaiah 41:10, Jeremiah 17:24, Matthew 11:28, John 14:27, Romans 8:28, Philippians 4:7, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Inner Peace", "Surrendering Burdens"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the importance of inner rest and the true meaning of Sabbath-keeping, which transcends the literal observance of a day. He explains that burdens, whether from worries or cares, disrupt our spiritual peace and hinder our relationship with God. Meyer encourages believers to cast their burdens upon the Lord, trusting Him to manage their concerns and provide peace. He contrasts the burdens we create for ourselves with the divine care that God offers, urging us to rely on His strength rather than our own. Ultimately, true Sabbath rest is found in surrendering our worries to God and experiencing His unbroken peace.

Transcript

Do You keep the Sabbath? Not indeed the literal seventh-day rest, but the inner rest of which that day was the blessed type. The pause in the outward business of life was but a parable of that inner hush, which is not for one day but for all days; not for one race but for all men; not for the hereafter only but for now. The Sabbath-keeping which awaits the people of God, undiminished in a single atom by the storms which have swept around it, is for all faithful souls, who may take it when they will and carry it with them.

Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,

Plying their daily task with busier feet,

Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

A strain borrowed from the eternal chords and harmonies of the life and being of God.

The secret of Sabbath-keeping is in the absence of burden-bearing. "Thus saith the Lord, Take heed to yourselves and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day." And in the words that follow, the continual presence of a king is made to hinge on obedience about burdens (Jer. 17:24, etc.). Nehemiah was so

urgent in this matter that he set his servants at the city gates, as they crowned the gray summit of Zion, "that there should be no burden brought in on the Sabbath day" (Neh. 13 :19)

And what was true in those bygone days is true always. There can be no true Sabbath-keeping when burdens are freely brought into the precincts of the soul. As well try to sleep when a party of highspirited, healthy children are tearing up and down the house, and playing hide-and-seek in all the rooms. Care will break the rest of the soul as much as sin does. And there is no hope that we should know the peace which passeth all understanding till we have learned the art of shutting the door against the long train of burden-carrying thoughts which are always coming up the hill from the world beneath to fill our spirit with the ring of their feet and the clamor of their cries.

We need not stay to describe the results which burden-bearing brings to the heavy-laden. They are evident in the careworn look, the weary eye, the heavy step. But deeper than these, there is no power in prayer, no joy in God, no lying down in green pastures, no walking beside the waters of rest. As snowflakes in the arctics or sand-grains in the tropics will build a rampart before some lowly dwelling sufficient to exclude the light, so will worries, each infinitesimal in itself, shut out the blessed light of God from the soul and make midnight where God meant midday.

Burden-bearing sadly dishonors God. As men of the world look upon the faces of those who profess to be God's children, and see them dark with the same shadows as are flung across their own, they may well wonder what sort of a Father He is. Whatever be a man's professions, we can not help judging him by the faces of his children. And if God be judged by the unconscious report made of Him by some of His children, the hardest things ever said against Him by His foes are not far from the truth.

Under such circumstances the unbeliever may fitly argue, "Either there is no God, or He is powerless to help, or He does not really love, or He is careless of the needs of His children. Of what good will religion be to me?" We are either libels or Bibles; harbor-lights or warning-signals; magnetic or repellent; and which very much depends on how we treat our burdens.

Of course there is a difference between Care and Pain; between bearing the self-made burden of our anxieties, and suffering according to the will of God. We must not make light of sufferings sent by our Father to teach lessons which could only be learned in the school in which our Lord and Saviour has sat before us to learn obedience. The chastened spirit must go softly, and withdraw itself to suffer. But this is very different from burden-bearing. There will be no doubt as to the Father's care, no worry about the issues, no foreboding as to the long future, which to the eye of faith gleams like the horizon-rim of the sea on which the sun is shining in splendor, though dark clouds brood immediately overhead.

Before we are thoroughly awake in the morning we sometimes become conscious of a feeling of depression, as if all were riot right; and a voice seems to tell a long tale of burdens to be carried, and difficulties to be met as the hours pass by.

"Ah!" says the voice, "a miserable day will this be."

"How so?" we inquire. fearfully.

"Remember there is that creditor to meet, that skein to disentangle, that irritation to soothe, those violent tempers to confront. It is no use praying. Better linger where you are, and then drag through tile day as you can. You are like a martyr being led to his death."

And too often we have yielded to the suggestion, and have dragged ourselves wearily through the hours, doing our daily tasks with hands engaged and strength spent by the burdens which we have assumed. God is pledged to give strength for all duties which He sets, but not for the burdens which we elect to take on as well.

The one cure for burden-bearing is to cast all burdens on the Lord. The margin of the revised version of Psalm 55:22 reads thus: Cast that He hath given thee upon the Lord. Whatever burden the Lord hath given thee, give it back to Him. Treat the burden of care as once the burden of sin; kneel down and deliberately hand it over to Jesus. Say to Him, "Lord, I entrust to Thee this, and this, and this. I can not carry them, they are crushing me; but I definitely commit them all to Thee to manage, and adjust, and arrange. Thou hast taken my sins. Take my sorrow, and in exchange give me Thy Peace, Thy Rest." As George Herbert says so quaintly, "We must put them all into Christ's bag."

Will not our Lord Jesus be at least as true and faithful as the best earthly friend we have ever known? And have there not been times in all our lives when we have been too weary or helpless to help ourselves, and have thankfully handed some wearing anxiety to a good, strong man, sure that when once it was entrusted to him, he would not rest until he had finished it to his satisfaction? And surely He who loved us enough to die for us may be trusted to arrange all the smaller matters of our daily lives!

Of course there are one or two conditions which we must fulfill, before we shall be able to hand over our burdens to the Lord Jesus, and leave them with Him in perfect confidence. We must have cast our sins on Him before we can cast our cares. We must be at peace with God through the work of our Saviour before we can have the peace of God through faith in His gracious interposition on our behalf. We must also be living on God's plan, tarrying under the cloud, obeying His laws and executing His plans so far as we know them. We must also feed faith with promise, for this food is essential to make it thrive. And when we have done all this we shall not find it so difficult

To kneel, and cast our load,

Then while we pray upon our God,

Then rise with lightened cheer.

HAND OVER TO CHRIST THE BURDEN OF HOW TO GROW IN GRACE

This is a very great burden to some earnest people. They go from convention to convention, from one speaker to another, notebook in hand, so eager to get the blessing (as they term it), and often thinking more of the rapture of the gift than of the Person or the Giver. And because they hear of others having experiences which they know not, they carry heavy burdens of disappointment and self-reproach.

Equally well might a child in kindergarten fret because he is not entered in the higher classes of the school. But why should he worry about his future progress? His one business is to acquire the lesson set him by his teacher. When those are learned

will be for him to teach his pupil more, and advance him to positions where quicker progress may be made. And it is for us to learn the lessons which the Lord Jesus sets before us day by day, leaving Him lead us into the fuller knowledge and love of God.

Thomas was one of the dull pupils in our Master's school. He could not see what was clear to all beside. But instead of chiding him, and leaving him to grope in the dark, the Master paid him a special visit, and made the glad fact of His resurrection so simple that the doubter was able to rejoice with the rest. Don't worry about your dullness; it will only mean that the dear Master will give you longer and more personal attention. Mothers give most pains to the sickly, weak, and stupid among their children

HAND OVER TO CHRIST THE BURDEN OF MAINTAINING A CHRISTIAN PROFESSION

Many are kept from identifying themselves openly with the Lord's people by a secret feeling that they will never be able to hold out. They carry with them a nervous dread of bringing disgrace on their Christian profession, and trailing Christ's colors in the dust. Almost unconsciously, they repeat the words of David, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul" (1 Sam. 27:1).

Anxiety about so sacred a matter as this will hide the face of Christ, as the impalpable vapor-wreaths hide the majestic, snow-capped peaks. And it is quite needless. He who saved can uphold. As is His heart of love, so is His arm of might. He is able to keep from stumbling, and present us faultless before the presence of His glory. But we shall never know the sufficiency of that keeping while we cling to the boat, or even keep one hand upon its side. Only when we have stepped right out on the water, relying utterly on the Master's power, shall we know how blessedly and certainly He keeps what is committed to Him against that day.

We must not carry even the burden of daily abiding in Him. Let us rather trust Him to keep us trusting and abiding in Himself. He will not fail us if we do, and will answer our faith by giving us an appetite for those exercises of prayer, Bible study, and communion, which are the secrets of unbroken fellowship.

HAND OVER TO CHRIST THE BURDEN OF CHRISTIAN WORK

How to maintain our congregations; how to hold our ground amid the competition of neighboring workers; how to sustain the vigor and efficiency of our machinery; how to adjust the differences arising between fellow and subordinate workers; how to find material enough for sermons and addresses-beneath the pressure of burdens like these how many workers break down! They could bear the work, but not the worry.

And yet the responsibility of the work is not our but our Master's. He is bearing this world in His arms, as a mother her sick child. He is ministering to the infinite need of man. He is carrying on His great redemptive scheme for the glory of His Father. All He wants of us is a faithful performance of the daily tasks He gives.

Let the sailor-lad sleep soundly in his hammock; the captain knows exactly the ship's course. Let the errand-boy be content to fetch and carry, as he is bidden; the heads of the firm know what they are about, and have plenty of resources to meet all their needs. And let the Christian worker guard against bearing burdens which the Lord alone can carry. The Lord would never have sent us to His work without first calculating His ability to carry us through.

HAND OVER TO CHRIST THE BURDEN OF THE EBB AND FLOW OF FEELING

Our feelings are as changeable as April weather. They are affected by an infinite number of subtle causes-our physical health, the state of the atmosphere, over-weariness, want of sleep-as well as by those which are spiritual and inward. No stringed instrument is more liable to be affected by minute changes than we are. And we are apt to take it sorely to heart when we see the tide of emotion running out

fast.

At such times we should question ourselves, to see whether our lack of feeling is due to conscious sin or worrying; and if not, we may hand over all further anxiety in the matter to Him who knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust. And as we pass down the dark staircase, let us hold fast to the handrail of His will, willing to do His will, though in the dark. "I am as much Thine own, equally devoted to Thee now in the depths of my soul, as when I felt happiest in Thy love."

HAND OVER TO CHRIST ALL OTHER BURDENS

Servants with their frequent changes; employers with unreasonable demands; unkind gossip and slanderous tales which are being circulated about you; the perplexities and adversities of business; the difficulties to make two ends meet; the question of changing your residence, or situation, and obtaining another; children with the ailments of childhood and the waywardness of youth; provision for sickness and old age. There are some whose businesses are peculiarly trying, and liable to cause anxious thoughts; others whose horizon is always bounded by the gaunt specters of poverty.

Any one of these will break our rest, as one barking dog may break our slumber in the stillest night, and as one grain of dust in the eye will render it incapable of enjoying the fairest prospect. There is nothing for us, then, but roll our burden, and indeed, ourselves, on God (Ps. 22:8, marg.). When a little boy, trying to help his father move some books, fell on the stairs beneath the weight of a heavy volume, the father ran to his aid and caught up boy and burden both, and bore them in his arms to his own room. And will our Father do worse? He must love us infinitely, and be ever at hand. "He careth for you" (1 Pet. 5 : 7) .

It is a good way in dealing with God, and if you are not quite sure of His will, to say that you will stay where you are, or go on doing what you have been doing, until He makes quite clear what He wants and empowers you to do. Roll the responsibility of your way on God (Prov. 16:3, marg.), and expect that He will make known to you any alteration which He desires in a way so unmistakable, that though you are dull and stupid you may not mistake.

Don't worry about dress, or ornaments, or doubtful things. Satan loves to turn the soul's attention from Christ to itself. It is as if a girl should spend an hour in her room wondering in what dress to meet her lover, who is waiting impatiently below. Let her go to him, and if she desires it, he will soon enough tell her clearly what he prefers. Get into the presence of Jesus, and you will not be left to hazy questionings and doubtful disputations, but will be told clearly and unmistakably His will, and always definitely about one point at a time.

Archbishop Leighton sweetly says: "When thou art either to do or suffer anything, when thou art about any purpose of business, go, tell God about it, and acquaint Him with it-yea, burden Him with it-and thou hast done for matter of caring. No more care, but sweet, quiet diligence in thy duty, and dependence on Him for the carriage of thy matters. Roll over on God, make one bundle of all: roll thy cares, and thyself with them, as one burden, all on thy God."

And so, when no burdens are brought into the soul, but are handed immediately over to the blessed Lord, the peace of God will fill the inner temple. And though outside there may be the strife of tongues, and the chafe of this restless world, like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, and the pressure of many engagements, yet these things shall expand themselves on the battlements of the life which is the environing presence of God; while, within, the soul keeps an unbroken Sabbath, like the unruffled ocean

depths, which are not stirred by the hurricanes that churn the surface into foam and fury. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

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