



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

January 12, 2020

Jump Start # 2226

Psalms 68:19 *"Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, the God who is our salvation."*

Our verse today is a gentle reminder of how great the Lord is. Not only does the Lord bear our burdens, but he does it daily. Just think about this promise and blessing we have in the Lord. Just think about this in terms of God's children. Just think about this in terms of today. Here's an expansion of this:

- There are many prayers going up this morning for safety. We have ice on the ground. The roads are slick. Many are without power. Schools are delayed or closed. Those who have to get out are especially concerned today. There is a heaviness and an uneasiness upon them. The Lord bears our burden.
- Out West, it's the fires. Many are missing. The fires continue to burn. Many are concerned about loved ones. The Lord bears our burden.
- A family I know has to prepare for a funeral this week. A loved one passed away. The Lord bears our burden.
- A mother is dealing with a troubled teen. He's been in trouble with school. He doesn't seem to want to make the right choices. The Lord bears our burden.
- A man has learned that his wife has been unfaithful to him. She no longer wants to remain in the marriage. His world is coming apart. The Lord bears our burden.
- A man is beginning his first series of chemo treatments this week. The dreaded word cancer is now part of his conversation. The Lord bears our burden.

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- A preacher in a third world country struggles to support his family. He wants to preach, but the money isn't there. The Lord bears our burden.
- A couple is facing the tough decision about moving an aging parent into assisted living. The parent doesn't want to go. A battle looms on the horizon. The Lord bears our burden.
- A congregation faces going forward without elders. They have had wonderful shepherds for years but now due to health issues and job transfers, all the elders have resigned. The church is worried. The Lord bears our burden.

Our list could go on and on and on. You know things in your part of the kingdom that I do not. All of these things reveal some truths for us.

First, life is hard. It was Job who said "man born of woman is short lived and full of trouble." There are burdens. These burdens take the breath out of us. They keep us up at night. They steal our appetite. They invite worry, fear and doubt into our hearts. We want sunny days. We want worry free vacations. We want interstates that are free of traffic. We want arteries that never clog. We want smiles on the children's faces, and wagging tails on our dogs. But life is not like that. Burdens come. Stress mounts. The world, because of sin, leaves us with broken promises from others, jobs that are not completed, people that are not true, and a heartache cuts us to the core.

Second, the expression, "The Lord bears our burden," is enormous. David wrote this from the standpoint of Israel. We read this from the standpoint of our homes. But just among God's people, there are a lot of us. There are a lot of things going on. There are many prayers reaching Heaven every day. There are many concerns among all of us. This task would overwhelm us. There are too many people and too many problems, we'd declare. We'd have to list them in order of importance. We'd have to limit the number of times a person could share his burdens. We'd want to give everyone a fair chance. We just couldn't do this. But there is the Lord. He is bearing all of our burdens. There will be prayers today that come from broken hearts. There will be prayers offered from those who are joyful and blessed. There are prayers coming from those who are scared and unsure. There are prayers seeking advice. There are prayers begging for forgiveness. There are prayers wanting someone to come back home. There are prayers seeking reconciliation with family members. This one principle illustrates for us how big the Lord is. Not only can He bear our burdens, but He can do it all at once. Some of these burdens are very complicated. Some of them take time to work through. Some of them are decades old. These burdens, every day, are not too much for the Lord. He never gets to a point where He must take a break. He never gets to a point where He cannot carry one more burden. He's not like that. Daily burdens. The Lord bears them.

Third, the Lord wants us to burden Him with our burdens. Cast all your anxiety upon Him, is what Peter wrote. He wants us to do that, because He cares for us. He wants us to do this because these burdens are more than many of us can handle. He wants us to do this because He has answers when we do not. He wants us to do this because when we don't these burdens get the best of us. They run us empty. They overcome us with worry. They defeat us and we are left feeling alone and we wonder about God.

Fourth, the Lord wants to bear our burdens because He can do things. This is more than sitting on Heaven's couch and unloading to the divine therapist about our problems. This is praying to God, a God who loves us and can do something. If God couldn't do anything about our burdens, then why give them to Him? It would be nothing more than an exercise in talking things out. But it's more than that. God is our hope. God is our refuge. We pray because prayer accomplishes much. We are not alone. We are not without options. We are not without help. There is the Lord. When others seem too busy for us, God is there. When others do not seem to care, God is there.

Finally, what a blessing it is to have the Lord. Without the Lord, who is there to help us? Without the Lord who is there to bear our burdens? Without the Lord we barely push on, weighed down, burdened, heavy hearts and doubts surrounding us. This is the world. This is most people you see today. There isn't much to be joyful about. There isn't much to be thankful for today. Life is hard. But with the Lord, what a blessing. I don't have to figure everything out. I don't have to know what tomorrow will be. I have the Lord to help me. I walk with Him and He carries my burdens. We have much to be thankful for. We have much to look forward to. God is good, He is good to me.

Now, I wonder how many times we try to carry our burdens by ourselves. We don't allow the Lord to help us. Too private. Too much pride. Too much independence. And, as a result, we walk not much differently than the man of the world.

The Lord daily bears our burdens. That includes today.

Roger Shouse (used by permission)

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