

Burdens Become Blessings

Introduction:

1. Many things that we view as burdens can become blessings when properly used or understood.
2. The Bible illustrates this idea with the figure of childbirth (John 16:20-22).
3. Hardship, pain and suffering often bring the greatest blessings.

I. The Burden of Labor

Noah

- A. Physical labor results in physical blessings (Genesis 3:17-19; Isaiah 65:21-22; 2 Thessalonians 3:10).
- B. Noah illustrates this principle in his building the ark (Genesis 6:14-22).
 1. He was given a tremendous burden – to build an ark.
 2. Without doubt, it took many months to complete (cf. Genesis 6:3).
 3. This was in addition to his burden of everyday life – providing for his family, preaching to sinners, etc.
 4. Yet, when the work was accomplished, Noah received the greatest blessing – the salvation of his family from the flood.
- C. In like manner, spiritual labor results in spiritual blessings (1 Corinthians 15:58; 3:8; Galatians 6:9-10).
 1. Helping the less fortunate...
 2. Visiting the sick...
 3. Preparing the Lord's Supper...
 4. Teaching a Bible class...

II. The Burden of Distinctiveness

Timothy

- A. Timothy was the product of a mixed marriage – his father was a Gentile and his mother was a Jew.
- B. Certainly, this caused problems for Timothy in the culture of his day (cf. John 4:9; Acts 10:28).
- C. Yet, God was able – through Paul – to use Timothy to preach the Gospel to both Jew and Gentile!
- D. Christians must be distinctive, different from the world.
 1. So, the world will try to isolate us.
 2. We will be ridiculed and persecuted.
 3. But, God can still use us to teach and preach His Word.
- E. Our burdens may become a blessing to others.

III. The Burden of Preaching

Isaiah

- A. Isaiah was called by God to be a prophet – a spokesman for Jehovah (Isaiah 6:8-13).
- B. Yet, his preaching would be a burdensome task, for the nation would reject him.
 1. What a discouraging task!
 2. Yet, Isaiah faced it with true devotion and faithfulness.
- C. Ultimately, a blessing came from his work – a remnant was saved.
- D. All Christians must bear the burden of preaching.
 1. It is a burden to go into “all the world” (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
 2. It is a burden face rejection and ridicule.
 3. It is a burden to study diligently the Scriptures.
 4. But, the blessings of these efforts are eternal.

- IV. The Burden of Sickness *Man Blind from Birth*
- A. Certainly, it is a burden to go through life without the blessing of sight.
 - B. However, God was able to use this man's burden to glorify His Son (John 9:1-7).
 - C. God can use our burden of sickness to bless our lives and the lives of others.
 1. Illness reminds us of what is truly important in life (priorities).
 2. How we deal with sickness can demonstrate the power of faith in God to others.
 3. Sickness can bring us closer to God and to God's people.
- V. The Burden of Grief *Anna*
- A. Anna was married for seven years, and then her husband died.
 - B. She lived as a widow until the age of 84 (Luke 2:36-38).
 - C. However, she did not allow her grief to separate her from God.
 - D. Instead, she drew closer to Him and became a faithful servant.
 - E. Grief can become a source of blessing in our lives and in the lives of others.
 1. Grief reminds us of our dependence upon God.
 2. Grief encourages us to long for Heaven.
 3. Enduring grief teaches us how to help others (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
- VI. The Burden of Sacrifice *Jesus*
- A. It is not easy to sacrifice things that we hold dear.
 - B. Yet, our Lord set an example of sacrifice for us to follow.
 1. He humbly gave up equality with God (Philippians 2:6).
 2. He left the glories of Heaven.
 3. He sacrificed having servants for being one (Philippians 2:7).
 4. He gave up a heavenly body for a physical one (2:7).
 5. He sacrificed His body on the cross (2:8).
 6. He sacrificed His life at Calvary.
 7. He sacrificed His blood freely.
 - C. His sacrifice resulted in abundant blessings.
 1. Salvation (Redemption)
 2. Reconciliation (Fellowship)
 3. Adoption (Church)
 4. Mediation (Prayer)
 - D. When we must bear the burden of sacrifice, we must remember the blessing that will come.
 1. Submission to the Word of God
 2. Leave home to go and preach
 3. Live as a servant to others
 4. Wear out our bodies in His service
 5. Give our lives, faithful unto death
 6. Blood, sweat and tears for the kingdom

Conclusion: *Burdens will come, but blessings will follow.*