

The Burden Bearer: Finding Freedom at the Cross

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[0:00] Oh, hello there.

I am Pilgrim. You may know me from John Bunyan's story, *The Pilgrim's Progress*.! While I was living, in the city of destruction, I became aware of this dreadful burden upon my back.

This weight, this burden, it pressed me heavily. I read in the book, and my eyes opened. I saw with trembling that this burden was my sin, my guilt before a righteous and holy God.

The weight bore down upon my shoulders, crushing my spirit, driving me to despair. No effort of mine could ease it.

No worldly comfort could ease it. I wept and cried out. A man named Evangelist directed me to the gate and the pathway to deliverance.

[1:17] I set forth, I set forth, stumbling beneath my load, with tears upon my face, and the cries of my forsaken city, ringing in my ears.

I trudged on, the weight pulling me down, my strength almost gone, but hope flickered in my heart, for I believed that if I pressed on, I would find relief.

At last, weary and worn, I came to a place most wondrous and marvellous, a hill atop which stood a cross, and here something strange and marvellous happened.

The straps that bound the weight upon me began to loosen into an open grave where it was seen no more.

Tears of joy streamed from my face as I gazed upon the cross, for there I understood had been wrought for me on my behalf.

[2:18] The one who hung there had borne my burden in his own body. My sins were laid upon him, and by his suffering I was set free.

The crushing load that had so tormented me was now gone, lifted by divine mercy. And I walked forth from that place a free man, my heart leaping with gratitude and praise.

This was how I came to understand the true weight of sin, the depth of my own wretchedness and the boundless grace of my King who ransomed me, no longer a condemned man.

I journeyed on, my soul set free towards the celestial city where joy awaits, where I will be made even more complete. For I had been delivered, and I would tell the world of him who had set me free.

What was this burden of pilgrim? Let's have a look. What he carried. Oh, it's very heavy. That burden, that weight.

[3:23] What was it? Could it be guilt and shame? The weight of past sins, of regrets, of failing, that seemed too great to be forgiven.

Oh, what about fear and anxiety? A worry about the future, the unknown, the judgment to come. Another one. Pride and self-righteousness, the false belief that one can be good enough of their own without God's grace.

Here's another one. Bitterness and unforgiveness, the resentment, the grudges that we hold that weigh us down, the past hurts. What about this one? Worldly attachments, the love of material things, or pleasures that distract from eternal truths.

Another one. Doubt, unbelief, the inner struggle to trust in God's promises and his ability to save. Sorrow and grief, the pain of loss, of suffering, of disappointments that seem unbearable.

And then Pilgrim, as we can see, picture this, at least three movies you can watch, some cartoon ones, some film ones. You see him pictured here.

[4:37] And we see of Pilgrim, it tells of that burden that he carried. And the Bible tells us of Christ that he is not only king and saviour, but he can be our burden bearer.

Of course, we know life is full of burdens and sin, sorrow, struggles, suffering. The world can weigh us down with so many things, worry, shame, grief, hurts.

But the Lord steps in and he says, let me carry that for you. And he carries what we cannot. He carries our sorrows. He bore our sins. And he provides release as we come, as it were, pictured as it were, coming to the cross.

In other words, the work of the cross. That we can find that release. That the burden can fall off our back like that. Not that we let go, like a picture here, but of the cords of sin, broken, of freedom, of release.

That like Pilgrim, we can feel the weight of our sins, gone, gone forever. Life is heavy sometimes. And you don't need me to tell you that. Maybe you walked in here where the broken relationship, the weight of that, the burden of financial strain, the ache of a body that's failing you.

[5:53] Maybe it's the guilt of past, of stuff you can't undo that you did. The anxiety of the future ahead. You can't control it. And the psalmist relates about this weight as he cries out of his guilt, that his guilt was overwhelmed, gone over my head as a heavy burden.

They're too heavy for me. Like a burden too heavy to bear. And can anybody relate to that? I know that I can. The Bible tells that the reality of our struggles, of sin, that it entered the world, it brings burdens.

Burdens of our own making. Burdens thrust upon us by others. Burdens that just seem to be part of living in a fallen world. But, friends, today there's hope.

That's why we come to the cross as it were, as we see, pictured in the pilgrim story, that God doesn't leave us alone. He carries our burdens. And he still carries them today.

Of course, we know that he carried them at the cross as pictured as Isaiah relates in prospect of him coming. Isaiah 53, for surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

[7:08] But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.

When it says borne our griefs, it means to lift up. He's borne them. He's lifted up. He's carried our griefs. He's carried our sorrows. It's got the sense of lift up, carry or bear away.

It's got the sense of our Lord actively shouldering those griefs, taking them off our shoulder. And it tells of his carrying our sorrows, tells of pain, of anguish. Life can be filled with different loss and sadness.

Our Lord takes the heavy load upon himself and he suffered for us. Friends, that's why we come to a communion time as we think of that greatest burden. It was our sin.

That's the greatest burden and maybe you're still carrying that in the sense that you've not found his forgiveness of your sin. You can know that today by faith. Think of as he took that road to the cross of Golgotha's Hill, the weight of the cross was heavy but the weight of the world's sin was heavier far greater.

[8:20] And when we think that our Lord bore our sin, that speaks to every heart surely that we can know that release. We don't have to carry that burden of our guilt and condemnation.

The weight that crushes you, he's already lifted it. The shame, he's already paid for it. And of course the Bible exhorts us, cast thy burden, thy burden upon the Lord.

He shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. It's very personal there, isn't it? Thy burden. You've got a personal burden. And the Lord says, cast it, cast it upon me.

What could it be you worry about tomorrow? Could it be some of these things? Here, the burden of sin, you've yet to trust Christ for your salvation. I probably should have laboured the point of what's in this burden.

I think, oh, it doesn't smell too good. It smells like they should have gone out in the rubbish pickup. It's the sense of our sin. It's a gross thing, isn't it?

[9:25] The sinfulness, the exceeding sinfulness of our sin, the horror of it, the shame of it, the stench of it, the foulness of it. How can we picture it? That Christ, our Lord, took that.

In reality, he took that. Not as I'm picturing it, but in reality, he took that upon himself. And friends, we can think about all the things we could carry, our burden, thy burden.

Could it be your worries about tomorrow? Cast it. I'd like to demonstrate that too. I'll find something to throw. Maybe I shouldn't go.

But the thing, casting it. And I think you'd be like the cricketer, wouldn't you? You'd be throwing that with all your might, wouldn't you? Or the baseball or the football player.

He throws something and it goes right to the outside of the stadium. But that's how we should cast our burden on the Lord, isn't it? We should throw it energetically, cast it. Throw it for all you're worth. [10:21] Throw it to Jesus. Cast thy burden. Of course, we know 1 Peter 5, 7 likewise says, cast your burden. Cast your cares upon him for he cares for you.

And cast it, your grief, over yesterday. Maybe your shame, your regrets, all the things you've done that you ought not to have done. It stinks, but you can cast it upon him.

You can know a full release. Your daily struggles, your fears, your doubts, cast it, throw it. And we can trust him to carry us through every trial. As John the Baptist tells of him at his coming, he looks unto Jesus and he says, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

This word, taketh away, it's got the sense of lift it away. In other words, you don't have to carry it any longer. He takes it away. He takes the sin of the world. He can take your personal sin. He can take that sinful heart and make it a new heart as you trust him as your saviour.

It's got that sense of lift it away. You don't have to carry it. The sin. And of course, every man, woman, everyone has sin and needs the saviour.

[11:32] We all have that need of Christ and we can trust him to take it away, to lift it away, to carry it. What burden do you need to surrender to the Lord Jesus today?

Could it be you've yet to trust him for your salvation? That's number one, to trust him, to take your sin away. And then, of course, there's all the other burdens of life's trials and tests and we can think, could we lay it down at the cross this morning as it were, to picture it, to lay down whatever it is that we're carrying, to know that he'll carry it away, to come and rest and trust in him.

Oh, what needless pain we bear. Sometimes we carry things we don't need to carry. Take it to the Lord in prayer. There's lots of things we could reflect on, isn't there? And to cast our burden, cast thy burden, thy burden upon the Lord.

I can't cast it for you, no one else can. You have to cast thy burden, you have to cast it upon the Lord. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that you are the burden bearer that carries our sin as you carried it to the cross and paid for it all.

Lord, that we can trust you today and know your saving love, to know your grace that can pay for our sin and take it all away. Lord, we pray that each heart might have that release of that burden, that the cords of sin can be torn away from our shoulders, Lord.

[12:53] That heavy load can be torn away. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. And trust your sin to him. He'll carry it for you. He'll pay for it. And you can be saved by that moment of faith as you simply trust, Jesus, take my sin, take it away.

I want you to be my saviour. I trust that you paid for my sin at the cross and we can have that wonderful release of our sin, the burden of it. The hymn book says, burdens are lifted at Calvary. Burdens are lifted. Cast your care on Jesus today. Cast your care upon him. Days are filled with sorrow and care, but burdens are lifted.

Burdens are lifted. They're still being lifted. He's still the weightlifter. He's the greatest weightlifter of all time, isn't he? That he can carry the weight of the world, the weight of your sin. Jesus is very near.

Amen. Burdens are lifted at Calvary.

[14:11] Calvary, Calvary. Burdens are lifted at Calvary.

Jesus is very near.