

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas
October 21, 2018

Bearing Burdens Galatians 6:1-5

6:1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

6:3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

6:4 But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.

6:5 For each will have to bear his own load.

1. Burdens

As Ieyasu Tokugawa's doctrine says, "Human life is like going long way with the burden," everyone is living with some "burdens." There are many people who have disabilities or have disabled in the family member. We do not know how hard it is unless we are experienced. Medicine has developed, but there are still many diseases that will not cure. Many people are suffering from intractable diseases and mental illness. Perhaps there is nobody who does not carry a burden such as financial problems, pressures from work and human relationship.

The heaviest burden we carry is the burden of "sin". As the king of Israel, David had the burden on the country. Sometimes, he might be crushed by the heavy pressure. However, the burden of sin was heavier than such a thing. When he sinned, he was totally

overwhelmed. David said, “For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.” (Psalm 32:3-4)

There is such a poem in someone's poem book.

If my heart is bright

Can endure a painfulness

If my heart

believes in God and really brighten up

People, in particular, those who believe in God can endure a painfulness burden if there is a bright heart illuminated by the light of God. However, if darkness such as unsolved sin, doubt, lack of faith etc., that becomes the burden which crushes us.

Jesus said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) I think that “burden” pointed to “burden of sin.” We know what Jesus did for us to remove the burden of sin from us. He offered his life on the cross. The hymn titled “Calvary” sings, “Mercy there was great, and grace was free; pardon there was multiplied to me; there my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary.” Also, another hymn sings, “Would you be free from the burden of sin? There's power in the blood, power in the blood; Would you o'er evil a victory win? There's wonderful power in the blood.”

Since we have brought down the burden of sin under Jesus, we can sing such hymns powerfully from the bottom of the heart. Well, have Christians no longer bear any burden? No, even we are saved, we are still in a weak flesh and the environment surrounding us will not

change soon. People have burdens that must bear as long as they live. Even if you do not have a heavy burden on yourself, Christians have the burden of working for the salvation of their families and their neighbors. Paul had a great burden for his race, the salvation of the Jewish people. Romans 9:2-3 said, "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh." All Christians must bear the burden for the salvation of others.

2. One Another

Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear one another's burdens" There is a saying, "When shared, joy is doubled and sorrow halved." God is aware that we shall not bear burden by ourselves alone. Firstly, Lord Jesus is who bears our burden with us. We shall not forget that Jesus holds the yoke to pull the heavy load. Also, Jesus prepares the *koinonia* (fellowship) who can "bear burden one another."

There is a Japanese term "*Otagai-sama*" which means "in the same boat." "Bearing burden one another" means you bear the other's burden and others bear your burden. Sometimes, it seems like you bear the other's burden but actually the other bears your burden. Parents have to bear their child's burden. In the past time, after you graduate the high school, you go to the university by yourself and begin to walk your life; however, in these days, there are so many who expect the support from their parents even after their marriage. However, in this situation, it does not mean that the parents need to bear their child's burden. Through the child raising and support of

child, the parents receive the encouragement from their child. The child bears their parents' burden. The nursing of the aged parents is very hard and you might feel it is burden; however, you might be comforted by the parents a lot. Your parents bear your burden in that situation. If you bear the other's burden, the other will bear our burden. It is truly "in the same boat."

"*Otagai-sama*" or "in the same boat" is a beautiful Japanese word. This is ἀλλήλων (*allēlōn*) in Greek and you have seen nearly 100 times in the New Testament. However, the half of them are used for referring to bad things such as "betray one another," "hate one another," "murmur one another," "argue one another," "hurt one another," "disgrace one another," "kill one another," etc. Galatians 5:26, which we have learned previously, says, "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." This verse tells us that God has a heartache when He sees people hurting one another. The human relationship without Jesus results in awful consequence. It looks like everyone is on the same page; however, it is because they want to get rid of "God." They do not have true unity.

3. The Law of Christ

However, when we invite Christ into our relationship of "one another", an authentic and good human relationship will be born there. That's the "koinonia" (fellowship) of "accepting each other" (Romans 15: 7), "bearing with one another" (Ephesians 4:2), and "forgiving each other" (Colossians 3: 13). Even saying "to accept each other" does not mean we mix up holiness and worldliness, good and evil, light and darkness together. Our "*koinonia*" (fellowship) should be in

the holy light of God's presence (1 John 1:7). It should not get used to each other at a low place, but should be "pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding." (Romans 14: 19) aiming at higher things.

In a word, this means "to love one another." And "to love one another" is "the law of Christ." Why is this "the Law of Christ?" Because, this is the commandment given directly by Jesus Christ. "Loving God" and "Loving Neighbors" are the commandments already given in the Old Testament, which is the essentials of the Law. In addition to "loving God" and "loving neighbors," Jesus added the third love, mutual love of those in Christ. In John 13:34, He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." "Loving God" and "Loving Neighbors" are ordered to everyone, but those who believe in Christ are required to "love one another" in addition to those who believe in Christ. Christians are required to bear each other's burdens and fulfill this "Law of Christ."

We cannot fully love God our neighbor. Can we love one another in addition to the God's law? Of course, we cannot do by the nature of inherited from parents and "flesh." But, if we are the "spiritual people" who trust in the Holy Spirit and walk with the Holy Spirit, we can do it. The "spiritual people" does not mean "grown," "mature," or "perfect" Christians, but "growing" Christians. Even we have various weaknesses and lacks, if we are "aiming for growth," we are "spiritual" people.

The Lord Jesus said, "Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." Paul said, "Forgive one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32) John said, "Beloved, if God so loved

us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:11) The important words are “God loved us” and “God forgave us.” When we receive the love and forgiveness of God, are impressed with it, appreciate it, we can start to “love one another” and “forgive each other.”

“To love one another” came from the love of the cross of Jesus Christ. “To love God” and “to love people” were written on the two ten commandment stone tablets God gave to Moses, but “to love one another” was written on the cross with the blood of Jesus. Besides knowing the love of the cross and living it, there is no way to fulfill this “law of Christ.”

The yacht can move in the direction of the wind blowing. But, for that, we must manipulate the sails and the big rudder called the “centerboard” on the bottom of the ship. It is in the water and can not be seen from the outside. However, it gives stability and direction to the yacht. The “burden” that we owe each other is like the centerboard. By firmly tackling the burden given by God, our lives can be stabilized and oriented. At that time, the “spiritual people” can proceed by receiving the wind of the Holy Spirit.

If we do not have any burdens to bear on us, our lives will probably be slightly flirting and only shed by the flow of the world. Our lives are to satisfy “the Law of Christ,” firstly by “bearing the burden of ourselves” and secondary by “bearing burdens one another.” Let’s be the Law of Christ our delight and goal with “bearing the burden of ourselves” and “bearing the burden of each other.” Let’s heartily ask to become “spirit people” who will proceed with the wind of the Holy Spirit in that way.

(Prayer)

God Father, I thank you that we could consider the burden you removed from us and the burden you gave us. Still, keep us to learn to bear our own burden and to bear burdens each other. Guide us and help us to put it into practice. We pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.