

# Faithfully casting our burdens on Christ (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Warboys, Ralph (1927-2008)

[ 0 : 00 ] In Mark chapter 16, and especially verses 3 and 4. Mark 16 verses 3 and 4.

And they, that is these three dear women, they said among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great.

Before we come more especially to these words in their providential application, and more especially in their spiritual, I feel we should say a few things concerning this season of the year.

We do not know the time of the year when Christ was born. Those who have studied these things consider it was probably at the Feast of the Tabernacles of the latter part of September or the early part of October.

[ 1 : 25 ] But we do know when Christ suffered, died and rose again. As we read in the second verse of the 12th of Exodus, the Lord said to Moses concerning the Passover, this month shall be the first month of the year to you.

The month Nisan, or sometimes referred to as Avian, was therefore the first month of the Jewish sacred calendar. They had also a civil calendar which does not concern us.

And this month Nisan corresponds with the latter part of March and the most of April. So it was this season of the year.

Also in passing I point out the birth of the Lord Jesus is only recorded in Matthew and Luke. His sufferings, death and resurrection are in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

As it were setting forth that we should spend at least twice as much in our meditation upon the sufferings, death and resurrection as we do upon his birth.

[ 2 : 41 ] And so, as we read in the last part of chapter 15, after the Lord had died, after he had cried, as we read elsewhere, it is finished, Father, loving union restored, after that time of felt separation, when his sufferings reached the apex, and he did not cry, My Father, My Father, but My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?

The answer to the question being that his people, you and I, if we are amongst them, deserve to be forsaken by God forever and ever, cast into the pit.

And he had to suffer that punishment for his people. But he did not die in a forsaken spirit. As we read elsewhere, he cried, it is finished, Father, loving union restored, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.

And he gave up the case. Then Joseph of Arimathea, this disciple, went in boldly unto Pilate. We read also of Nicodemus, who had first met with Jesus by night in the third of John, also was there.

And they went in and craved the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled he was already dead. His legs were not broken. The legs of the two thieves were broken, that their death should be hastened.

- [ 4 : 36 ] When a person's body is supported by their arms only, you cannot breathe properly. And so, a death by asphyxiation is hastened.
- And of course, with the shock of the legs broken as well. But they break not the legs of the Lord Jesus, for he was dead already.
- That scripture had to be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broke. But then he was dead, and so when Pilate knew it of the centurion, not believing, Joseph of Arimathea only.
- And so Joseph took the body down, and having bought fine linen, his love to the Lord cost him something, and laid it in the sepulcher, hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone under the door of the sepulcher.
- Hewn out of the rock. There was no question then of a stone being removed, and the body extracted, and the stone replaced.
- [ 5 : 55 ] There was this one entrance into the sepulcher, and the same entrance exit now. Then this stone was rolled unto the door of the sepulcher.
- One person can roll a heavy stone downhill, but clearly three ladies knew they could not roll the stone away.
- They rested, we read, on the Sabbath day, according to the commandment. Then when the Sabbath, the seventh day, was passed, they came, having bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.
- In Psalm 16 we read, Thou wilt not leave his soul in hell that is in the grave, nor suffer thine holy one to see corruption.
- They clearly were unaware of that scripture, or did not believe it. But nevertheless, they had the right motive. Though they were mistaken in their action, their motive was right.
- [ 7 : 15 ] Oh, how more important it is for our motives to be right. Much might be said concerning that in our prayers. We might be praying for right thing.
- You might be praying for every seat in this chapel to be occupied. But if your motive was pride, or to share responsibility, to help out with the collection, the motive would be wrong, and then the whole action would be wrong.
- Oh, look well to your motive. Cannot dwell upon that in detail, but our motives should be firstly God's glory, and secondly, his people's God.
- To set forth in that prayer after which we should pray, the first three petitions do not ask for anything for the person who is praying. They ask for God's glory.
- Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. They bought sweet spices that they might come and unwind him.
- [ 8 : 24 ] Love motivated their heart. They rose very early in the morning. We read elsewhere, while it was yet dull, and came unto the sepulchre and the rising of the sun.
- Here we see vangeling faith. Vangeling faith. As far as they knew, the stone would be upon the door of the sepulchre, and they could not roll it away.
- I'm sure they were tempted to stay in bed, to go and sell the spices and have a good time with the money, but love motivated them.
- And so with vangeling faith they came. We have this vangeling faith set forth in other scriptures. You read of the children of Israel approaching Jordan from the east through the land of Moab.
- And the waters were not divided when they set out from Shittim, where they had abode a few miles from Jordan. And the waters were not divided as they approached the river Jordan.

[ 9 : 49 ]     Indeed, it overflowed all its banks at the time of harvest, when the snows of Lebanon and Hermon were melted. But they still came forth.

And the way was not made until the feet of the priests were dipped in the brim of the water. And then the waters were divided. Because you see, they obeyed the commandment of the Lord.

Speak unto the people that they go forth. It may be there is, as it were, some river Jordan flowing before one of you now.

Or some great stone lying in your path. Thinking of it for the moment in its general application, providentially and spiritually.

And you may be saying, who shall roll away the stone? It is very great. You cannot do it. What are you to do?

[ 10 : 54 ]     I remind you of what we read in the 11th chapter. Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, not just a stone that one man may roll downhill, but whosoever shall say to this mountain, be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea.

Ah, and then how close this comes. And shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore, I say unto you, what things however ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

And so I said, Lord, increase our faith. James writes in this connection concerning how we are to ask in faith.

He speaks especially concerning wisdom and how we need that in providential and spiritual things. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him, but, but, let him ask in faith, in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

[ 13 : 01 ]     For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the north. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

I remember our esteemed friend Mr. Ramsbottom preaching a few years ago at the annual meetings from the prophecy of Isaiah.

I will make all my mountains a wave. And amongst his remarks he said, we think the mountains are ours, but God describes them as his.

I will make all my mountains a wave. So that we have this faith to believe these mountains that so often lie in our paths can and will be removed.

With God all things are possible. may we have that faith to believe in, to wrestle.

[ 14 : 20 ]     We sometimes sing wrestling prayer can wonders do, bring relief in deepest strength. Prayer can force a passage through iron brass and brazen guys.

Lord, increase our faith. These women had that faith to believe that the stone would be rolled away or they would not have left their homes, would they?

But they ventured. Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulch?

But just to look at some of the things in providential matters that so often lie before us. I'm sure you dear children often have perhaps some great stone or mountain it may seem in your path.

Maybe some examination, maybe some bully at the school or some event that seems like a mountain. Bring it to the Lord in prayer.

[ 15 : 45 ]     I've often said the best tool in my toolkit is prayer. Just a simple matter only recently I wanted to change the fuel filter on a tractor.

I had great difficulty in getting the old one off. I had great difficulty in getting the new one on and I could not stop it leaking. Renewed the washers and so on and still it leaked.

And in the end, sadly so often there's a last resort instead of being the first, we had to pray about it. And then lo and behold the next time we put it back, all was satisfactory.

How often we read in the 107th Psalm, especially, when they were at their wick's end and not before, then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful words to the children of man. nothing is too small to pray about, nothing is too great, from the smallest providential matter to the greatest spiritual.

[ 17 : 11 ] You can't get a wider range than that. Bring it to the Lord in prayer. Another great stone in providential matters that may seem to lie before some of us that are older.

What will we do? How will it be with us when the afflictions of old age come?

When we cannot look after ourselves or perhaps our loved one either cannot look after us or we cannot look after them? what will we do?

How will it be? Bring it to the Lord in prayer. And again, how will it be with us when we come to die?

Again, I think it is in Isaiah, we read, if thou was run with footmen and they have wearied thee, how would thou do in the swellings of Jordan? May we prove then that thy waters are divided and that we have that grace as it were to follow the ark of the covenant.

[ 18 : 35 ] Moses' rod was stretched over the waters of the Red Sea when the children of Israel left Egypt. And it is, of course, under the felt power of the Lord, the Lord's people leave the Egypt in their spirit in this world.

But they do not enter the promised land under a rod, but following the ark of the covenant. But coming more especially to spiritual things, for we shall all soon be finished with providential troubles and burdens, this stone separated them as they thought from their loved Saviour.

They wanted to anoint his dear body. And as far as they knew this great stone, we read elsewhere, it was very great.

In the next verse we read, it was very great. Separated them from their Saviour. Well, there are many stones, some of which we may mention, but surely the great stone that separates us in our feelings is our sins.

sins. And we cannot roll it away. We read in the 51st Psalm, Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.

[ 20 : 17 ] cast. To cast is to throw. And when we throw something, we leave hold of our own grasp upon it. No longer are we taking any of its weight when we throw something.

But sadly, concerning the burden of our sins and indeed other burdens, how often we, as it were, keep hold of it and snatch it back at the first opportunity, instead of leaving it with the Lord.

I think the margin does in fact say, roll thy burden upon the Lord. We can, of course, roll something that we cannot lift, if it is of that suitable shape.

And how great is that burden of the sins. To see sin smarts but slightly, said Hart, to own with lip confession, tis easier still, but oh to feel, cuts deep beyond expression.

How many will be saying in our national church as they repeat the creed and confess their sins, but oh one has to doubt how many feel the burden of it.

[ 21 : 48 ] And how often in our unregeneracy, at least it was with me in our village school, a church school, we repeated the so-called Lord's Prayer night and morning on our arrival, on our departure.

Forgive us this day our trespasses as we forgive others and it didn't concern us in the slightest. And especially in the afternoon it was gaveled through at such a speed the headmistress made us stop and say it all over again.

It was mocking God. We were lying, even while we were saying it. one often feels how solemn it is concerning many of the hymns we sing.

I feel especially guilty concerning that hymn that we sing concerning our love to the Lord. Do I love the Lord or no?

Often it causes anxious thoughts. Do I love the Lord or no? Am I his or am I not? And how often I sung it when it wasn't causing me any anxious thoughts at all.

[ 23 : 06 ] I was lying even while I was singing. Do we not have to cry God be merciful to me thou sin?

And this mountain rises up before us separating us from the Lord. But we believe that with the Lord's dear people there will at least be a grain of fame to believe that this mountain can and in his time will be rolled away.

I would be careful in this way because not all the Lord's people feel the burden of their sins to the same extent. We have this set forth in the parable that the Lord spoke to Simon the Pharisee in the seventh of Luke concerning the two debtors.

There were two debtors. One owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. One ten times as much as the other. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.

Both. He did not say to the fifty pence debtor, you won't be forgiven until you also owe five hundred pence.

[ 24 : 45 ] The all important thing, dear friend, is have you nothing to pay. We may read of Huntington and Bunyan and others who had the weight of their sins so weighty upon them they could not continue in their occupations.

And it has not been so with you. Are you out of the secret? I say not if you feel you have nothing to pay, knowing that you cannot roll away the stone.

As the poet puts it, while we can call one might our own, we have no full discharge. Who shall roll us away the stone?

Another great stone is following in the ordinances of his hearers. Remember how it was with me in the 1950s when I so burdened with this matter and our late dear friend Mr. Green at that time living in South London in Balaam came one week evening all the way to Okington and he preached from Zechariah who art thou O great mountain before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.

And I had a grain of faith raised up in my heart to believe that one day that great mountain would be removed. At that time there were no male members and I knew that immediately I'd have to pray in public and read sermons and so on.

[ 26 : 31 ] And it seemed a great mountain. Perhaps it is to one here. A mountain also not only regarding responsibilities and duties but a mountain as to whether it was through presumption whether I was mistaken.

But we had to cry. And just in passing have you ever considered Solomon's throne as setting forth that mercy seat of which we read in the epistle to the Hebrews.

And if you read concerning Solomon's throne I think it is the ninth chapter of the second book of chronicles there were steps that led up to the throne and there were lines on every step.

A line at one end and a line at the other. And so it is as we approach the footstool and the footstool was chained to the throne it couldn't be separated from it.

On the one hand there is the line of presumption and of unbelief of a slavish fear that frightens us.

[ 27 : 52 ] And at the other extremity there is the other line of pharisaical pride and a demanding spirit when we have to pass through the lines to that mercy sea.

Bunyan speaks of them in the pilgrim's progress. After Christian had ascended the hill difficulty and all that set forth he met a man who told him there were lines in the way and he'd be slain.

And that man was returning to the city of destruction. But Christian dare not turn back and he continued to venture forward venturing faith again.

And he saw the lords and was afraid but he still ventured forward. And when he drew near he saw the lords were chained. And if he kept to the middle of the way he could pass safely through which he did.

Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away.

[ 29 : 20 ] It seems though not directly stated that their eyes were cast down. Or it may be they were looking at one another.

but they certainly were not looking toward the sepulchre. I spoke on Good Friday at Gravesend concerning Abraham on Mount Moriah.

That after the angel had called from heaven saying lay not thine hand upon the lad neither do thou anything unto him. Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behold behind him not in the direction he had been looking was that ram caught in a thicket by his horse.

As we read in Hebrews Abraham believed that Isaac could be raised from the dead from whence he received him as an inner figure. But it was not God's will that Isaac should be saved.

God had indeed provided himself a lamb for a burnt offering but not in the direction he was looking. A beautiful type of Christ with that ram.

[ 30 : 36 ] Himself he cannot say. Insulting foe it is true. The words of sacred meaning have though meant in scorn by you.

When they looked they saw. I may have said here before that for us to see something four things are essential.

We must be alive. The dead cannot see. No use pointing out to a dead person what a beautiful sunrise there is.

There would be no response. We must be awake. Ah and how close that comes. For a living soul can be asleep just like a living body and when asleep we have no hunger nor thirst.

No knowledge of whether it is dark or light. No knowledge of whose company we are in. We are unconscious to all these things. Awake thou that sleepest said the captain to Jonah.

[ 31 : 46 ] Arise and call upon thy God that we perish not. We must be awake. We must have our eyes opened. And fourthly we must have light.

Ah how essential that is. Had the children of Israel in the wilderness had the brazen serpent raised up in the darkness they could not have seen it.

They would not have looked and lived. Are you looking? Have you life spiritually? Are your eyes open?

Are you awake spiritually? Have you life? The Lord spoke much of that in John chapter 12 concerning life.

Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light. Less darkness come upon you.

[ 32 : 52 ] He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whether he goeth. While ye have light believe in the light that ye may be the children of light.

and then later in that chapter I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth on me should not abide remain in darkness.

When they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away for it was very great.

Very great. Let us look a little then at that which follows because you see this young man they saw there in this white garment said to them behold the place where they laid him.

behold means of course to look and to consider not a passing glance but a meditation upon that which our eyes see that the tomb was empty over Gordon's sepulcher as it is called in Jerusalem or outside Jerusalem which archaeology says a tomb of that period it is not claimed it was the actual one but a tomb of that period over that is written come see the place where the Lord lay.

[ 34 : 49 ] Elsewhere we read the napkin was folded and laid by itself and the clothes were laid the grave clothes all setting forth done in due order no haste as it were in Matthew as we read at the breakfast table the angel rolled away the stone and sat upon it and I think that is so significant and this often in scripture sets forth either the work is complete or taking a long time we read of that concerning the silver in the fire in Malachi he shall sit as a refiner of silver but there in that case the angel sat upon the stone as defying men and devils to roll it back the tomb was empty we do not worship a dead

Christ we worship a living Christ a risen Christ the Lord is risen indeed they were told here to go and I like the phraseology tell his disciples and Peter and Peter I think it was a few years ago at an Easter in April I spoke from Peter's fall and Peter might have doubted whether he still was amongst the disciples as it were but the Lord make it very clear and Peter Peter had repented of his denial and if you and I have repented of our sins then that is for us also the tomb was empty how vital is the resurrection of Christ one often feels guilty that we do not dwell upon it enough speaking comparatively often concerning the sufferings and death of Christ but not enough concerning the resurrection in the 15th chapter the first epistle to the

Corinthians words often read at funerals we read there of the vital importance of the resurrection if Christ be not raised your faith is vain ye are yet in your sins they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished like a trumpet now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept the gospel as it is in Leviticus and that is not a slip of the tongue sets this forth so beautifully in the 23rd chapter the

Lord spake to Moses saying when ye come into the land which I shall give you and shall reap the harvest thereof then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you notice which day it was to be waved on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it not on the Jewish seventh day the Saturday but on the morrow after the Sabbath the Lord rose from the dead the first day of the week not on the Sabbath but the first day of the week and he's become the first fruits of them that slept sadly we read here of when the disciples were told they believed not those two that went to

Emmaus as we read in Luke when they returned and told it to the residue neither believe they there the Lord upbraided them with their hardness of heart it was as it were a great stone before them and they believed not until he implanted that faith in their heart and they believed that the Lord was risen indeed we have in John of course that case of Thomas except I shall see in his finger the print of the nails and put my finger into the print as if he wouldn't believe his eyes until he also felt I will not believe then the Lord eight days later appeared and said

[ 40 : 54 ] Thomas reach hither thy finger put it into the print of the nails thrust thy hand into my side and be not faithless but believing and Thomas said my Lord and my God the stone you see was rolled away Thomas because thou hast seen thou hast believed blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed may you and I have that vengeling faith as it were to come to the Lord though these great stones especially the stone of our sins lies before us seeming to separate us as we think from the Lord but may we have that faith to see that the stone is already rolled away that as we read in

Romans 8 who shall separate us from the love of God shall tribulation persecution and so on I am persuaded that neither height nor depth nor any other creature shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord well we leave these thoughts with you who shall roll us away the stone when they looked the stone was already rolled away Amen Hymn 320 June 176 Hymn 320

God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform he plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm Hymn 320 June 176 season 118 ng

Huh? Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 45 : 15 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.  
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[ 46 : 15 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.  
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name and hello. Thank you.

[ 47 : 42 ] Thank you, Lord, for that truth of the power.

Blind unbelief is sure to act. Lord, then, do roll away those various stones that block up our path, providentially sometimes, but especially those that seem to come between us and the Lord.

And may we have venturing faith and sight to see the stone is already rolled away by thy redeeming love and the power of thy resurrection.

Forgive anything amiss. Be with us in the interval. Give us that which is needful for the age. And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, the communion of the Spirit, be with us.

Amen.