

Divine strength for carrying burdens (Quality: Average)

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- [0 : 01] In complete dependence upon the Lord for his help, I ask your attention to the fourth chapter of the book of Nehemiah and verse 10.
- The fourth chapter of the book of Nehemiah and I read verse 10. And Judah said, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed and there is much rubbish so that we are not able to build the wall.
- And Judah said, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. There is much rubbish so that we are not able to build the wall.
- It is necessary for a moment to look at the surrounding verses and indeed the surrounding chapters.
- Before we may as help look at these words, respecting the spiritual house of God and the church of Christ in the earth.
- [1 : 13] And our own cause of truth and indeed our own pathway. Now the context then, as we mentioned briefly, Nehemiah was distressed.
- As we could have read in the first chapter about the state of Jerusalem. The gates were burned with fire and the walls were broken down.
- And much exercise and much distress and much distress of soul was upon him. And that he would find the way and the means the Lord would provide for him to return to Jerusalem and to build and to repair, to restore the places where it was broken down.
- The second chapter is that remarkable chapter where the King Artaxerxes provided the means, sent him off with protection.
- And indeed the provision was made for him to be able to repair the walls and the gates of Jerusalem. But against them came great enemies.
- [2 : 36] Great enemies. I believe this, my friends, where the Lord is pleased to lay with weight any or any or part concern of the house of God or the state of the church of Christ.
- It will always be that there will be many temptations, many enemies. Not as real, perhaps, as Samballot and Tobiah and Geshe. But many fears, the enemy of one's soul.
- Temptations that follow anything that is done in the Lord's name and for the Lord's cause. And indeed the gracious work of the Spirit, when that is sought for and desired after.
- As you know, Moses wrote in the 90th Psalm, let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children. It will always be accompanied and it seems to attract many, many enemies and great opposition.
- Well, Samballot, Tobiah and Geshe was but a few of the great opposition that Nehemiah and his people experienced. The purpose was, of course, that the work should come to nothing.
- [3 : 55] And also that great fear shall be in the hearts of those who worked on the wall and upon the place where they were, that the work should come to nothing in that way.

Do not we read this? And that there was an army come against them and he spake, Samballot, he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria. What do these feeble Jews?

All this would have had an effect upon those Israelites of old, those who longed to see better days in Jerusalem. Then in the seventh verse, apart from Samballot and Tobiah, the Arabians, the Yemenites and the Ashtoreites.

And then there were some more enemies. And they come a little closer. They come a little closer, these enemies. If you read the word carefully, my friends, you'll find that there's enemies within the camp.

The text begins, and Judah said, Judah, the tribe from which Christ should come, the tribe of Israel, the tribe which was highly spoken of, of Judah, said, The strength of the bearers of burden is decayed and there is much rubbish so that we are not able to build the wall.

[5 : 15] Even those of Judah were affected by the opposition, affected by the fear that they would have installed in them.

And as if they were to bow to the opposition and bow to the hindrance and bow to the overthrow, the enemies that were against them. And then we get a little further.

And one more. And it came to pass that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us, Once, ten times, from all places whence ye shall return unto us, they will be upon you.

No encouragement from those who were Jews. And Judah was cast down sufficiently to, as it were, would have called a halt to the work.

And so that this great work should not be accomplished. And there's something else I read. In the sixth chapter, or the closing verses of the sixth chapter, we read these words.

[6 : 32] Moreover, in those days, the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, one of the enemies. Sent many letters unto Tobiah.

And the letters of Tobiah came unto them. For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son-in-law of Shekariah, the son of Arah, and his son Jehonah, and taken the daughter of Meshulam, the son of Berechiah.

And also they reported his good deeds before me. Good deeds. This was Tobiah, who was the enemy of the truth. Enemy of God. Enemy of those who would have built the wall.

They reported his good deeds before me and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear. So you can see the opposition.

It was massing, as it were, against these feeble Jews. Do you know where the Lord's work is? And blessed be God when he puts the work of God in the hearts and upon the spirits of the people of God, those who fear him.

[7 : 45] Where the work of the Lord is, there is something that these enemies cannot overthrow. Oh, they may hinder, I believe if you read in Ezra, there was a time when the work in building the temple came to a halt.

But in Ezra's time, there was a commencement again of building the temple. But you can see the reason, you can see the purpose, and you can, as it were, understand the fears of Nehemiah.

He wasn't one of these courageous persons who shrugged all this fear off and, as it were, labored on in strength. My friends, he, like all that fear the Lord, had a refuge.

And it was the God of all grace. I'm very touched sometimes when I read these things because they are personal, some of them. And it came to pass when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to naught, that we returned all of us to the wall, everyone, and to his work.

And we want to just say this before we go on with the spiritual aspect of this text. With all this opposition then, with all this distress, with all this fear in the heart, and it must have been they labored with one hand with the trowel, and with the other hand with the sword.

[9 : 11] They stayed up night and day to preserve and protect the people. With all that, and Nehemiah said, and I looked and rose up. Where did he look? Where did he look?

Where do you look? In all the trials and the troubles, all the oppositions, all the matters that distress your spirit, all the fearfulness of mind, all those things that come against us, where do we look?

And I looked. My friends, I believe he looked up. And I looked and rose up and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them.

Remember the Lord. There was his hope. There was his comfort. There was his distress to be taken. The person of the Lord of hosts.

And in what place ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us. Our God shall fight for us. Makes you think of those words, isn't it, in the 8th of the Romans?

[10 : 14] If God be for us, who can be against us? In the 54th of Isaiah, we read this, No weapon that is formed against thee should prosper.

Every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. And I would just remind you of one more.

Then we will turn to the spiritual. And it is this word. In the 6th chapter of Nehemiah, And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen were about us, saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes, for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

Now, then we would look at these words. And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. And there is much rubbish so that we are not able to build the wall.

First of all, my friends, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed.

[11 : 37] Who are these? Well, they are men of like passion as we are, or women of like passion as we are. They are those who fear the Lord. They are those to whom the Lord has laid the burden of Zion, the burden of our church and people, and to some, the burden of the souls of these people, the state and condition of one's own soul, the church of Christ in general, and one's own cause of truth in particular, the bearer of burdens.

And there's something you know that is often being the attraction to the bearers of burdens, and that is to lay the burden down. Now, God gave Nehemiah this burden, and God gives his people a burden to carry that they cannot lay down.

But they come into this place, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. In other words, there's weakness. In other words, there is temptation.

In other words, there's distress. In other words, they look at these burdens and they say, well, Lord, they're impossible things. The burdens that these people carry.

The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. In the 42nd Psalm, and I will speak from memory here, the psalmist speaks of two occasions, when, now we will read it, it will be better, where there was temptation.

[13 : 21] Great temptation laid upon the psalmist. my tears have been my meat, day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy God?

And then again, as with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me, where is thy God? Here was a man who loved the cults of God's house.

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me, for I've gone with the multitude. I went with them to the house of God, with a voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day.

And there was enemies. There was this sword in my bones. There was this continual temptation. Where is thy God? This isn't new, is it?

Where the work, where the burden of, of the house of God, where the burden of the souls of the people are concerned, whether the state is personal or collective, the Lord's house, the church of Christ, there will always be opposition.

[14 : 31] But there was an answer to that opposition, as there was in Nehemiah's day. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

There was this then that lay underneath it. It was the comfort, the strength, that which enables the child of grace, the burden bearer, to continue carrying those burdens.

The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. What brings weakness? Surely opposition will. Impossibilities will do so. Temptations will do so.

The enemy of one's soul will do so. And then, of course, these so-called friends, the Jews, those who were of the same nationality, those that were of the same upbringing, those who were under Israel's God, there was always these temptations.

Well, what we read from all places, when she shall return unto us, they will be upon you. My friends, with such propositions, then, there is weakness.

[15 : 51] The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. But I thought as I was coming up to chapel this morning, whatever the strength of the bearers of burdens is, how low it is, how impossible is the situation or circumstance, the castings down, the darkness of mind, the very many prayers and supplications that go unanswered, you know there's something that doesn't change.

And you'll say now, what indeed is it? Well, if the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, therefore the strength changes. There is weakness, no.

And there is distress, and so on. But you know something that doesn't change? The burdens. That doesn't change. The trouble of the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, is one thing.

But that doesn't lighten the burden, does it? That doesn't take the burden away. That makes it, of course, more distressing. That makes it more difficult.

That makes it more impossible. But the burdens remain the same. My friends, this is what dropped into my spirit as I came up to the house of the Lord.

[17 : 15] Though the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there's so many obvious ways in which this weakness is felt, this casting's down, this darkness, an opposition can be very strong.

You can't, my friends, turn away from the very many insinuations of the enemy. I read this now, and it touched my spirit. Hear, O God, for we are despised, and turn their reproach upon their own head and give them for a prey in the land of captivity and cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be bottled out from before thee, for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.

You know, these things do distress. These oppositions do distress. They do trouble. They do bring the child of grace low. These bearers of burdens.

But the burden doesn't change. That is still there. But, this is the mercy, my friends, in this word this morning. That goodness and mercy of God.

You know, if God lays something on his people, they are a dependent people with that burden that he is, they carry. They shall not carry it on themselves.

[18 : 36] There are many various words throughout the scriptures and examples throughout the scriptures that are encouraging and comforting and supporting to the bearers of burdens.

The poet says, Cast on me, he said, thy care. Tis enough that I am nigh. I will all thy burdens bear. I will all thy needs supply.

And in the Psalm 55, we read this, Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. There are many places in the book of Psalms and elsewhere in the scriptures where there is a casting of the day of trouble and the trial and the affliction and so on and the Lord will remove them.

But in that 55th Psalm, there isn't a removing of the burdens, but there is a support promised within the burden and to carry that burden. Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee.

And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. Oh, they might well be called these feeble Jews.

[19 : 54] What were these few feeble Jews as against the Arabians, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites and Sambalat and Tobiah and Gesheb?

What were they amongst so many? You know, if you look right through the word of God from Genesis to Revelation and then inquire, my friends, of the experiences of the people of God today, how great is the opposition, how distressing is the opposition, how fearful is the heart and how impossible is the situation, my friends, but there is three words that have come to me so much lately.

Three words. God is faithful and remember that. This is what Nehemiah rested upon. This is what Nehemiah was able to say to the Jews that were built and who all be not she afraid of them.

Remember the Lord. Remember that he is an unchangeable God. Remember this, that he is a faithful God. And remember this also, if he has laid a burden upon you, it will be a burden you can't manage.

But remember this, that he will give that grace to carry it. And another thing too, remember this, if God has laid a burden upon you, you can't lay it down. You must never try to lay it down.

[21 : 22] You listen to some people you know and you wonder really what their words really mean. Some people speak of the cross they carry and within a few days you suddenly realize that they've got rid of their cross.

Something else has happened. They've been relieved of it. So they haven't got a cross anymore. I say this with all carefulness, my friends, a child of God without a burden will be a very weak person.

You know, when the Lord lays burdens upon you, it is to teach you, first of all, there's a need of carrying a burden, but it is also a most sacred way of teaching the people of God, dependence entirely upon him, for his grace and for his mercy, for his intervention, for his appearance, for his deliverance, and that is what God will do and will indeed support his people.

There's one word that just came then to my mind that is in the last, next to the last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy. Moses had come to the end of his life.

Canyon lay, rather, Jordan lay before Israel and beyond Jordan was Canyon. They were to enter into the promised possession, but what lay in front of them, Jordan had overflowed his banks at harvest time, making the usual situation of a river more impossible, more impassible.

[23 : 06] But the promised possession lay beyond Jordan and Moses was to lay down his charge and the Lord were taken to his eternal rest and Joshua, Joshua the man of God was raised up in his stead.

And that in that chapter where he pronounces the blessing upon the people of God, he said this, the eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.

And Judah said the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. if there is to be a continuing to carry the burden, and I would say with carefulness that if God has given you the burden, a burden, the concern, the exercise, whatever that might be, if God has put that into your heart and it will therefore be accompanied by fearfulness and inability and poverty and unfitness, unsuitable, you know, amongst all the people of God that have been raised up to preach the gospel, there has been one that's suitable in themselves, not one.

you listen to them. You hear their cries as they pour out their heart before the Lord. You listen to them as they pray for the Lord's appearance and the Lord's deliverance.

My friends, I'm not exaggerating if I said this to you, that every service is an impossibility, and every Sunday is a mountain, and I come to the end of everything before I start, and it's only the Lord's appearance.

[25 : 07] I told a good friend of mine in the ministry how relieved I was at the end of the Sunday, and he couldn't understand me, but I believe he does now. The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed.

So what are we to do, these bearers of burdens? What are they to do? Lay the burden down? Well, they can't do that because the Lord laid it upon them. The Lord put the burden down.

Did he intend that you should be fitted, prepared for the matter of being a bearer of burden, and not give the necessary grace, and strength, and wisdom, and help?

Would he have laid these matters upon you, and as it were, left you to deal with them with your own ability, and wisdom, and strength? Not so, my friends, in this work.

Not so in this bearing of burdens. The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and so it will be, and it ever shall be.

[26 : 16] There's not going to be any possibility of changing that. Did we sing recently, was it Friday night, no help in self, I find, no help, and yet a salted well, the hated treasure of my mind, is sin, and death, and hell, where to then will we look for this help, for this grace, for this continuing grace, because that's another thing you know when you start in a matter.

I've said this before, I remember a dear servant of Grotty being sent out by a church to preach the gospel, and the chairman of that church meeting, who was a minister, said, starting is one thing, continuing, my friends, is the need of grace.

You start in a matter while you feel the Lord's appeared, but you know as the days go on, and the time goes on, and the years go on, well, it's a miracle indeed, but my friends, under it all is the Lord's appearance, the renewing of strength, you know what I pray for, I was going to say almost every day, the close of the 40th chapter of Isaiah, we find these words, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint, and all those mercies are to be found to those who wait upon the Lord.

I know this, I'm sure of this, I know it in myself, my friends, it's so me that you think any matter of the church of Christ, or any burden that the Lord is pleased to lay upon you is, well you're able to do something about it yourself, and we'll do it this way, this way, and this way, you know what it is, the natural mind working, preparing it all together, and mapping it out, and laying it straight, my friends, be not surprised if you're brought to Confucian.

There's a good man in our denomination many years ago, John Walgerton, and when he went to preach, men began to come and listen, and his congregations increased, and he began to think himself some prophet in his time, he began to feel that perhaps he was one of those good ministers in the denomination, till the day he got up and gave his text out and the Lord closed his mouth, my friends, if ever there was a need to be kept humble, it is only when you and I are kept dependent, that we are kept in humility, when you go in your own charge and your own strength and your own wisdom, my friends, who gets the glory and who gets the honour?

[29 : 07] Who gets the praise? I was brought low and he helped me. That's where it is. How many times do you say, Lord, help me in your prayers?

How many times were you like the woman from the coast of Tyrant site, come into circumstances, come into places, come into spots? You know what the hymn says in 1106, when all around my soul gives way, he then is all my strength and stay.

The strength of the bearers of burden is decaying. And this will be the pathway, which they're going to look into those Jews for help. All they do is to pour scorn on it or cause you to doubt and to fear.

What's the point of looking at Judah? He's Judah, the tribe of Judah and the elders of Judah. They look into the place where it's all coming to nothing.

My friend, if you walk the path of the master, if in a measure in your way you walk as a follower and a believer in the person of Christ, you will know that it will be a pathway where you've got to walk most of it alone.

[30 : 27] Never will I forget that verse of the hymn when it came and where it came. I feel forsaken and alone and hear the lions roar.

My friends, and so it is, isn't it? And every door is shut but one and that is mercy's door. Mercy's door. Take it to the spot of ground where that word dropped in.

The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. Or if there's to be a continuing, if there's to be a starting, if there is a commencement in the carriers, to be a carrier of a burden, the bearer of burdens rather as the scripture tells us, my friends, you have to start where you have to continue, not starting on your own abilities.

Empty the earth, my friends, that's no small thing to confess, emptied of earth, emptied of everything, of wisdom, of man, you know, there's one of the most lonely spots.

I heard when I first, well not when I first, during the early years of the ministry, I was sitting in a pulpit, rather in a vestry, rather in a chapel, waiting for the time to go into the chapel to service to commence, and someone said to me, well many years ago, the old pastor here said this was one of the most loneliest places, the vestry, that there's another lonely place, my friends, and that's where the servants of God stand.

[32 : 08] There's no help there, anywhere else, you know. I can't lean on anyone there, you know, there's no one there but the Lord, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed.

Well then, if there is to be a commencement, there is to be a dependence. If there's to be a dependence in the start, it will be a dependence all the time. My friends, none have ever gone into the service of the Church of Christ, whatever position that is, that have had to say before the Lord that they can only go as they are sent and they can only go as grace is given.

They can only go as indeed the Lord will continue with brought to nothing. That's a real fear, you know. Soon after I went to preach, I came across a dear old servant of God who's in glory now and I said it's come to nothing.

And he said it will come often to nothing. That wasn't facetious, that was experience. it will often come to nothing. Well, nobody understands that language.

My friends today, do they? But those who serve the Lord Christ in some manner or way in the Church of Christ, they'll come to nothing. So often.

[33 : 31] Thy whole dependence on me fix, or entertain a thought thy worthless schemes with thine to mix but venture to be known.

Oh, if there's ever a position or place in the Church of Christ, my friends, whether you are a member of a church or one who fears the Lord and others who hold office in the Church of Christ, whatever there is, it's where the Lord has laid a burden.

wherever the Lord has laid a burden, a spiritual burden, an exercise, a true concern, and the weight of that burden will cast you down, will bring you to the mercy seat, will bring you to the throne of grace, will bring you to prayer, to prove his help and to plead for his help.

What a blessed word that is at the close of the epistle to the Philippians, but my God, should supply all your need. Not some of it, not the bit that you can't manage, not those extras that have laid upon you, my friends, all of it, all of it, but my God should supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

That's where it will come from. I've often said and I hope you're not tired of listening to this example, but the Lord's ministry was three years.

[35 : 12] The Lord Jesus Christ's ministry was only three years or so. Those disciples who he chose and laid the word of God upon them, went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them.

But it was that word in the 22nd of Luke that just dropped in again. He sent them forth, he authorized them, he gave them the commission, he told them what to take with them and he told them what not to take with them.

And just before he went to suffering, he said, when I sent you without purse or script or shoes, lacked she anything, and they said nothing.

And I believe, my friends, every burden bearer in Zion, whatever that place may be, as a servant of God, whatever that place will be, my friends, I'll come to the end of that time and I'll have to say with those disciples, not one thing has failed.

Not one thing. And Judah said the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed and there is much rubbish.

[36 : 32] And there's much discouragement, isn't there? You know, there's something that's not lacking today. There's a lot of things that are lacking today in the church of Christ, but there's something that's not lacking, and that's discouragement.

There's enough of that to go on with. There's enough matters which distress and discourage the people of God, but there's something that remains under it all.

And this is the strength, and this is the support, and this is the source of every grace, and every help, and that is the faithfulness of God.

Remember the Lord, Nehemiah was able to say to his nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people. Be not ye afraid of them. Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses.

Well, sometimes we have to say we forget that text or forget that encouragement. Sometimes we say within ourselves, as it were, well, will the Lord appear?

[37 : 44] Will he? Shall I be brought to nothing? Shall the foretaste thou shalt be to disappointment brought? Not so, my friends.

Not so. Sin itself cannot separate the people of God from their God. All their unbelief, which is so strong and indeed so powerful powerful against these things will not separate them from the God of all grace.

We must close for this morning. And Judah said, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed and there is much rubbish so that we are not able to build the wall.

Amen. The notices are as follows. There's a prayer meeting God will in here on Wednesday night at 7 o'clock. Next Lord's Day there will be a reading service in the morning and I hope to be here in the evening.

Now I mentioned on Wednesday the death of Brain Tree of Madeline West. Tuesday she died. A funeral will take place at Brain Tree at 1.15pm the 26th of July.

[39 : 06] That's a week tomorrow. now shall we close with hymn 1047. 1047. By whom shall Jacob now arise for Jacob's friends of you?

And what should fill us with surprise they seem divided too? By whom shall Jacob now arise? For Jacob's foes are strong.

I read their triumph in their eyes. They think he'll fail here though. Hymn 1047. 1047. 2047.

10■■■■. 20àn 11■■■■ are kong probation or won rise on ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ territories Amen.

suffer and rise 14 but drifts for so so I heard that I was that I our on rise they have And let your songs in that evening Son, who was born This world was born

[41 : 59] The castle is lost not without her eyes Three ■■■ fera high but none The love of God's love The love of God is mine The love of God is mine O take them on the bright sun A highest hivpre ■■■■■■

Lord we ask thy blessing on thy word thy forgiveness for all that has been spoken of this gather us together Lord at the evening of the day meet with us here, bless us with thy presence graciously influenced by thy spirit enable us to continue and now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father in thee communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit the Comforter remain with us each both now and forever Amen