

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

Volume 9

December 6, 2020

Number 49

THINGS TO BEAR

John Edwards

The word “bear” appears more than 200 times throughout the pages of Holy Writ. Consider some things the word of the Lord calls upon us to bear:

HIS CROSS. The cost of discipleship includes cross-bearing. Jesus said, “*And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple*” (Lk. 14:27). Remember Jesus bore the cross for us. John 19:17-18 records, “*And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull... Where they crucified him...*” Hebrews 12:2 says He “*endured the cross*”. Think of the sacrifice and shame associated with His cross-bearing! Each must bear his cross, in order to be the Lord’s disciple.

THE REPROACH OF CHRIST. As the bodies of beasts were burned “*without the camp*” under the old covenant (Ex. 29:14), “*...Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate*” (Heb. 13:11-12). Romans 15:3 says of Christ, “*For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me*”, a quote from Psalm 69:9. We are admonished, “*Let us go*

forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Heb. 13:13). This involves being “*made a gazingstock*” (Heb. 10:33), the object of contempt or scorn. Moses serves as a great example: “*Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward*” (Heb. 11:25-26). How do we regard disgrace for the sake of Christ?

THE INFIRMITIES OF THE WEAK. Paul wrote, “*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves*” (Rom. 15:1). The “*strong*” and “*weak*” in this setting has to do with difference in personal conscience: “*For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs*” (Rom. 15:2). “*One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike*” (Rom. 15:4). Such were matters of individual determination: “*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*” (Rom. 15:4). “*Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God....*” (Rom. 14:22). How did the one, who could in all good conscience eat meat, bear or endure those scruples of the vegetarian which arose through weakness of conscience? By submitting to self-restraint

(1 Cor. 10:24-33; 8:1-13). Paul’s disposition was: “*Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend*” (1 Cor. 8:13). We must respect other people’s consciences! Rather than pleasing ourselves, “*Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification*” (Rom. 15:2).

TEMPTATION. We are taught: “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*” (1 Cor. 10:13). Temptation is common to man in that “*every man is tempted*” (Jas. 1:14) through the same avenues: “*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*” (1 Jn. 2:16). To say that temptation is greater than we can bear is to make God a liar, for He says that is not the case in this passage, and to charge God as being unfaithful, which He is not! With every temptation comes a way to escape. To bear or endure temptation, we must look for and take the escape route! “*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*” (Jas. 1:12).

OUR BURDENS. The Bible teaches, *“For every man shall bear his own burden”* (Gal. 6:5). There is a sense in which we have to carry our own load. The word *“burden”* here is used of faults, the consciousness of which oppresses the soul. David expressed this after he had gone in to Bathsheba: *“...my sin is ever before me”* (Ps. 51:3). We are each responsible for our own conduct. We have to stand on our own two feet. *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”* (Rom. 14:12).

ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS. Galatians 6:2 teaches, *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”* *“Burdens”* here is used of troublesome moral faults. Paul had just mentioned *“if a man be overtaken in a fault”* in verse one. Have we considered the heaviness and weight of such a load? When we carry and share each other’s burdens, we *“fulfil the law of Christ.”* Galatians 5:14 says, *“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”* Jesus said, *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you,*

that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn. 13:34-35).

FRUIT. The word *“bear”* is used in the sense of yielding or producing fruit. John 15 abiding in Jesus teaching points out: *“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit”* (v. 2). *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me”* (v. 4). *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”* (v. 5). *“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples”* (v. 8). From this we learn that the Lord expects His disciples to be fruit-bearing, and that to be fruitful we must get in and remain in the Lord! We are known by the fruit that we bear (Mt. 7:15-20).

Jesus Christ set the perfect example of bearing! *“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many...”* (Heb. 9:28). He

bore it all! How are we doing when it comes to bearing?

ARE WE BEHAVING OURSELVES?

John Edwards

“...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God...” (1 Tim. 3:15). Here Paul speaks of the manner of life incumbent upon children of God. Paul behaved himself. He reminded the Thessalonians: *“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe”* (1 Th. 2:10). *“For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you”* (2 Th. 3:7). Men desiring to be elders must be *“...of good behaviour...”* (1 Tim. 3:2). Titus 2:3 says, *“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness...”* (Titus 2:3). Sometimes children misbehave and need to be corrected. This is no less true of children of God. This is for our profit.

The Terre Haute **SPEAKER** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

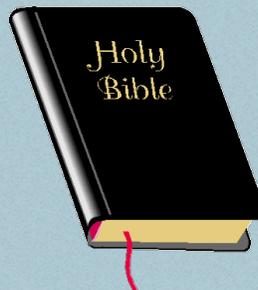
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