

John 14

Burden Bearing

Jesus taught his disciples many lessons in the three years
he spent with them..

Now Jesus teaches them the most difficult lesson of all so far.

To take his yoke upon them and learn from him
to stay connected to him
to believe not just about him, but to believe in him
when they are confused or fearful or feeling heavy burdened.

Jesus told them he was leaving them.
He told them he would come back and
would prepare a place for them where he was going and
that he would not leave them orphaned.

Yet, their questions tell us that they didn't grasp what he was saying.
All they heard was that he was leaving them behind.

You know how it is when you receive some shocking news
your mind is trying to absorb what you just heard
and then whatever you hear after the shock is just a blur.

You can hear the desperation and panic in the tone of the questions
the disciples asked him when he told them he was leaving.

Peter a man of action said,
“Lord, *where* are you going” and “Why can't I follow you *now*?”

Thomas a man of caution who had to have it all laid out first, said,
“Lord, we don't *know* where you're going,
how can we *know* the way?”

Judas, not Iscariot, thought,
“Wait a minute, you're the Messiah and you haven't established your
Kingdom on earth yet like we know you're supposed to
Lord, how is it that you have manifested yourself to us and
not to the whole world?”, he asked. “You're not done yet!”

If you have ever stood in an airport terminal and
looked out through the large glass wall and
watched as a plane with someone you love on board slowly pulled
away wondering if the plane would arrive safely,
and you wished they didn't have to leave or
wished you could run at the last minute to stop the plane
to get on board with them,
then you have a sense of what the disciples were feeling.

They loved Jesus and wanted him to stay.
Not only that but he was their leader.
Who would lead them? Who would teach them?
Who would finish the job he had started?

They didn't know it yet but they were the ones who Jesus had been
preparing all along to lead and teach and heal.

Jesus told them "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me."

The disciples didn't understand yet that Jesus had to die so that
the life he lived in the Father and the Father in him
could be made available to them.
They were to be his hands and feet in the world.

The grace and power of the Holy Spirit could not be fully unleashed
until the Son willingly went to the Cross in total obedience to the
Father.

Jesus being in the Father meant more than knowing about Him.
His relationship with his Father was such that the Father's will became
his will, lived out in perfectly submission and action.
The Father's life was his life.
'Believing in' vs. 'knowing about' are two different things

A college basketball player, for example, who believes in his coach
because the coach is a former NBA champion,
will do whatever the coach says.
He believes the coach is right because the coach has done the very same
things in his life that led him to the pinnacle of his profession.

If the coach says to a player to change his shooting technique,
he will do it even if it feels awkward and initially causes him
to shoot worse at first.

He believes in the coach. He trusts what he says even though it may be
difficult at first.

If the coach says to run four miles a day or lift weights thirty minutes
each day, he will do it even though it hurts.

If the coach says to pass the ball more and shoot less for the sake
of the team, he will accept his role. Why?

Because the athlete believes the coach knows better than he does
what makes a winner.

When you truly believe in a person in authority,
you willingly follow that person in complete authority
because you trust that he knows what he is talking about
even if what he directs you to do is a challenge.

The athlete who does not believe *in* the coach will not fully follow.
He may believe things *about* the coach – that he is a former champion
but believing certain information and believing in someone's authority
are two different things.

True believers of Jesus not only believe in things about Jesus' life.
True believers believe in his right to direct their lives.
And as the Son was obedient to the Father,
followers of Jesus are obedient to the Son.

The crisis reveals to us a good lesson we can all learn from –
the difference between “burden-bearing that is right and
burden-bearing that is wrong.

Jesus had a heavy burden to bear
and the Father did not take the cup from him
when his burden seemed too heavy to bear.

And sometimes when we follow Jesus
“There are burdens placed on us that God will not lift off us”
(Oswald Chambers).

It's crucial to see how Jesus bore his burden – he turned to his Father and his life in Him gave him the strength and will and courage to persevere.

We will be overwhelmed unless we turn to God and hand back to God whatever He has put upon us.

Not fling it back to him but hand it back to Him and walk hand in hand with him. (Chambers).

Believing in him and living in him and he in us means
He takes away the feeling that we are responsible
by our own efforts alone
by bringing in the power and grace of
Himself into our efforts and into our life.

The disciples learned the hard way, as we all do at one time or another
that when we undertake work for God
and then get out of touch with him either by casting the burden off
or by bearing the burden alone—
we will be crushed by the responsibility.

God never asks us to bear the burden of life alone.

Jesus bore the crushing weight of his burden-bearing through his obedience
and total trust in his Father. Jesus assured his disciples:

Your questions will be answered in time when the Holy Spirit,
the Comforter will remind you of everything I am saying to you now.
Until that time, stay in touch with me.
Stay in touch with each other.
I will not leave you orphaned.

You cannot bear it all by yourself.
Do not fling off what God has asked you to bear and quit.
Let the burden rest on his shoulder and then put your shoulder into it as well.

The burden will be lightened by the sense of companionship
between you and the Lord and
between you and the other burden-bearers God has put in your life.

We can put our trust in Christ.

We can believe in Christ.

Not just *about* Him but *in* Him because he and the Father are one and
because he is in us and we in him.

We can turn over to him authority in our lives
because as Paul writes

“Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ”.

He will not demand authority over our life or
grab it from us against our will or pressure us to turn it over.

The burden-bearer of the world will wait patiently for us
to allow him to bear the burden in a way that leads
to companionship and intimate fellowship with Him in this life.

And a place in His Father’s house for all eternity.