



Carrying Other's Burdens!

by Mark Brunner

Making Things Go! (Psalm 22:5)

Recently I was confronted with moving my son's go-cart from one end of the woodshed to the other. But, because I had stacked quite a bit of wood in the middle of the shed, I couldn't push the cart. I had to tip it up and carry it. That's when I ran into trouble. It was a bit too heavy for me to move alone and it wasn't long before my shoulder muscles began to ache. That's when my son stepped in. What had been a near impossibility became fairly easy with two sets of hands at work. The cart got moved and my muscles were spared.

When someone steps in to lend a hand its amazing the work that can be done and even the pain that can be spared. It's no different when it comes to lending a hand to our fellowman.

Here's a story: It was a very hot summer day when Herman Trueblood was walking home from a cool dip in the ocean when he noticed a man perspiring profusely as he was trying with the help of his two young sons to push

his broken-down car up an incline. Trueblood looked at the struggling trio and said to himself, “Here is an opportunity for service. You ought to give them a hand.” An opposing voice chimed in, “No, it’s none of your

business. You’ll get yourself all hot and dirty. Let them take care of their own responsibility.” Eventually he yielded to the better impulse, put his shoulder to the task and together they pushed the car over the incline and on

its way. Before they took off, the father, putting his hand out to Trueblood, said, “I’m very glad that you came along. You had just enough strength, added to ours, to make the thing go.” Trueblood noted, “Years have passed since that hot day, but I can still hear that phrase as fresh in my mind today as it was then. (Daily Encounter)

There are numerous people around us who are barely making it over their private hill of despair when, with a helping hand, they could make it. God works through his church and you and I are the body of Christ. We are the arms and legs that make it happen for those who are falling down, crushed by the cares of this life. Our humble strength is just enough to make things go.

“Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matt 6:34)

Love Bricks! (Luke 13: 15-17)

Recently I wanted to watch a movie with my son. It was one of those flicks with lots of suspense and some pretty good “action” sequences. That was my focus when I came downstairs to put the DVD into the player and start watching. Unfortunately, my son had one more thing to do before he could sit down with me to watch the movie. It wouldn’t take long, but it had to be done. I found myself becoming impatient with Dan. My sense of time and his weren’t in sync. Something had to give. Yet, my impatience was overwhelming. It was so overwhelming that I couldn’t even see the fact that if I had given him a hand, we’d see the movie sooner.

Sometimes we buzz through life so quickly, we don't slow down long enough to see how others might need us.

Here's a story: A young executive was traveling down a Chicago street in his new Jaguar. He slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, a brick sailed out and smashed into the car's shiny black side door! He slammed on the brakes and backed to where the brick had been thrown, jumped out of the car, grabbed the kid and shouted, "What are you doing? That's my new car." "Please, mister, please ... I'm sorry! I didn't know what else to do!" pleaded the youngster. "I threw the brick because no one else would stop! It's my brother, mister." He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up. Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me." The young executive tried desperately to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. Straining, he lifted the young man back into the wheelchair. He then watched the younger brother push him down the sidewalk toward their home. The executive never did fix the side door of his Jaguar. He kept it to remind him not to go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at him to get his attention. (Source Unknown)

It's easy sometimes to hide behind our own comfortable, little lives in order to avoid committing flagrant acts of love; and, perhaps, it's more comfortable as well. Sometimes it takes a "love brick" thrown by someone in need to knock us into our senses and remind us that carrying someone else's burden is what true Christian love is all about.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt 6:34)

Birds Of A Feather! (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

I watched a flock of Canadian Geese fly over Beech Springs the other day. It was the usual v-shaped flight formation except that there was one bird straggling toward the rear of the group. Suddenly that bird broke formation completely and slowly glided toward a soft landing in a nearby field. For

some reason the bird evidently just couldn't keep up with the group. What was amazing, however, was that, as soon as that one bird broke formation, the two geese closest to it in the formation broke ranks as well. Together they glided down to that same field where their comrade had landed only moments earlier. They waddled up close to their exhausted friend and I watched them for a brief time until all three bounded back into flight, now a small flock of three with one of the companion birds now leading the way.

So it is sometimes with us. If it wasn't for the companionship of friends, breaking ranks could mean total isolation.

Here's a story: On July 25, 2002, nine coal miners were drilling into the Quecreek Mine in Somerset County, Pennsylvania when 50 million gallons of water released into their shaft, cutting them off from the surface. More than 200 rescuers worked to save them. The men were trapped in a small chamber in frigid 55-degree water. The miners "decided early on they were either going to live or die as a group." They were all rescued as a group some 77 hours later. To avoid hypothermia, when one would get cold, the other eight would huddle around that person, and when another person got cold, the favor was returned. "Everybody had strong moments," one miner later reported. "But any certain time maybe one guy got down, and then the rest pulled together. And then that guy would get back up, and maybe someone else would feel a little weaker, but it was a team effort. That's the only way it could have been." (Peter Kennedy, © 2003.)

In everyday life, we need to decide to live or die as a group and to carry other's burdens when they become too heavy to bear. Each of us needs to seek to build up other believers when their load becomes too heavy. "To bear one another's burdens" simply means to help each other along. If you see your fellowman leaning, prop him up; if you see him stumble, help him get his footing; if he fall, pick him up. That's the only way we'll all get through this—together!

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt 6:34)

To Fix Or Not To Fix! (Galatians 6:2)

I love to lend a helping hand when someone in my family asks for help. Last night Holly asked me to help her with her computer banking. She needed someone to help her with her computer accounting software. I jumped in and was able find the solution to her problem. Once discovered, I proceeded to “fix” her software problem. Unfortunately, I neglected to backup her files prior to “fixing” her problem. It wasn’t long before my fix became a problem in and of itself. While it took me only a few minutes to find the problem in the first place, it took me a whole lot longer to restore her file after I corrupted it with my new fix.

Before jumping in with both feet, sometimes it’s wiser to see if our fix is really what is needed in the first place.

Here’s a story from Judy Miller: One of my clients has a couple of finches. They are such tiny little birds. I had never seen such little birds up close before. But there was something even smaller in the cage. There were about six teeny little eggs in the nest. I couldn’t believe the size of them. I could hardly wait until they hatched and I could see those teeny little birds. The next time I was there, the eggs were gone -- but there were no baby finches either. I was told the eggs did hatch and the young were doing fine until the male finch tried to fix the nest for the mother and her babies. In doing that, he fluffed things up in the nest and added more “comfortable stuff” to make it better for the babies. The problem, though, was that in doing this, the babies were smothered. (Judy Miller gjmiller@telusplanet.net Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada)

How often we try to “fix” things for others. So many times, we “smother” those we’re trying to fix. We add too much “comfortable stuff” in their lives. There is a difference between “fixing” and helping others. Fixing is not helping them to see their own issues that need to be dealt with. Supporting and encouraging is helping them to see what they need to do in order to grow. If the finch had “helped” with the young, they would not have died. But “fixing” destroyed them. May it be our goal to help others to grow – and at the same time, not to fix them. We all need to see that we are responsible for

our own actions. If we don't allow others to take responsibility for their actions, it doesn't help them one little bit.

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matt 6:34)

Growing Good Corn! (Ephesians 4:6)

I'm often amazed as to how beneath the surface of simplicity there are often layers of complexity hidden from the human eye. I use a lot of plywood here at Beech Springs. And, because it is so mundane, I don't often take the time to really look at the wood closely. It's amazing how such thin strips of wood, glued together, form such a strong bond. In fact, wood bonded this way is often stronger than solid wood; since it is so, well, pliable. The key is the glue that holds the thin pieces together to make the solid piece. No individual layer can do the work on its own. It takes multiple layers, each touching the other, to make the wood strong.

How we touch one another as Christians is similar in that respect. Alone and isolated, as individuals we really aren't that effective. But, put us together as a group, that's a whole different story.

Here's a story: A farmer grew award-winning corn. Each year the farmer entered his corn in the state fair where it won a blue ribbon. One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it. The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbor's. "How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?" the reporter asked. "Why sir," said the farmer, "didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn." (Tidbits Devotional tidbits-request@mlists.net)

That farmer was very much aware of your life and mine are connected. His corn couldn't improve unless his neighbor's corn improved. So it is with us:

Those who choose to be at peace must help their neighbors to be at peace. Those who choose to live well must help others to live well, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all. The lesson for each of us is this: If we are to grow good corn, we must help our neighbors grow good corn.

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matt 6:34)