

Burden Bearing

• Lesson One •

We Live in a Burdened World

1. The cause of our burdens is sin
2. The answer to our burdens is redemption

Worship

Read responsively **Job 7:1-7**, the anguished prayer of a burdened man.

A: Does not man have hard service on earth?

B: Are not his days like those of a hired man?

A: Like a slave longing for the evening shadows,

B: Or a hired man waiting eagerly for his wages,

A: So I have been allotted months of futility,

B: And nights of misery have been assigned to me.

A: When I lie down I think, "How long before I get up?"

B: The night drags on, and I toss till dawn.

A: My body is clothed with worms and scabs,

B: My skin is broken and festering.

A: My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,

B: And they come to an end without hope.

A: Remember, O God, that my life is but a breath;

B: My eyes will never see happiness again.

Prayer: Lord, help us to understand why we suffer pain and lead us to see your loving purpose in everything. Let us never give up hope but find our hope in you. Amen.

Introduction

Thelma and George were proud of their son. He had made a fine career for himself. He had a lovely wife and children. But in the prime of life, he was killed in an auto crash. It made no sense. It hurt so much. They cried out to God: "Why did he have to die? Why was he taken when he was so young?"

How do you answer the questions and heartaches people have when tragedy strikes their lives?

Studying God's Word

The cause of our burdens is sin

Bad stuff happens. Living in this world means living with painful and ugly events. Some of God's first recorded words to humanity remind us why this is so.

Read Genesis 3:16-20.

1. Adam and Eve had just sinned. What painful consequences would sin bring to women? to men?

2. What was the ultimate burden all people now would bear? (verse 19)

3. After hearing God's Word, Adam made a confession of faith. What bold confession did he make by calling his wife Eve? On what was his hope based? (see Genesis 3:15)

His Word in My Life

The city neighborhood where the Smiths lived was eroding. Crime was becoming more prevalent. Drugs and gangs were evident. So the Smiths moved out to the suburbs. They found they did not like the school district there, so Mrs. Smith began homeschooling their children. Then a group of college students moved into the house next door and had loud parties late into the night. Down the block, the Smiths discovered there was a family whose teenage son had been arrested and held in juvenile detention three times. Mrs. Smith became uneasy about letting her children play outside. She and her husband talked about moving again.

As a Christian friend of the Smiths, what advice would you give them?

Refocus on the key point

In I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew, Dr. Seuss wrote,

*"I'm off to the City of Solla Sollew,
On the banks of the beautiful River Wa-Hoo,
Where they never have troubles! At least, very few."*

The answer to our burdens is redemption

During hospital visits, a pastor will often quote these words: "When you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned" (Isaiah 43:2). Notice that God does not say we won't have to cross the rivers or walk through the fires. He does promise to rescue us in the midst of these things.

Read Romans 8:18-25.

1. Since sin entered the world, God has subjected his creation to frustration. What are some evidences of this?

2. None of us would choose to live in frustration. Why is it God's will to let us live in a frustrated and frustrating world?
3. Paul wrote, "The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (Romans 8:22). Name some ways in which the experience of childbirth compares to the "groaning" of creation and of our spirits.
4. Agree or disagree: If we had no burdens in life, we would have little interest in eternal life.

His Word in My Life

Mr. Gibson is a well-paid executive for a highly profitable company. He easily affords to send his children to private school. He and his wife are able to jet away for holidays at their leisure. He is in good health and has no major problems.

Mr. Jensen has been unemployed for over a year. He suffered a back injury at his last job that never fully healed. He received disability income for a time, but that has run out. The trailer home in which he and his family live is in need of repair. They are experiencing severe behavioral problems with one of their children.

Which of these two men do you suppose might feel a greater need for the gospel?

Refocus on the key point

"I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden." Lynn Anderson, remake by Martina McBride

Summary

Go back to the opening worship verses quoted from Job. If you were one of Job's friends and you had come to visit him in his pain, what would you have said to him?

Life with God

- Day 1: Sing aloud or use as a prayer all four verses of hymn 417, "I'm But a Stranger Here."
- Day 2: Read Job chapter 1 and memorize verse 21. Notice that tests and temptation may happen at the same time and through the same difficulty. Satan tempts with the intent to destroy. God tests with the intent to build up and strengthen.
- Day 3: Review Job 1:21. Read Job chapter 2. Pay special attention to verse 10.
- Day 4: Read Job chapter 3. Notice that Job was not a superman, immune to pain.
- Day 5: Read Job chapters 4 and 5. Note especially 4:7. Eliphaz assumes that Job is suffering for some specific sin.
- Day 6: Read Job chapters 6 and 7. Note what he says in 6:21-30. Job knew that he was not being punished for being more wicked than others.
- Day 7: Read Isaiah 43:1-7. You may wish to commit parts of this section to memory for your own comfort in times of need and to comfort others.