

## SABBATH THOUGHT 2026-04-25—BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

A very familiar scripture is found in Galatians:

GALATIANS 6:2 **Bear one another's burdens**, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

The meaning of this seems so clear; however, read Paul's conclusion:

GALATIANS 6:5 For **each one shall bear his own load**.

If verse 2 is so obvious, then why does verse 5 seem to completely contradict it? How can we bear the burden of someone if they must bear their own burden? The Greek word for *bear* in both verses is *bastazo* (G0941), which means to *lift*. We are to lift the burdens of others to help them endure.

While the word *bear* is the same in both verses, the word for *burden* is quite different. In verse 2, *burden* is the Greek word *baros* (G0922). It means a *weight* or *pressure*. It is source of the word *barometer*, which is a device for measuring the pressure of gases. It is used by meteorologists to measure atmospheric pressure. This is quite different from the Greek word for *burden* in verse 5. That word is *phortion* (G5413), which means an *invoice*. An invoice is a bill that lists the cost for goods provided or services. In other words, verse 2 says to help bear the weight or pressure of burdens that others are enduring whereas verse 5 says each person must bear the cost of their own burdens.

God tests us to prove our hearts, our faith, and our obedience by giving us burdens to bear in the form of "fiery trials."<sup>1</sup> Our 'invoice' is the personal cost of those trials. Many times it comes in the form of pain, sickness, illness, grief, persecution, etc. but it is nontransferable—the cost of suffering can only be paid by the recipient because the physical and mental sufferings of a trial can only truly be borne by the one with the burden. Others can provide aid, comfort, and encouragement but no one else can help pay the cost of that 'invoice'. But there is more:

GALATIANS 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and **so fulfill the law of Christ**.

Paul says bearing the burdens of others fulfills the Law of Christ. What is that? Recall that the Law of God is summarized by the two Great Commandments:

MATTHEW 22:36-40 "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall **love the LORD your God** with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is *the* first and great commandment. 39 "And *the* second *is* like it: 'You shall **love your neighbor as yourself**.' 40 "**On these two commandments hang all the Law** and the Prophets."

The Law of God given to Moses HANGS on the two Great Commandments. But what fulfills the Law of God?

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 4:12.

ROMANS 13:8-10 Owe no one anything except to **love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.** 9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, “**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**” 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.**

Love of God and love of our neighbor FULFILLS the Law of God. But is the Law of Christ just another name for the Law of God? No; Jesus spoke often of the Law of God but, on one occasion, He gave His own commandment:

1 JOHN 3:23 And this is His [*God's*] commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ **and love one another, as He [*Jesus Christ*] gave us commandment.**

Apparently, Jesus Christ Himself gave a commandment that was not originally part of the Law of God:

JOHN 13:34-35 “**A new commandment I [*Jesus Christ*] give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.** 35 “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The commandment Jesus Christ gave was a NEW commandment; that is, it was not part of the original Law of God. The Law of Christ refers to this new commandment to love one another among the *ekklesia* as He, Jesus Christ, loves us! The Law of God demands people to love their neighbors but Jesus Christ commanded a much deeper love between those of the *ekklesia*. It was a new commandment because the *ekklesia*, also called the Body of Christ, did not exist before His crucifixion. Continuing in Galatians:

GALATIANS 6:3-4 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let **each one examine [*G1381 = dokimazo = verify*] his own work**, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Each person is to *test, examine, and verify* their own WORKS. What works are we to examine? The works of bearing one another's burdens! **Bearing the burdens of others specifically fulfills the Law of Christ because it is a work of agape love to help brethren with their sufferings by lifting their burdens to the extent possible. Being willing to suffer along with others fulfills the Law of Christ who loved us and suffered for us. Bearing the burdens of others are GOOD WORKS!** While the full cost of suffering can only be borne by the one in the midst of a trial, none of the *ekklesia* should allow a brother or sister to bear their burdens alone, even if helping them costs us personally.

Above all else that pertains to salvation, nothing is more important than becoming agape love in the same way that “*God [and Christ] IS love.*”<sup>2</sup> Agape love is the motive for bearing the burdens of others, which are not only evidence of agape love but are Good Works we are to EXAMINE. Our Good Works mirror the works of

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<sup>2</sup> 1 John 4:8, 16.

salvation that God is doing in us. Salvation is not by our works but by the works of God alone<sup>3</sup>; however, God works to produce the Fruit of the Spirit in us. Fruit is a metaphor for Good Works done for the benefit of others. Like the tree that produces them, fruit is *always* produced for OTHERS<sup>4</sup>—the tree does not profit from its own fruit. Fruit is lacking or missing among the *ekklesia* when:

- Brethren are divided according to their organizations,
- Brethren look for faults in others (and ignore their own sins),
- Brethren refuse to reconcile offenses—they ‘love’ to be angry and hateful,
- Brethren turn away from those in need of help with their trials.

The fact is that salvation comes 1) by the works of God that produce His agape love in us (this requires faith that God works to impute His righteousness), and 2) our own Good Works<sup>5</sup> motivated by agape love. If the first point is not critically decisive for salvation, then why does Scripture say that “Love covers all sins?”<sup>6</sup> If the second point is not critically decisive for salvation, then why did Jesus Christ declare the Parable of the Sheep & Goats?

MATTHEW 25:33-36, 41-43, 46 “And He [*Jesus Christ*] will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, **‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 ‘I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ [these are GOOD WORKS!] ...** 41 “Then He will also say to those [*goats*] on the left hand, **‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 ‘I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ [they did NO Good Works!] ...** 46 “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Bearing the burdens of others is the only TEST (that I can find) in the Bible by which we can examine our GOOD WORKS.<sup>7</sup> Read it again:

GALATIANS 6:2-4 **Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.** 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 **But let each one examine his own work,** ...

Bearing one another’s burdens aids the physical and emotional sufferings but it also can be helping others overcome sin. Notice what Paul said in the first verse:

GALATIANS 6:1 Brethren, **if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness,** considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 4:5-6; 1 Cor. 12:6; Phil. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; Jas. 2:14; Rev. 15:3.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the Sabbath Thought article [2025-11-08 – Giving Fruits of the Spirit](#).

<sup>5</sup> Jas. 2:14; Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19, 23; 3:1, 8, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Prov. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8. Also Luke 10:38-42.

<sup>7</sup> Also 2 Cor. 8:8-22

It does not say to publicly condemn the person, it does not say to confront them with self-righteous anger, it does not say to shun them, it does not say to 'disfellowship' them, and it does not say that you are spiritually superior. To that last point, it says to consider YOURSELF; lest you fall by your own temptations. Whether the burden of someone is the result of someone's sin, the sin of others, poor decisions, 'time and chance'<sup>8</sup>, or Satan, true agape love desires all to be SAVED. Agape love looks past the faults, sins, and circumstances behind the burdens and desires to help those who suffer. Actions that ease the afflictions of others are Good Works. This is why becoming agape love IS becoming a god-child<sup>9</sup>—God loved us while we were in our own sins<sup>10</sup>. It is not an exaggeration that we must BECOME agape love like God<sup>11</sup>:

EPHESIANS 5:1-2 Therefore **be imitators of God** as dear children. 2 And **walk in love**, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

[NET2.1] EPHESIANS 4:23-24 to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and to **put on the new man who has been created in God's image [lit., "made into a god"]**—in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth.

1 JOHN 3:2 Beloved, now **we are children of God**; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He [*Jesus Christ*] is revealed, **we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed [metamorphosis = fundamentally transform] into the same image** from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

PSALM 17:15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied **when I awake in Your [the LORD's] likeness [the embodiment of God]**.

GALATIANS 4:19 My little children, for whom I [*Paul*] labor in birth again until **Christ is formed [metamorphosis = fundamentally transform] in you**,

Agape love and Good Works are foundational to receiving eternity in the Kingdom. There is only one *ekklesia* and, if we are a part of it, we must have "deep concern for **all** the *ekklesia*"<sup>12</sup> and bear one another's burdens according to the Law of Christ!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>8</sup> Eccl. 9:11; Luke 13:2-5.

<sup>9</sup> Ps. 82:6.

<sup>10</sup> Rom. 5:8.

<sup>11</sup> Also Matt. 5:48; Luke 6:40; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 2:16; Gal. 4:19.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Cor. 11:28.