

Are You Carried By God or Carrying Your gods■

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the imagery of God being a God who carries His people, contrasting the false gods that require burdens to be carried by weary beasts. The message highlights the need to believe in God's ability to bear our biggest burden of sin, His willingness to carry us, and the importance of turning to Him for salvation and sustenance. The sermon encourages relying on God's strength, trusting His guidance, and being proactive in bearing the burdens of others as a response to His tender love.

Scripture: Isaiah 46:4, Isaiah 46:7, Isaiah 46:13, Matthew 11:28, Deuteronomy 1:30, Isaiah 40:11, Isaiah 45:22, 2 Corinthians 1:9, Philippians 2:10

Topics: "God's Care", "Burden Bearing"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the imagery of God being a God who carries His people, contrasting the false gods that require burdens to be carried by weary beasts. The message highlights the need to believe in God's ability to bear our biggest burden of sin, His willingness to carry us, and the importance of turning to Him for salvation and sustenance. The sermon encourages relying on God's strength, trusting His guidance, and being proactive in bearing the burdens of others as a response to His tender love.

Transcript

Go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 46. For a moment, I was wondering if Caleb was going to say that when he said 43. So we're going to look at a few chapters past Isaiah 43.

Isaiah 46. Let's go ahead and read. Verse 1 and a little in there.

Isaiah 46. Bell bows down. Nebo stoops.

Their idols are on beasts and livestock. These things you carry are born as burdens on weary beasts. They stoop.

They bow down together. They cannot save the burden, but they themselves go into captivity. Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been born by Me from before your birth, carried from the womb, even to your old age.

I am He. And to your gray hairs, I will carry you. I have made and I will bear.

I will carry and will save. To whom will you liken Me? And make Me equal and compare Me, that we may be alike? Those who lavish gold from the purse and weigh out silver in the scales and they hire a goldsmith and he makes it into a god. Then they fall down and they worship.

Then they lift it to their shoulders and they carry it. They set it in its place and it stands there. It cannot move from its place.

If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble. Remember this and stand firm. Recall it to mind, you transgressors.

Remember the former things of old, for I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is none like Me. Declaring the end from the beginning, from the ancient times, the things not yet done.

Saying, My counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all of My purposes. And let's stop right there. What a glorious reality.

Going on and on again. Isaiah and the Lord speaking through the prophet. We just behold the magnificent glory of who our God is.

Let's pray. Father, Lord, I thank You that we have these incredible words that I hope of encouragement here that You are a God who carries His people. Lord, that You bear us.

That we're laid upon You. That we're Your responsibility. And Lord, I need You to even carry me as I try to speak to the sheep about You being a God who carries His people.

Lord, You've got to carry me to help even relay this in a way that is correct prayed, even that is something that's memorable by which we run to in times of discouragement, of struggle, of unbelief, that we go back to You. Because Lord, there is no other. Lord, there's none like You.

Lord, all these illustrations and the imagery that You've given to us in Your Word, Lord, it fails to show us perfectly who You are and Your glory. And yet nonetheless, Father, we thank You that You do give us these different pictures and these ideas and these concepts. And You do reveal Yourself to us.

And I pray even as I speak, Lord, if someone here has a distorted view of who You are, Lord, would You correct that? That they'd see You in this way of God who carries His people. And Lord, that they would cry out to You to carry them even today, that they would no longer bear their own burdens. But Lord, have You, the burden-bearing God, bear their burdens for them.

Lord, I pray this in Christ's name, Amen. Well, the Lord has spoken to Israel about His plans to deliver them from Babylon. You have a lot of that happening in chapter 45.

And in this chapter, I specifically want to think about and emphasize on God being a God who cares for His people. And the imagery given as we just saw is He's carrying us. He's carrying us.

What amazing imagery this is. And He's bringing this imagery up even to reprove those who are stubborn in heart. If you look at the end of 46 in v. 12, He says, listen to Me, you stubborn of heart.

So He's dealing with people who are stubborn. They've been exposed, even as Jonathan dealt with in the first hour. They've been exposed to so much truth, so much of who God is.

And then He's reminding them of who He is. And one of the things He emphasizes is this contrast between Him being a God who carries them compared to all those idolaters who've got to go carrying their own gods. There are no gods at all.

But do you and I know who the Lord is? Does this ever enter into your mind? That you have a God who's there like a father carrying a son, who's bearing your burdens and carrying you all the way to the end. Does that imagery ever come to your mind? And we're going to look at how it even more explicitly says that in Deuteronomy 1. But Isaiah 46, let's just look again at a couple of these verses that we read. "...Bell bows down, Nebo stoops." These are basically the false gods of Babylon.

It's the idols or the images that were created after the false gods. You have this supposed god you worship and you hire someone to make an image of whatever it is that god supposedly looks like to represent them. And he says, these things you carry are born as burdens on weary beasts.

Meaning, the animals, the oxen carry these idols. Are these oxen getting power from the idols to sustain them, to carry them? What happens to these oxen bearing these idols? They stoop down. They get weary.

I mean, those supposed gods are of no help at all for these weary beasts. These beasts are weary being weighed down by them. There's no power coming from them.

Verse 2, "...they stoop down, they bow down together. They cannot save the burden. But they themselves go into captivity." You hear that? They bow down together.

The supposed god at the time when the beast is worn out and bows down, the god goes with it. Because any of the power that the supposed god has is intertwined in the beast. What's more real? The false god or the beast? The beast.

And the beast is the one with the power. Right? There's no power in this idol. It's a false god.

Maybe there's demonic power, but it wasn't manifested there through the devil to give any power to this animal. You know, when the beast runs out of gas, so does the false god. I mean, who would want to worship a god like that? It's pathetic to be honest.

As we read those verses, the imagery that it portrays to us, v. 7, they lift it to their shoulders. They carry it. And they set it in its place.

And it stands there. It cannot move from its place. You have Israelites who saw the mighty miracles and the power of God in the wilderness and all of these years.

They've seen all of these things. Captivity has come. They gave in to a lot of what Babylon taught in this idolatry, in this foolishness.

I mean, who would want to worship a god that you've got to be the one carrying it and putting it into its place? It's absolutely pathetic. It should make us feel pity to those who worship such gods. But you know what one of those such gods is? It's a god many of us worshipped.

It was a god of self. Right? We trusted in our own works. We trusted in our own power.

We trusted that we were going to somehow reform our life and turn over a new leaf and make everything better. We maybe didn't have an actual image that we carved and we sat down and we bowed to, but in

our hearts, we bowed daily to ourselves, living for self, and we bowed to a god that was no real god at all, that we could have died at any moment and it all would have been taken away. There's no real power within ourselves.

I mean, these beasts can't even rescue the images. They all head off into captivity together. It's absolutely pathetic.

That's what the god of materialism will do. That's what the god of self-righteousness is going to do. Look, when the enemy comes, it's going to have absolutely no power to deliver you.

And then he shifts his focus right there in v. 3. He says, listen to Me, O house of Jacob. Listen to Me. And he describes them.

You who have been born by Me from before your birth. I mean, they have been sustained and supported by Him from the very beginning. From the very beginning of what? I would even add the universe.

Because what does Paul say in Ephesians? He knew us in Him before the foundation of the world. It says here, before your birth. You see this contrast that he's trying to develop to put before their eyes between the false gods and the true God.

There's this massive contrast. The images of the false god, their burdens on the back of a beast that wears the beast out, yet the true God, He actually takes you as His burden and He carries you. Even when your hair gets gray and you get old and you get to the end, guess who's still going to be there carrying you? Yahweh, the one true God.

He's not going to grow weary. Even to old age. Isn't that right, Papa? He's carried you these many years.

And even you see this email of Rick's Health. Look, we don't know what's going to happen to our brother Rick. Even already, what happened to his mind years ago.

But you know what? There's a promise here. Even if your mind starts to give way, even if your body starts to fail, God will carry you to the end in the spiritual realm. This imagery here, it's not the Lord coming and physically picking us up.

This is spiritually being sustained by the Lord. We need this. This doesn't mean there's a life with no trials.

But it does mean there's a life with full support from the Creator when you're in the midst of those trials. Look at verse 4. He says, I am He. I will carry.

I have made. I will bear. I will carry.

And implying, I will save. There are multiple emphatic pronouns here where the Lord Himself is emphasizing this is something He will do. Notice, this isn't Isaiah saying the Lord will do it.

It's the Lord Himself speaking and it's recorded, I will do this. The Lord wants it to be very clear to you. He's saying to you, He's saying to me, believer, I will carry you.

I have made and I will bear. I will carry. This isn't something you're hearing secondhand.

God is saying it specifically to you, specifically to me, in an emphatic way. We should take great comfort in that. We should not question the Lord's love here.

So the Lord is saying that I'm taking full responsibility to tenderly care for you even into your old age and even to the very end. I don't know about you, but that comforts me. There's great comfort in that.

And this truth does not contradict other passages that speak about who God is. It doesn't contradict anything in the last two weeks on church discipline. Again, discipline is something that illustrates the Father's love.

Right? It's a means used to keep us, to get us to the end. Now, this is said to Israelites. He's talking about delivering them from Babylon and these idols being crushed to the ground and stooping low.

I mean, does this really apply to me and you? Can we take this reality of God carrying His people and put that on us? Well, yeah, I agree the answer is yes. Why is it yes? For one, who are the true Jews? You and I, circumcised of the heart, born of the seed of the Word of God. You and I are the true Jews.

We find all these promises and they find their ultimate fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are the nation that He has created and is carrying. The church.

The church is who He gave Himself up for. Ephesians 5 speaks about. And we've been born again by God.

And Christ chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. And this imagery is something that the Lord Jesus even takes upon Himself. Luke 15, He says, when He has found it, a lost sheep, He lays it on His shoulders rejoicing.

So you get this picture of Christ carrying you, bearing you, supporting you, sustaining you. We need that. And you know what? This isn't Him having someone else carry you.

He's doing it personally. There's times I might get kind of weary and I'll have a little baby Boaz and I give him to someone else to carry. Can you hold my son for a moment? The Lord, He's not doing that.

He's the one carrying you and supplying the strength for you and for me. You know, with false gods, the people must do the heavy lifting. But with the Lord, we are carried by Him.

He's the one doing the heavy lifting for us. Again, verse 7, they lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place. I mean, how astonishing is that? Yet, we have a God who doesn't need us to carry Him.

He doesn't need us to set Him in His place. He actually comes and He carries you and He sets you in the right place. He's the one putting you right where you should be.

And we're going to see that's actually exactly what's happening to Israel right now. They're in a place where you might assume God stopped carrying them. They're in captivity.

They've suffered. All of this has happened, yet God is the one who's carrying them in the midst of all of that. You know, even the Skinners.

I just saw that text message this morning. It was heartbreaking knowing after 11 years this couple praying to have a child and they get pregnant and then the child is born at 28 weeks and then the baby just died this morning. And you think of that.

The suffering they're going through. They've got to trust God is the one who's carried them into that. Eleven years.

And they finally get pregnant. And then that happens. Did God fail to carry them? Is He carrying them today? I trust He is carrying them.

Just like Israel, this is the Lord. He knows exactly what we need. But our mobility depends on the Lord.

The false gods, their mobility, it depends on the beast and the people putting it in its place. What a stark contrast here that we see. God is giving us spiritual support.

And we see this also in Deuteronomy 1. We're going to mainly be in Isaiah, but if you want to read this verse in Deuteronomy 1, this is another place where it just clearly says it. I'll start in v. 29. And again, He's actually bringing all this up in the midst of correcting them on refusing to go into the land because of unbelief.

I just find that interesting. The Lord brings this imagery up in the midst of disobedience from the nation of Israel. V. 29, "...Then I said to you, do not be in dread or afraid of them.

The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight for you. Just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son." The Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son. All the way that you went until you came to this place.

And then v. 32, "...Yet in spite of this word, you did not believe the Lord your God who went before you." You see, they saw it. God was carrying them. All these things were happening just like Jonathan talked about in the first hour.

And then in spite of all of that, they abandoned the Lord. Brethren, this reminder about God being a God who carries you, this is something that Israel had in a time where some of them were becoming apostates. And it didn't even woo them over to keep following the Lord necessarily.

Many of them continued on as they should. I mean, can our hearts be so hard to see the comparison of this idol and the true God and see how great our true God is, pathetic the idol is, and choose the idol over the true God? May that not happen. Isaiah 40, you don't need to turn there, but he says this similar language.

"...He will tend His flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in His arms. He will carry them in His bosom and gently lead those that are with young." See, brethren, what a visual image given to us of God's tender care.

It doesn't say that God drags people or has someone else carry them, but He personally is going to carry you all the way to the end. And you know what this really speaks about? God's constant, dependable love. His love, the Bible says, it's from everlasting to everlasting.

I mean, it's before you were born and it's lasting after you die. His love, it's not going away. It's not going to cease and desist.

It's not just for you and I's lifetime. It's since forever until forever. It's eternal.

The eternal love of Almighty God. And we can depend on that love. And this should make us say like the psalmist, what is man that you are mindful of him? I mean, Lord, how could You be mindful of us? And show us such tender care? We do not deserve this at all.

And even Israel, who had such care when we rebelled, and yet You keep carrying them and giving them opportunity to repent and to not harden their heart. You know, if God will carry us, what does this suppose about us? If you and I have to be carried by God, what's the instant reality that you should recognize about yourself? We're weak and we need it. I mean, I need the Lord to be carrying me.

As many have said, Christian maturity isn't you grow stronger and stronger. It's you grow weaker and weaker, more and more realizing the older you're in the faith, the more you need God for everything. How many of us as new Christians have too much reliance on our own performance, our own strength, what we coined zeal when it was really emotionalism, and we had to get away from that to truly rely on God and His power? You know, the idea here is this imagery of a journey, and we can't go it alone, and we need a Father there with strength to carry us all the way to the end.

And again, when you hear this imagery, don't let imperfections enter into the image. You might have parents who have been hypocritical and they've not been a good example to you of this fatherly image of love. Don't let that enter in to your mind.

Don't get a distorted view of God. Because even here, the Lord, He said in v. 5, to whom will you liken Me and make Me equal? I mean, even this imagery here is going to fail to show who the Lord is in the fullest sense of this reality. But it gives us something to think about.

I mean, how many of you parents have carried your son? You know, I've got little Boaz. He's nine months, I think, right now. Nine, eight or nine months.

My wife would know. But I pick him up, I carry him. Am I like grabbing him by the collar and just hanging him over here? No.

No, I'm carrying him. Now, I might do that for fun and tickle him or something like that. But there's protection.

There's a tender care there. I know he doesn't have the ability to walk and to defend himself. I don't send him out the door into the world at eight months old.

He's not going to make it. I mean, as a father, God as a father, and as a shepherd, our Lord, Yahweh, He's saying there's no situation which I'm unable to defend you. There's no situation by which I am absent.

Right, you know, the world talks about the absent father. You know, the kid had the game and the dad didn't make it to the game and the kid is disappointed. Brethren, that's never going to happen to you as a Christian.

God, your Father is there. He's not absent. He didn't miss the situation.

Even if it seems grim and a trial, He brought you into the situation. You've got to trust Him there. You've got to realize He is God and no other.

You've got to not have your mind corrupted with false views of God that the world wants to put forward here. And they specifically want to attack His sovereign control over everything. And even the Jews that

apparently were giving in to that to some extent because He had just said to them in the chapter prior, 45.7, He just said, I'm Lord and there's no other.

He said, I form light and create darkness. I make well-being and create calamity. I am the Lord who does all these things.

Why would He need to tell that to His people again? Man, their hearts get hardened to God's sovereign control. May that not happen to us. So, I want to give you briefly nine reasons why you should... Let me put it like this.

In one way, the Lord's already carrying all of us in the sense that the only reason you're alive, even if you're a lost atheist here today, is because God has given you breath, right? But there's another sense where God is carrying the believer as a father carries the son. And I'm going to give you nine truths that you should all the more want to embrace that reality and keep believing God and not get out of His arms. And then these same nine reasons, if you're not a Christian, I hope they would compel you to want to cry out and say, Lord, carry me.

I'm finished with these false idols that can't even defend themselves and can't even move. So the first reason, which I hope it's an obvious reason and it's all over even what Caleb read in the Lord's Supper and it's all over Isaiah 45 and 46, the first reason why you should want the Lord to carry you is because there's no other. Right? I mean, you've got no other options.

If you choose the other option, the false gods, guess what? You've got to carry the false god. Or you get your ox to do it. It's not going to be carrying you.

It's not going to be sustaining you. Don't go that route. There's no hope there.

So the first reason is there's no other option. And eight times in these chapters, the statement is said there is no other. There is no other.

It's just the Lord. He's it. There's no other so-called gods or no gods at all.

These are loud statements declaring the Lord is sovereign. Look at what happened in verse 46. Bell bows down.

Nebo stoops. You know what was just quoted in verse 23 of the previous chapter? Paul alludes and quotes this text from Isaiah in verse 23 and applies it to Jesus Christ. To me, every knee shall bow and every ton shall swear allegiance.

Brethren, that's going to happen one day. Every single knee in this room and every single ton whether in heaven or on earth or under the earth, it's all going to declare that the Lord is the Lord and there is no other. And even right here in Isaiah's day, guess what was happening? Knees were bowing.

The false gods were falling down. They were worthless. Every knee's going to bow and then boom, verses later, there you've got it.

Bell bows down. Nebo stoops. Whether it's Dagon or whoever, they can't stand before Christ.

He's the only one. He is Yahweh. Paul is appealing in Philippians 2. He is the Lord.

And there is no other. Eventually, every knee is going to bow. V. 25, 24, Only in the Lord it shall be said of me are righteousness and strength.

Right? I mean, it's very exclusive. Only in the Lord. Only in the Lord.

What's John 14, 6 say? What did Jesus come and say? I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me. What did Paul say in 1 Timothy? There's one mediator between man and God.

One. One. That's it.

There's only one, and it's the Lord. And yet, men would have the utter foolishness to do what 46, 6 says, and they would go and hire a goldsmith and make it into a god. Then they will fall down and worship.

Did you know I did that for six years of my life? I hired a computer programmer by paying money to that company, and they created this little game, and I went and I lived in that world for six years, 14 hours a day. I worshiped it. That was my life when I was lost.

Look, some of you young people, you have the same God. It has a different name. It might not be whatever.

And the name might change and you might go from one game to another game, but that's what it is. It's your life. My identity was found in this character in a game.

Kids, it can't defend you. It's fake. A man made it.

A company produced it to get you to want to play it all day long. And you're going to lose your soul over that? You're just going to rot your life away? Matthew Poole, he said, if you're tempted or inclined at any time to exchange me for an idol, do me and yourself this right. Seriously consider whether you can find another God who will be more able and more ready to do you good than I have been.

You're not going to find that. You will never find that. Because there is no other.

And every other reason I'm going to give basically overflows out of this first reason that God is God and there is no other. The second reason why you should want to be carried by the Lord is that He alone can bear the biggest burden you have. And some people don't even realize the biggest burden they have, but the obvious biggest burden you and I all have is our sin.

And there's one person who can bear that burden of your sin, and it's the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not a priest at a Catholic church. It's the great high priest who's seated in heaven.

And Isaiah says chapters later in Isaiah 53, he says that Christ bore the sin of many. He alone can bear your sin and bear the anger and wrath of God that you deserve for your sin. Christ alone can do that.

And make you clean where He'll carry you as a father carries a son. That's astonishing. This is the holy, holy, holy, holy God.

You know what? There's a law given to the Israelites that if you killed an insect and at any point you carried part of the carcass, you became unclean and you had to leave the camp for the evening. How is it that God comes and He's able to carry us and not be unclean? Brethren, it's because we have the

righteousness of Christ. He looks at us and He sees we're as righteous as Christ is because we have Christ's record on our account.

It's absolutely astonishing. A third reason you should cry out to Him to carry you is because He carries you like a father carries a son. Notice, what did they carry their idols on? Weary beasts.

God doesn't strap you on an ox, brother or sister. He doesn't get the ox to carry you. He doesn't strap you on the ox.

He's not like a lot of the Amazon delivery guys, which we all get a lot of Amazon these days and I've got the window open and I see how they're carrying the package. Some of them are carrying it close. A lot of them are rushed and ready to go throw that down no matter what's in the package.

That's not how the Lord is with us. He's very careful. He's tenderly carrying for you.

And guess what? He's not leaving you at anyone else's door. He's going to carry you all the way to the end. And He does it as a father carries a son because we are His children, right? We've been adopted.

We are co-heirs with Christ. He is our Father. It's not just He carries us like a father carries a son.

He is our Father. We're no longer children of the devil, but through Christ we've become children of God. The fourth reason you should believe in Christ to carry you and you should keep on believing Christ to carry you is that He will never stoop down in weariness or weakness.

Right? He's never going to get to that point. I mean, think about the longevity of the Lord's commitment to you. 46, for even to your old age, I am He.

And to gray hairs, I will carry you. I'm never going to leave you. I'm never going to forsake you.

Therefore, you can confidently say the Lord is your Helper. I will not fear what man can do for me because my Father is carrying me in the midst of all of these trials, in the midst of these difficulties. He is fully committed to me to the end.

And even before birth, He was committed to me. No one else can give you such an offer of longevity. They can't.

And it's not just the longevity, it's the power and the strength in the midst of that longevity, the steadfast love that is from everlasting to everlasting. He will never grow weary. I remember prior to being saved, maybe 16, 17 years ago, there was a viral video on YouTube of Dick Hoyt pushing his son who had cerebral palsy and could not walk, could only talk through a computer.

He pushed him in his wheelchair on these marathons. And I think they did 32 Boston marathons. And I wasn't a Christian at the time.

I remember it had the song, I Can Only Imagine playing. It was very emotional just seeing this father love his son to go through all these races. And the son didn't do anything.

He literally just sat there and got pushed. If anything, he was encouraging his own dad and that's why his dad was doing it. But you know what happened? In 2001, Rick, the dad, at 80 years of age, he died.

His son is still alive. His son can't be pushed by the father anymore. The father is gone.

Death took him. Brethren, that's never going to happen to you and me. God never dies.

Christ who did die is raised from the dead and seated in heaven. And you know, Rick's father, yeah, he maybe pushed him on 32 Boston marathons, but there was a lot of time in Rick's life that his father wasn't pushing him. He was resting because he needed more strength.

Not so with the Lord. He's never going to rest. Rick's father, his love didn't endure forever.

But not so with the Lord. It's amazing, millions of people saw that clip 17 years ago. You'd think if they loved that clip and how it displayed the love of a father, that if they heard about God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, that they'd all believe on Christ.

I mean, why would they reject such love? That shows you how hard in sin is. People hear the truth, they reject it, and they worship their false gods and their idols. You know, brethren, does all this mean we shouldn't be serving the Lord? No.

You know what it all the more means? We should be serving the Lord as Peter says, but it's with the strength that God supplies. That's what we're relying on. A fifth reason to give up and fall in the arms of the Lord is that He knows the best route.

Since He declares the end from the beginning. I mean, if you let the Lord carry you, you're not going to get lost on the road even if you think you did get lost. Look at 4,610.

I am He, there's none other, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things not yet done. The Lord is saying, look, I'm not in the race carrying you hearing an announcer say what is on the course, but I am already announcing to you what is on the course. I already know what's going to come.

I don't need to hear it from anyone. I already know what the end is going to bring. I already know what is yet not to occur and what will occur.

God has no uncertainties with Him. Who wouldn't you want carrying you but someone like that? This isn't getting some ride from a person who you have no idea where they're taking you. This is a person who is your best interest in view in every little turn in your life, every little street that God takes you down.

There was a purpose for that. He carries us down many roads that we otherwise honestly would not have gone down if it had been up to us. We wouldn't have taken that turn.

I mean, a stark example of this, and we don't have time to get into this, but if you look at 4,501, it says, the Lord says to His anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue the nations before you. God uses a pagan to deliver His people Israel and He gives this pagan the title anointed to go be used by God to deliver the Jews. That's not how you would think things up.

And you wouldn't think things up, the Jews being in captivity. And the Jews ultimately, they didn't even like this idea necessarily. 4,509, He says to them, Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, what are you making? I mean, just like Romans 9, men want to question God with the turns that He takes them in the paths of their life.

But who are we, O man, to answer back to God? Israel must not despise the Lord's plans even though calamity was a part of those plans. And we have no idea what calamity in Ukraine is part of God's plans

and how He's using that for good for the Gospel to go forth right now. The Jews struggled at times to see how the Lord was using Cyrus and other providences for good.

We don't want to struggle with that. We want to believe the Lord. He says in 45.11, Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, the One who formed Him, ask Me of things to come.

Will You command Me concerning My children and the works of My hands? I made the earth. And it's like the Lord speaking to Job. It's just God is continually making us shrink back into our place.

He's making us get really, really small and keep our mouths shut and realize who am I compared to this God, this living God. A sixth reason to have the Lord carry you is that He keeps His Word all of the time. 46.11, He says, I have spoken and I will bring it to pass.

I have purposed and I will do it. You don't find hesitancy here with God. It's pretty certain I'm going to do this because He can, because He has the power.

There's so many other places we could go to see this reality, but remember that you want God to carry you because He's a God who keeps His Word all the time. A seventh reason to keep trusting the Lord to carry you is that He's already proven Himself to you if you're a Christian. He's already proven Himself to you in many, many ways.

That's what we saw in Deuteronomy, right? He said, where you have seen how the Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son. But what did they do? Yet in spite of seeing how the Lord had carried them all those years, in spite of that, they rebelled. They rebelled.

In spite of that. God has proven Himself to us. He's proven Himself to the Jews.

Isn't that amazing? There might be people among us who've had God prove Himself to them 20,000 times, and in the end, they'll still deny Christ and go back to their sin. And they can't dare look at God and say, well, the Lord wasn't there. No.

Just like with Israel, the Lord's there. The Lord is doing many things. It's on them if they're going to reject Him despite all that He has marvelously done for them.

An eighth reason to give up trying to carry yourself and to ask the Lord God to carry you is because the weight is too heavy for you. You can't bear the weight. Isn't that what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1? He said this trial that happened where I had a spirit of life, it was so I'd no longer rely on myself, but on God who raises the dead.

God wants us to rely on Him. Moses got to the point where he's even complaining in Numbers 11 and saying, did I give birth to these people that I should carry them in my bosom as a nurse carries a nursing child to the land that you swore they're fathers? I'm not able to carry all these people alone. The burden is too heavy for me.

That's right, Moses. It is. When God gives Him 70 more people, He delegates it.

But ultimately, it's God working through those people that anything good ever happens. It's the same thing in our lives. It's only by the Lord, His strength.

Brethren, if you face something right now in your life and you feel like it's too heavy for you, you should absolutely acknowledge the fact that it is too heavy for you. And you should look at the reality that it's not too heavy for God. And He's able to sustain you in the midst of that.

You should ask Him. Even just lay down and say, Lord, carry me. That doesn't mean you're passive and do absolutely nothing.

No, we don't just lay around and supernaturally get moved. It's not what the text is saying. Not that God couldn't do that, but it's a look of faith to the Lord.

A ninth reason, the last one I had, to be carried by the Lord is that He's willing to carry anyone. You're not going to find that, right? A lot of people here, they're not willing to just carry along journey anyone's child. The people leaving Ukraine, they're probably carrying their own babies.

Their own children. They've got a specific love for those children. That's how God's love is for you and I. Craig pointed out in Isaiah 43 about bringing sons and daughters from afar, and that's even right here in 46.13. He says, I will bring near My righteousness.

It's not far off. And for some people, us Gentiles, we were those who were far off. But the Lord has brought in Christ Jesus those who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

God's willing to carry you. It doesn't matter what you've done, what sin you've done. It doesn't matter if you're here today and you're homosexual or you're an atheist.

It doesn't matter if you're an atheist or a Satanist involved in child sacrifice. God's willing to take you and wash you of all of your sins. Even like it talks about in Ezekiel 16, one of the greatest love chapters in the Bible.

He's willing to come and to take you and to clothe you and make you His own. And then He's willing to carry you all the way to the end and sustain you through every single trial that you face. At the same time, is He going to be disciplining you when you try to buck and wrestle in His arms and not submit? Yeah.

That's His love too though. So look, all of this, Christ is willing to carry you to pick you up. Are you going to ask Him to take you? All this begs the question, how can I be carried by God? Well, the obvious first answer is you need to believe.

You need to believe He is who He says He is and that He's willing to take you. Jesus said in Matthew 11-28, Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. You've got to come to Christ.

You've got to believe that Christ really did die, that He really did raise, that He really is seated in Heaven, that He's willing to not only forgive you of your debt, but He's willing to change your heart and make you a new person, a new man, a new woman, a new child, give you new desires. You want to be carried by God? You've got to submit to His will. The Israelites, they didn't want to be resigned to the will of God.

They wanted to shrink back in their fear and unbelief and not go any further. Even though God had carried them that long, they wanted to go back. Hosea 11, And it was I who taught Ephraim to walk.

I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of kindness, with bands of love. I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws.

I bent down to them and I fed them. They shall not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyrians shall be their king, because they have refused to return to Me. Isn't it amazing? You would think the kind, gentle, grace, and tender care of God would cause someone to never abandon the faith.

But the Bible says the opposite. The Bible has replete examples of people seeing the tender mercy of the loving God, and they reject it for a love that is going to fade away from false idol that can't even carry itself or move itself. How can I be carried by God? I've got to believe Him today.

I've got to keep on believing Him. I've got to recall and remember. That's what Isaiah 46, verse 8 says there.

Remember this and stand firm. Recall it to mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things of old.

We've got to remember, as John Newton said, and be gone unbelief. His love in times past forbids me to think He'll leave me at last. Got to remember Him.

How can I be carried by God? Cry out to Him. Cry out. He says in Isaiah 46, verse 7, if one cries to it, the false God, it doesn't answer.

That's what the devil wants you to think the true God is going to do. He's not going to hear you. No, that's not true.

He will hear you. Don't be there looking for some subjective feeling and emotion or tears to come upon you and then you think, well, that means God heard me. You go by faith.

Not feelings. Not sight. Not how does my gut feel.

You go taking God at His Word and you determine from that point on from me and my house, we're going to follow the Lord no matter what I feel. I'm going to believe God. I'm going to obey Him.

And I'm not turning back. I've decided to follow Jesus. We have a God, if we cry to Him, He'll hear us.

We have a God, Isaiah 40 says He gives power to the faint. He gives strength to those who are weary. And weary and young men shall fall exhausted, but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.

Brother, sister, you feel exhausted? Wait for God. Ask for His help. He's going to help you.

It could all happen in one hour where you've got spiritual strength you had no idea that you had because God drew near and He helped you. What do you need to do to be carried by God? Isaiah 45, verse 22, Turn to Me and be saved. Turn.

All the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other. And right after that, that's where he says, to me every knee shall bow. And Paul in Philippians 2, he takes that and he says that's Christ.

Christ is Lord. And He's going to come back one day. It's not just knee bow and bow falling in Isaiah 46.

Every one of us is going to be on the ground. But are you going to be there worshiping God who carried you to that point? Are you going to be there worshiping the gods of sin and self-righteousness and false religious deceit? William Jay said, do you have no confidence in the flesh? No dependence upon your own resources for your happiness. No dependence upon your righteousness for your justification.

Do you have no dependence on your strength for your sanctification? No dependence upon your wisdom for your guidance. You reverse all that, that's our problem. We depend too much on self.

God wants us totally cast upon Him. And you know what? Sometimes the trials in your life, they're God carrying you to a point where you're all the more be willing to be carried by Him. He breaks you down.

That you might finally be weak enough, like Horatius Bonar said in that tract, let go and fall in the arms of God. He wants you to let go, to stop striving in your own power, to give up and to rest in Christ alone for salvation. So will you be carried by Him? He's already given you breath.

Or are you going to resist His love and live for yourself? I pray that not be the case. So do you have this view of God being a father carrying a son? Do you have that? Remember Deuteronomy 1. Remember Isaiah 46. God will carry you.

He will sustain you, even into old age, all the way to the end. And obviously our response to such tender love as Christians, you know, it's not passivity, but it's being proactive. It makes, if God is bearing me, He's bearing me to go bear the burdens of others, right? So you and I go and we bear the burdens of others because God is bearing us and sustaining us and emboldening us as we rely on Him.

Now we can actually go do something for the Lord. Apart from Him, we can do nothing. You know, this is just the reality again of John 15 that apart from abiding in Christ, you and I, we can't bear any fruit.

Nothing's going to happen. Well, brethren, I hope that encourages you. I first heard Charles Leiter on Deuteronomy 1 many years ago and just that reality of God being a God who carries you.

There's great comfort there. He's carrying you right now. Even if you have a sense He's not.

If you're His, He's sustaining you. And you want to be actively looking to Him. Because the Bible's replete with examples of people who cast God off for their idols.

Don't do it. Don't cast off His mercy and conviction in your life for your idols, but respond. Respond.

Ask Him to carry you. How firm a foundation it has this line from this very verse. Even down to old age, all my people shall prove my sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love.

And when grain hares share their temples adorned, like lambs they shall still in my bosom be born. Let's pray. Father, I thank You that we still, like lambs in Your bosom, are born.

Lord, I thank You that You bear our burdens. Lord, I thank You for sustaining us. Lord, we are weak.

But Lord, we want to be weaker, more reliant on You, less reliant on our own power. Lord, forgive us the times You've carried us in a direction that we've fought against or that we've questioned You, that we've even said, why did You do that? Lord, You know. You're God.

We are not. There's no other. Lord, You know everything from beginning to end.

Lord, I pray You would be with my brothers and sisters. You would strengthen them. Lord, as we all go through different trials, as we all go through opportunities, Lord, to serve You, Lord, help us to rely on Your divine, all-powerful power.

Lord, that You would carry us in the good works that You created for us to do beforehand. Lord, that we would rejoice in Your tender, loving care towards us. Lord, even as parents hold their children, Lord, that we'd be reminded that that's just a picture.

Though it's imperfect, Lord, it's a picture of You. Lord, You're carrying us, even into old age. Father, thank You.

Thank You for that incredible love. Lord, we pray others would cry out to You to carry them out of their bondage and into the promised land. In Christ's name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/jZvSSvuWvVM.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-jennings/are-you-carried-by-god-or-carrying-your-gods/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net