

Philippians - Commentaries by Gordon Henry Hayhoe

Lawrenceville Conference: 1983, The Service and the Burden

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The Libyans, chapter 1 and the ninth verse. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. For the margin says in all sense that ye may approve the margin. Again, try the things that are excellent, or the margin the things that differ, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness. Which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. Now if you'll turn back with me to Numbers chapter 3. Numbers chapter 3 and verse 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, And I behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the first born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be mine, because all the first born are mine. For on the day that I smote. The first born in the land of Egypt. I hallowed unto me all. The first born in Israel, both man and beast. Mine they shall be. I am the Lord. Then in the 4th chapter. The 4th chapter and the 47th verse. From 30 years old and upward, even unto 50 years old, everyone that came to do the service of the ministry and the service of the burden in the Tabernacle of the congregation, even those that were numbered of them, were 800 and 8504 score according to the commandment of the Lord. They were numbered by the hand of Moses. Everyone according to his service and according to his burden. Thus were they numbered of him, as the Lord commanded Moses. And we lost a look at the 8th chapter. And the 23rd verse. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, This is it that belongeth unto the Levites. From 20 and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation. And from the age of 50 years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more, but shall minister with their brethren in the Tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the child. Cards and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge. If you turn over to First Chronicles chapter 23. First Chronicles chapter 23 and verse 27. For by the last words of David, the Levites were numbered from 20 years old and above, because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the House of the Lord in the courts and in the chambers. And in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the House of God, both for the shell bread and for the fine linen, for meat offering and for the unleavened. Takes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size. And to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even, and to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord in the Sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts by number, according to the order. Commanded unto them continually before the Lord. And they shall keep the charge of the Tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the House of the Lord.

Now could we turn over to? The New Testament in Romans chapter 8. Pardon me, Romans chapter 12. I meant to say Romans chapter 12. And verse one. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable or intelligent service, and be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect. Will of God. And one more passage in Galatians chapter 6. Galatians, chapter 6. Verse 2. Bury one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself but that every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Well, in these verses that we have read today, I think all of us can see that what is being brought before us is that there was something for each one of these Levites to do. And they were brought to Moses, to Aaron rather, and Aaron appointed to each one their service and their burden in connection with the House of the Lord. And the reason that is given was that on that night when the judgment fell upon the. Of Egypt, all the first born in the homes where the blood was sprinkled on the lenthil and the two side posts, they were preserved. They were not cut off in that judgment. And I'm sure we can see how this would apply to us because every one of us who know the Lord Jesus is our Savior, it's through the precious blood of Christ, the Passover lamb, that we have been preserved from judgment which we so justly deserve, we deserve. That the judgment should fall upon us just like the children of Israel and Egypt. When that Angel passed through the land of Egypt that night, only the homes where the blood was sprinkled on the lenthil on the side pulse were safe. And there were actually thousands of those first born in those homes that were spared when that judgment fell. But God instead of taking the first born to serve in the Tabernacle. It tells us that he took the Levites in their place because there were the 12 tribes and God singled out this one tribe of Levi. And they were taken and the actual number was counted out, that the number that were spared on that night when the judgment fell were to now be devoted to service for the Lord in the Tabernacle. And dear young people, doesn't that speak to your heart and mine? It tells us ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price. Every one of us who have put our trust in the Lord Jesus as our Savior we belong to. Him before we were saved, we thought we belonged to ourselves. We could do as we liked, we could do our own thing. That's the way of life of this world. And it's become a common, well known expression to do your own thing. And it was remarked in the meeting how little thought there is of whether it's the will of God or not in the mind of the natural man, and perhaps in our own lives before the Lord brought us to himself. But when he brought us to himself, then, how gladly we looked up like Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? There was a new change of control in our lives, so to speak. There's a new captain who's guiding the ship, and are you and I going to recognize his rights? Are we going to follow that which he directs? Or are we going to say, well, I'm very glad I'm saved from judgment, I'm very glad that I have escaped the just punishment of my sins and will not be sent to hell. But I do want to please myself.

And you know that's the enemies work in our hearts to make us think that there's something really worthwhile in living to please ourselves. It tells us in James chapter one do under my beloved brethren, every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable, neither shadow of turning. That is if it was a good thing, God our Father. Would have given it to us. And every time we think that stepping out of the path of his will to get something for ourselves is really the happy path, we're mistaken. We err because the good things don't come through our own wills. They don't come through our lusts. They come down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He's not like earthly friends who change. He's not. Earthly friends who don't always understand us or love us, but he loves us perfectly, He understands us perfectly, and he wants to bless us. And his own heart will not be

satisfied until he has all his redeemed ones supremely blessed. And if we really believe this, dear young people, that heaven is going to be a place of supreme happiness, is it because we'll have our own wills there, or because it'll? His will, it will be supreme. I'm sure we all answer. It's His will that will be supreme, and we're glad that it will be so. Well, wouldn't it be wonderful if we should recognize this here and now? Well, these Levites were taken and they were brought to Aaron, and Aaron appointed to each one his service and his burden, not only a work to do, but a burden to bear. Because in the Tabernacle, as we know, there was service, there was the offering of the sacrifices, there was the singing of praises, there were the lighting of the lamps. But also. The Tabernacle was moving through the wilderness and the boards had to be carried. The ark had to be carried. The table had to be carried and each one had a particular work in connection with this, and so when they were brought to Aaron, he appointed to each one their service and to each one their burden. It's an interesting thing to see that as far as the numbering of these Levites was concerned, they were numbered from one month old. Now it doesn't say that about the other tribes. Tribes of the other tribes, it speaks of them being numbered from 20 years old and upward. But when it speaks about the tribe of Levi, it speaks about them being numbered from one month. It makes me think of a little Samuel when he was born, how his mother saw that he was one who had been given her by the Lord, and she wanted him to live a life that was useful for the Lord. And so as a child. She brought him to the House of the Lord and presented him to Eli and said, I prayed for this child and now I'm going to lend him to the Lord as long as he lives. Now, of course, it's true that there's a great period of development and it's not until we get older that we're actually able usually to kind of settle down and understand. What the Lord would have us to do and His claims over us. Yes, how about you know there is in these different periods, one month and 20 years and 25 years and 30 years. I'm sure as I read it, you notice these different periods and we do pass through certain stages in our lives when I believe it becomes increasingly clear to us that the Lord does have a claim upon us. It says even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure or whether it be right. We'll read about Josiah, that he began to reign when he was eight years of age, and it tells us that he began to seek the Lord, but it wasn't until he was 20 that he did anything very actively for the Lord. And if something like this, even in our schooling, you know, you're going to school and maybe that's 10 years old, what are you going to be? Well, it's rather indefinite in their minds, but. Still, as they get a little older, they begin.

To think about certain things that they're interested in and they are prepared for a certain line of work. And wise parents consider this about their children. What is necessary to prepare them for their livelihood and for their place in this world. Well, isn't it wonderful if we who are parents would think about the spiritual good of our children? And that these decisions made even in child. Childhood and in school days are all preparatory to something that is so important in later life if the Lord leaves us here. And that is that we should live a life of usefulness for the Lord, a life where we recognize His claims. We were reading in the meeting about being filled with the Spirit, and to be filled with the Spirit means that we recognize the claims of the Lord and that the Spirit. God is in control in our lives and how important this is for us. Dear young people, as I look at you and I have watched so many of you grow from childhood into. Adulthood, young men and young women. What a lovely thing it is to see young hearts being prepared by the Lord, it says about Samson. The Spirit of God began to move. Him even when he was a young person. It says about Samuel that all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Daniel was going to be a prophet of the Lord. They saw these things at work in his young life and that there were desires to please the Lord. And there's no young person here that can't have very simple desires. But I plead with you, dear young people. As you think, as you go to school, they prepare you for a place in this world. And they try to find out what you're most fitted for and suggest certain lines of study so you will be able to fit yourself into those things that they feel you're best suited for. And so they have counselors and ones who help you in this, but it's far, far more important that you consider about the Lord's claims and that you owe everything to Him that He bought us with His. Your teacher didn't, but the Lord did, and you and I belong to Him. I'm not at all minimizing the importance of having a proper calling in life, but the Lord can direct even in this. He'll show you what He wants you to do, and He'll enable you to get into an occupation where you can honor Him if that's where He wants you to be, and you can be a testimony for Him. And the Lord doesn't intend when he talks about His service, that every person should leave their secular employment and go out and serve Him. While I have often said the greatest servant of the Christian dispensation was not full time in the Lord's work, the apostle Paul made tents part of the time, and he showed to others, as he said, he showed them publicly and from house to house that so laboring. They should support the weak and to be ready to every good work. They weren't those who neglected the necessary things of life, but it's all to fit our whole life into God's plan to let him have his way. In other words, the Scripture says, oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. And what a lovely thing it is. I began with that verse in Philippians where Paul had a prayer for these Philippians Saints. And his prayer was, I'll read it again, Philippians chapter 1. I'm going to read it as it is in the margin, and this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all sense, that ye may try the things that differ, and that ye may be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. Now, as we think of what the Lord has done for. For us, our own hearts respond, and that's what He means when He says that your love may abound. Yet more and more, I don't believe it's possible for us to really think of how much the Lord loves us and what He has done for us without there being a response. The love of Christ constraineth us. It's like a mighty magnet. It attracts us. It pulls us along.

And so he says that we need knowledge and we need. We need judgment. We need sense that is to learn from His word, those things that are pleasing to Him. And we need to try the things that differ. How do we try them? Well, you know, in business, people have certain standards. There's a pound, it's 16 ounces, and there's a yard and it's 36 inches and so on. There's certain measurements by which people measure. And you know, we, we have measurements too, and we try things that differ. We try things that present themselves to us. And God has given us a measuring stick, so to speak. It says prove all things hold fast that which is good. And there are some things that are the same and there are some things that differ. Now, as far as salvation is concerned, God doesn't. Have any different plan of salvation for a boy or a girl, or for a man or for a woman? He doesn't have any different plan for a Japanese than for a person who lives here in the United States or in Canada. He has but one plan of salvation. He doesn't have a different way of gathering. If it's the little assembly out in Yokohama, or whether it's the assembly gathered to the name of. The Lord Jesus Christ in Saint Francisville, there is the same way of gathering, the same blessed person. We gather as members of the body of Christ as our brother brought before us so nicely yesterday. And we realize that there is a ground of gathering and it's common to all brothers and sisters, different nationalities. It's it's the same. And we learn this in the word of God. We don't go. Man like David did one time, he asked all the leaders, the captains of thousands and hundreds, how they should bring up the ark, and they gave him bad advice. They didn't go to the Word. And we might go to people and we might go to leaders even, and we might get the wrong kind of advice, but we'll never get wrong advice from the Word because God's Word is perfect. Heaven and earth shall pass away. But His word will not pass away. So if it's salvation or if it's the way of gathering, or if it's moral standards, God doesn't have a different moral standard for the Japanese than for the American or the Canadian. And God has certain things that don't differ. He has those things that He has laid down in His word. And a Christian doesn't do as people say, well, just let your conscience be your God. That's like putting a man in a dark room. And saying, let your eyes guide you. Why? He may have perfect vision, but what he needs is light. And you know God has given you a conscience, but you need light too. You need the light of His word. And your conscience will never operate properly if it just operates in a dark

room. If you shut out the light of God's Word, you may say things are wrong that are right and right that are wrong. You'll never form a proper judgment. You have to try the things in the light. As we had in our chapter, that which makes manifest is light. And so God has certain things that are the same, but he also has things that differ. And we're all different. Every one of us as individuals are different. God has a different place in the world for a woman and for a man. And we don't find it from the ideas of society. We find it in God's Word. And we learn what the place is. We try the things that differ. If you just go by the daily newspaper, you might begin. To think there wasn't a different standard, but God's word is that which is to direct us in these things. And so we have things that do differ and then we have things, as I say, that are alike. And those things, many of them are revealed in God's Word. But now to come to what I was beginning to speak about. Now that is the service and the burden our brother brought.

Before us yesterday, how that in the human body there's the eye, there's the ear, there's the hand, there's the foot, and those are things that differ. And so when the ark was to be carried, here were all these Levites that were brought to David. To Aaron rather, was it just a question of taking turns? Did he say, well, you just will take turns? No, there was the coathites were. Chosen to do that particular work, that was what was given to them. The sons of Merari were not given to carrying the Ark. They had a work to do, but it was a different work that was given to them to do. And so as we had yesterday, there are evangelists, there are pastors, there are teachers, there are helps. We have all different kinds of needs in the in the family. Of God and in the body of Christ. And you can find a way to be saved in the Scripture. You can find a way to gather in the scripture. You can find the place of the man and the place of the woman. You can find the place of a child in relation to the parent and the servant to his master. You'll find these things clearly defined in the Scripture. But if you're looking for a verse about where the Lord wants you to live, it won't. Find the verse to answer that there's no verse that in the Bible that I found that said that the Lord wanted me to live in the city of Nepean in Canada. I didn't find the verse and I I don't know anybody in Saint Francisville that would say they found a verse where the Lord told them to live there. Those are things like the Levite. He had to go and Aaron said now I want you to do this particular work this. Is the work for you to do? And another Levite came forward. This is the work for you to do. Another one came forward, and this is the work for you to do. Supposing one of the sons of Merari said to a clothite, I'm just as able to carry the ark as you are. But he wasn't appointed to that. He was appointed to a different service. And you know what we need among us as believers and as guests gathered to the. The name of the Lord Jesus is for each one of us to find the place that the Lord has for us to fulfill in the assembly where we are and among the people of God and in the world. And I believe if we really are before Him, it says that we're to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your intelligent service. If you ask to kothite why are you carrying the Ark and not one of the sons of Merari, he could answer you intelligently. He could say, well, Aaron appointed me to that particular work. Well, don't you think you're doing a more important work than the man that's carrying the pins? He would say, no, I don't say it's any more important. It was given to me to do this and it was given to somebody else to carry. The pins and to carry the boards and when the Tabernacle set forward, there was no striving for someone to have a certain place. Each one had a particularly God appointed place in connection with the service that God had appointed in regard to the Tabernacle. And it's a very blessed thing for us to realize that this is what Paul is talking about in his letter to Galatians. Let's turn to this again in Galatians chapter 6. Perhaps someone wondered why it's. Worded the way it is in the second verse and in the fifth verse, bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. And then in the fifth verse, for every man shall bear his own burden. But I just like to point out to you that there are two different words used in the original for burden. The one in the second verse is the same as that verse in Matthew that speaks of those who bore the burden and heat of the day. And, you know, you can often help somebody. There may be somebody in these meetings here that's bearing the burden and heat of the day. They're going through some real trial. And you can be a help to them. You can go to them and help and sympathize. Perhaps you can do something for them. And you can bear one another's burdens in this way. And I can try and help to bear another's burden. We need one another in this particular service.

Brethren, to bear one another's burdens. Every one of us craves love and understanding. We delight when we find someone whom we think really cares for us and who really enters into what we're going through in life. Because every one of us have some particular heat of the day, some particular thing that's difficult for us, and we can bear one another's burdens. But when it's speaking about. Every man shall bear his own burden. That's a little different thought there that has to do with an actual something that's carried, and it's the thought. The same thought is in Matthew 11 where the Lord Jesus said, he said to come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest. Unto your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Oh, that's when if you said to one of those Levites as he was carrying one of those heavy boards, don't you find that kind of hard? Wouldn't, wouldn't you like to have some help? Well, he'd say, I counted A privilege to do this little service for the Lord, because he has done so much for me. He spared me from the judgment that I deserved and. We're going to a grand and glorious land. We won't have to carry the burdens there. But we do have these burdens here. And you know there are, there is something in every life that you have to do, a burden to bear, and someone else can't take it for you. But it's the Lord that appoints it. Isn't that lovely? That Levite that was carrying the boards, He doesn't say I wish I was carrying the pins. He said I'm happy because. I know I'm doing what the Lord has appointed to me and that's why it says here. In this fourth verse. But let every man prove his own work. It would be comparatively easy for an Israelite and a Levite to go to Aaron and listen carefully to what he said. This is what your service is and this is what your burden is. And there would be no mistake about that. But you know, the one that we go to is up there in the glory. We can't see him, and it's a question of nearness to him. That we discover that which he has for. For us to do in life. And I believe, dear young people, that it's possible to go through life without ever finding out the place that the Lord intended you to fill. And there's nobody that can fill that place as well as you. He has a place for you. If my hand was cut off, I could probably get along the rest of my life with just one hand, but it would never be quite as good as having hands. And you know, every one of us are needed. There is no member of the body of Christ that isn't needed, and each one of us have a particular function to fulfill. Every man shall bear his own burden. I meet people sometimes, Christians, I mean, and they spend their whole life wishing that they were doing something that somebody else is doing. They feel that what they're doing is not much use, but that if they could only be. A missionary, or if they could only be this or that. If they can only occupy a more public place, it would be far, far happier. But it says that when you've discovered the work the Lord wants you to do and you're doing it, you have rejoicing in yourself alone and not in another. You're not wishing that you were doing something different. You're just satisfied in your own soul. You have peace and say, well, this, I believe, is what the Lord has appointed me to do, and I just want to. Do it for him. Oh, what a happy service that is. You know, it removes jealousy. It removes, it removes all kinds of ill feelings that often spring up if each one of us were before the Lord, asking Him. As I said, we can't go to a person like Aaron and ask Him because our precious Lord is up in glory, but He can make known his mind. Paul had to say about Archippus. Take heed to the ministry that thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.

Artifice had a work to do, but the assembly where he lived was bereft of a useful man because he wasn't fulfilling the place that God had appointed for him. He hadn't discovered what was his service, and if he had, he wasn't doing it. And while our is so lacking is that

devotedness to the Lord, that willingness to go on. Oh, you say, but the more public services are far more important. Not so. The more your service puts you in the public eye, the more danger there is of doing it for the approval of man. It must have been a real thing for Epiphysse to spend his time in his closet praying for the Saints, because maybe nobody else knew about it. But the Lord did, and he could be very happy in his soul if he never stood on the platform, that he was fulfilling a useful service in the Church of God better than if he was on the platform if that wasn't where the Lord intended them to be. God has a place for you, dear young people. And I say to everyone, be like the apostle Paul. He said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? But they weren't only appointed a service. They were also appointed a burden, and you know, Paul was appointed a burden too. He had a thorn in the flesh, and he thought he could serve the Lord a lot better if he didn't have that thorn in the flesh. He thought that's just a weight on me and I don't think I can serve the Lord as well as I should because this thing is kind of holding me down. But he learned that. God's grace was sufficient and that that burden. That he had, that he had to carry all through life was a blessing to Paul, and he could actually say he could fulfill this verse most gladly. Therefore, I rather glory in mine infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. I can look back in my life to some things that might seem like setbacks, but I can see that it was good, it was necessary, and God may allow a burden in your life. May not remove it, you may have it the rest of your life, but you'll be better fitted for what He wants you to do because you have that handicap or whatever it may be. Some of our best hymns were written by blind people and people who had a deep sorrow in their life. Don't ever think that because you have a burden that it hasn't been appointed by the Lord. It has. He appoints, just like Aaron did to everyone, his service and his. Burden. And now do you want to be happy in it? Well, it tells us here that every man proves his own work. That is, get into the Lord's presence. Don't go around and parade to everybody and say, the Lord told me to do this. Let that be a secret between your soul and the Lord. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God, but just go on quietly and do your little service for the Lord. Bear your burden and who can tell what a blessing you will be? There's more harm by murmuring Christians. There's more harm by Christians who are jealous because they're not doing what somebody else is doing that they think is more important than their own. There's more sorrow caused by that than perhaps anything else, and bad testimony to the world. When Aaron, when Abraham's herdsmen quarreled with Lot's herdsmen, it says the Canaanite was then in the land. They watched and saw these two quarreling over who was the biggest farmer. Oh, what a. What a sad thing it is, but you know, those things can come into our hearts. And I just wish to say to you, dear young people, ask the Lord the service and the burden. And there's some young ones here. You're not too young to start. The Levites got numbered from one month old. And it's nice for parents to seek to recognize in their children that they want them to grow up for the Lord and train them with that in view like little Samuel. And then at 20 years of age, to see those beginnings, see it increase, and until the full service began at 30 years of age, it's nice to see that growth through those formative years of life. And oh, what a blessing. Oh, to your young people. I believe the Lord's coming is near. But if he leaves us here a little longer, what happiness, what joy there can be in your soul and in mine and in the assembly. Where we live, if each one of us would go to our Aaron and say Lord.

I just want to know what is the service and what is the burden that thou hast for me? As far as salvation is concerned, it's common to all the way of gathering. There is nothing that differs. As far as the moral standards are concerned, they don't differ. But as far as the place that we occupy in the body of Christ, the service and the burden, every one of us has his own service and his own burden. May we do it happily. As unto the Lord. Shall we ask the Lord's blessing?

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