

## "GETTING OUT FROM UNDER"

INTRODUCTION We've all seen that huge mass of a man straining under the weight of a globe he's carrying on his shoulders opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral. Actually this comes out of Greek mythology in the story of the downfall of the Titans when Atlas, one of the leaders, was condemned to hold up the sky with his head and his hands. (Perhaps you're one of them)

How many people have been trying to hold it up ever since! It's strange, but true - some persons are what might be called compulsive burden bearers. If they don't have enough of their own, they borrow them from others.

DEVELOPMENT Basically, the "key" for getting out from under all this is very simple. The Scriptures are quite explicit for they tell us to "cast thy burden on the Lord".

This simply means to realize that there is a divine law involved, that there is a fundamental process at work, that if we can trust things and people into the care of divine order, that if we can release them and let them go, knowing that "underneath are the everlasting arms" - then certainly we will find a peaceful relationships, we will be in the "flow" of a guidance that will enable us to deal with situations creatively, effectively and easily. Take some of the tension...

[ And with this realization, we will become a greater part of the solution of the world's problems, rather than adding our cares to become part of the problem.

FEAR AND WORRY Perhaps the greatest burden that we have is fear and the worry about things, usually about things that are completely irrelevant to our own life. In a sense, we normally have a goal...somewhere we're trying to get, something we're trying to achieve. The principle is if you can look straight ahead, keep your eye on that goal and be only concerned with where you're going and what it is you have to do, not letting your consciousness or attention stray to the right or to the left, then you'll have very few problems. It's often been pointed out to us that most of the problems, most of the fears and worries we carry along with us never really happen. They could happen, but seldom do.

Let's say you're walking into an auditorium on an aisle that is about three feet wide. That's about the width of the center aisle here in the church. Try to visualize this in your mind. You walk down this aisle with no concern as to whether or not you will stray off to the right or over to the left. You don't even give it a thought because there's no problem walking on the three feet. Yet, if that aisle were raised about three feet in the air like a runway in a night club, I think most of us would still walk the aisle, but now suddenly a new dimension is added. Chances are that we would be a little more concerned with what is to the right and left, and the fact that it is three feet down to the floor.

However, now let your imagination soar a little and suppose that this aisle or runway was now raised to a hundred feet in the air. Picture it. It would be the same runway - solid and substantial, three feet wide. Anyone could walk it, and yet how many of us would walk it. Let's be honest with ourselves. Would you walk it? If you did, would you walk it without care, or would you get down on all fours and carefully inch along....being cautious and concerned about what was to the right or over here to the left.

RELATING THIS TO LIFE

I think this is a very basic and important illustration of our fears in life because we all have places to go, things to do, but we give far too much thoughts to what's going on "out there"....to our right and left.

I think you know what I mean. "What if this happens....or what if we don't have enough money....what if they say we're too old, or too young...what if the job doesn't work out....or what if the reports are not negative...what if they say this....or what if my loved one leaves me....what if I catch that germ that's going around....what if....what if....what if....". We tend to focus so much on the things "out there" and forgetting where we are and what it is that we are about. Our perspective, our attention is thwarted...

I believe the important thing is to take a "loose hold" on life. As one old philosopher put it,

"Taking the most of all that comes and  
the least of all that goes...."

"I don't care what has happened, it has come to pass" "Let it go and walk on". Sure there are problems, conflicts, obstacles for life is change and change is often the cause for adjustment, but the problem, the burden, the weight of the experience is in thinking of the problem as something permanent and static. As Napoleon once said,

"I recognize its existence,  
but not its permanence...."

And this is highly important. As long as we think of a thing as permanent, the more it becomes a terrible burden to us. If it is just a temporary thing, or a changing experience, then we can let it happen and in the spirit of adventurous faith make our adjustment and move on.

For instance, there may be some one present today who may be carrying the burden of unemployment. A person may actually have been retired or let go from a job. This can be a terrible weight, but the weight is in the confusion of the bitterness, the fear, the self-pity. Each of these can be dealt with in the light of Biblical truth in order to get out from under that load. We can spend so much time thinking about those difficulties that the difficulties become our entire world. Right? Then we lose our sense of perspective, like the person who said "It's all over....I've lost my job and I've nothing to live for". To which someone replied, "Oh, I'm sorry to hear that your wife has died, that you've lost your children, that your home was destroyed". And the person, seeing that he had lost his perspective, replied "Touche".

The important thing to know - once you've gotten away from all negative reactions - is the fact that you're simply in between jobs. Remember the great truth of the Book of Revelation, "Behold, I have set before you an open door". When you adopt this attitude, you find yourself able to do what I call the art of looking for advantages in disadvantages. Have you ever thought about that, that every disadvantage, every difficulty in life, has many advantages if you will only take the time to search for them.

PRATICAL STEP

Some practical advice then, for getting out from under....from under what ever burden it is that you may be feeling, carrying.

When you're on the verge of being defeated by it, sit down for a few moments....relax....take stock....pull together the scattered forces of your soul. Take a sheet of paper and write down all the advantages of a particular problem. Decide that you're going to do this. If you're open and non-resistant and willing to search, you will begin to find some advantages. This is a start. This can help you to get out from under the weight of the problem - to let go and walk on.

There's no use wishing that you could "unhappen" the situation. It is the negative attitude, the resistance, the self-pity, the bitterness and such that make up the weight of the problem. The person who has lost a job, for instance, has the opportunity to face the problem and determine that maybe the job he lost was really frustrating his talents and energies. Now he can go forth in a new and positive fashion and know that this is just one closed door that is going to lead him through some open doors. When you leave the closed door and have the faith to believe that other doors are already opening to you, then you're on your way!

PROBLEM Perhaps it would help to get a new attitude toward our troubles. The word "problem" itself is a bit of a problem for it means "dark meanings and perplexing questions; a matter involving difficulty in solving or handling".

Look at world or personal problems. We tend to identify the difficulty with roadblocks, so it may be that we need to alter the word problem and think in terms of a "project". A problem is an opportunity to project or to externalize the dynamics of the human spirit. The Apostle Paul once said,

"Stir up the gifts of God that are within  
you".

It's interesting that the word "project" connotes a positive endeavor. For example, our nation tackled the project of landing a man on the moon. We rejoiced in its success. We don't think of it as a miracle, but as a result of human ingenuity. This is one example of a project dealing with a thing that challenged us, of something that needed to be done. So that when we think in terms of the project, there is a conviction that it needs to be done, that it can be done, that it will be done!

SO: WHAT PROJECTS IN YOUR LIFE? So, this brings us then to this question: what projects do you have in your life?

This is looking for advantage in disadvantage. A seeming dark, difficult problem is for the person of faith a "project" - waiting for you to project into visibility the divine potential that is there within you. Get on the side of the Master of Life. Get the thought spinning in your mind that life is lived from within out - so experiences, no matter what they are, how demanding and difficult, are opportunities to release more of your potentiality into play.

Isn't that the way to think about it? Certainly it is - it's a marvellous way to get into the consciousness of your life the good that undergirds, that sustains, that steadys us at all times, that is potentially yours. Whatever may be your experience of life, don't try to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. Don't put those "weights" of your personal concern into your little knapsack and tot them around with you tomorrow morning. Get rid of that knapsack and "get out from under".

CLOSING The person of faith realizes he is a dynamic spiritual being, that life is easier and makes greater sense when it is lived from within out, and that in so doing you can cast some burdens on the Lord. To quote Paul again, he said

"As God is faithful, He will not suffer you to be tempted with that which is above you, but will with the temptation, give you also the way of an escape".

It's another way of reminding <sup>you</sup> us that the power and the potential of what needs to be done is always within you. And when we fully realize this, we'll know that we can always "get out from under"....from under any burden or weight that we may be straining to carry, looking it as a project to tackle with our human ingenuity and to overcome with God's help.

PRAYER Grant us, Lord, that what we have heard with our ears, we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts, we may practice in our lives very day of this week that is before us. In the spirit of Jesus, we pray. Amen