

Harris Creek Baptist Church

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Series: Ecclesia

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Ministry Starts Today

Galatians 6:1-5

**“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they're something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.”**

Well, this week was a good week to have a truck. And luckily for me, for the first time in my life just this last year, I became a truck owner. This last year I got myself a 2002 Ford F 250, diesel engine, four-wheel drive. This thing was an absolute beast, like my truck eats your truck for breakfast. That's how big this thing is. If I wanted to, I could probably haul this entire church with all of us in it because this thing is an absolute monster. This was the perfect week for me to have this 2002 Ford F 250-wheel drive truck.

But I sold it a couple of weeks ago. It was the worst possible timing. I had to get rid of it because it was a 2002, stuff kept breaking down. It felt like a bit of a money pit. When I got rid of it, I was bummed, but also somewhat relieved. It's fun to have a truck until everyone else finds that you have a truck. I'm a pastor, I love to help people, but it kind of got in the way of my job. People have so much stuff for you to do whenever you have a truck.

When I got a truck, my job title changed here at Harris Creek. I went from the college minister to the minister of moving stuff. It seems like every ministry had something for me to do now that I had a truck. The first week I had this truck I was asked to move a refrigerator from one side of town to the other side of town. A couple of weeks later, JP asked me to move a ping pong table from one side of town to the other side of town. Our worship team asked me to move some really heavy music equipment from one church in town over to our church in McGregor. I was constantly moving stuff now that I had this truck.

My office also kind of moved this summer. Typically, I'm working here in this building where it smells great and we've got air conditioning and it's awesome, but I spent a lot of my time this summer at the city of Waco landfill. Everyone had stuff for me to throw away. The youth ministry had an old basketball hoop that they wanted me to throw away. The kid's ministry had broken lamps and broken rocking chairs they wanted me to throw away. The creative team had broken TV stands they wanted me to throw away. I was going back and forth, back and forth seemingly every single week now that I had this truck.

One time I was there this summer, it was like a Tuesday at 3 pm and I'm just doing what I do every other week throwing away stuff, and I get a call. I look down at my phone and I'm getting a call from one of our elders. It was Blair Browning. If you know Blair, he's one of the kindest people in the world. He's one of my top four, top five, favorite elders I think here at Harris Creek. He's incredibly kind. Whenever you're getting a phone call from an elder, you're like, "Oh my gosh, what's going on? Am I fired? Is JP fired? What's going on? This is crazy!"

I answered the phone, and he goes, "Nate, I just drove past you Tuesday at 3 pm at the city of Waco landfill, why aren't you doing your job?" I'm like "Blair, I am! I'm throwing away the kid's ministry decorations from 2005. This is my job now. This is just what I do now that I have a truck."

Those are all the examples of me in my job having to do stuff, but outside of work, man, people are asking me to move and do a lot of different things with my truck, which is great. I love to serve people. The lesson that I learned in having a truck is that people are desperately looking for other people to help them carry their stuff. People are desperately looking for anyone to help them carry their stuff. When you're the only one with a truck, it feels like you're the only one who can do the job, and it's exhausting.

That same lesson I learned from having a truck is a similar lesson that I've learned being in ministry. I've been on staff here for five years now, and I've learned the same thing. People are desperately looking for other people to carry their stuff. People are just looking to unload the burdens and the stuff that they're carrying around every single day. I've heard of things like sickness, disease, fatherlessness, broken relationships, eating disorders, depression, suicidal thoughts, sin, anxiety, despair, and addiction, because people are desperately looking for other people to carry their stuff.

It can be exhausting for those of us in ministry because it feels like we're the only ones who can carry it. You're looking for people to unload it, and it's just given to those of us in ministry. It feels like a lot because those of us in ministry are the only people capable of carrying your stuff. Those of us in ministry are the only people who can do that job.

But when I say those of us in ministry, what am I saying? When I say those of us in ministry, what do I mean? Here at Harris Creek, we're trying to build a culture. We're trying to build a biblical culture, and this is one of those issues that's kind of like a tier-one issue to us. When we say those of us in ministry, what do we mean?

You probably think those of us on staff. You think of JP, or Drew, or Vanessa. You think people in ministry are those of us on staff. It's just not true. For the past 10 years of my life, I've been studying how to be in ministry, what it means to be in ministry. I've got my religion major from Baylor; I've got my M Div. from Truett Seminary. I've been on staff now for five years, I've studied the scriptures and have been trying to find out what it means to be in ministry.

Really, if you have this one quality, you're in ministry. All you need is one thing to be in ministry. It's this, we all need to understand this, if you have this one characteristic you are in

ministry, and it's if you have the Holy Spirit. If you believe in Jesus, if you've trusted Him as your Lord and Savior, if you have the Holy Spirit, now you're in ministry. It says this directly in Scripture, 2 Peter 2:9 talks to all of us saying that we are all a royal priesthood. We're all in full-time ministry. It doesn't matter if you're a stay-at-home mom, a financial advisor, it doesn't matter what you are, you are in full-time ministry.

The church today has largely messed this up. Especially in the American church, we believe that there are only a few top-tier people, gifted people, who are in ministry. I see this all the time, about once a week I get contacted by someone saying, "Hey, I'd like to get in contact with JP, because I've got something to share with him." I'm like, "Guys, I'm in ministry too! I can help! Why do you want to talk to JP? I can help! I get that he's kind of a genius. I get that he's memorized the whole Bible. I at least have a seminary degree though. I can help. I can do it."

This should be your reaction as well whenever someone in your community or someone in your life group shares something with a pastor before they talk about it with you. You should be like, "Wait a second, I've got the Holy Spirit. I'm in ministry too. Yes, we want you to share with the pastors, but I'm a pastor too! Let me help you, deploy me for missions" because we're all called to be in ministry.

It's humankind's desire to put a few in charge, but it's God's desire to give the ministry out to the many. This is one of the themes that we see all across scripture, especially in the New Testament, but one of the best examples of this and Exodus chapter 18. You don't have to turn there, because we're not going to be sitting in there today, but it's one of those chapters that JP keeps bringing up to our staff time and time again. He says, "Remember, Exodus 18. Exodus 18. Exodus 18." It's a great example of God giving the ministry away to the many.

In Exodus chapter 18, God has just led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, and now they're wandering in the desert alone. They're this community of God-fearing people that are trying to figure out how to structure this new God-centered community. They decided to structure the leadership capacity by having one person in charge. They're going to have Moses be their judge, their pastor, their leader, and they're going to unload all of their stuff to him. He's going to be the person that they go to.

What happened was it didn't work. Moses grew exhausted, and the people grew frustrated because he couldn't carry all their stuff. One day— this would be a total nightmare if it happened— his father-in-law came and corrected him. His father-in-law was named Jethro, and he said, "Moses, what you're doing is not good. What you need to do is put the ministry out to the many. You need to find leaders who love the Lord and put them over thousands. And you find people who love the Lord and who are filled with honesty and integrity and put them over hundreds. Then you need to find other people and put them over 10s. You need to give the ministry away so that people are doing ministry all the way down the road."

This is one of the things that we've seen all across this series called Ecclesia. We've been looking at the church and the New Testament, this is what we've seen week in and week out. In week one, JP talked about how Jesus has deployed us to be a battleship. We're not a cruise ship, we're a battleship. All of us are involved in the ministry. In week two, we peered into the window of

the first-century church, in Acts chapter 2, and we saw that everyone had everything in common because everyone was sharing with one another. Week three in this series, we talked about how each one of us in the church has been given a unique spiritual gift to uplift, encourage, and build up the church, because all of us are called to be in ministry.

Today we're going to talk about what that means. We're going to train you for ministry. We're going to train you to be deployed into ministry, because now that we know that we're in ministry what do we do? Today you're going to walk away with three things that every single minister should be doing on a frequent basis. We're going to go to Galatians chapter 6, verses 1-5. It's going to be so helpful for you to have the scripture in front of you. If you have your Bible, turn there right now. Pull out your phone, go to the Bible app or search it online, Galatians chapter 6 verses 1-5.

Some context on the book of Galatians, Paul's writing this book to the church in Galicia and he and he says, "Man, I was so encouraged by y'all. When you came to understand the gospel, you pursued Jesus with all you had, you were serving people, you were doing things for the kingdom of God."

Within chapter one, he says "I'm surprised that you have so quickly deserted the good news of the gospel." Later in chapter five, Paul says this: "You were running a good race, who cut you off? What happened? You were going after it. You were doing ministry, but now you've stopped. What went wrong?"

In chapter six he's telling the church, "Hey, just as a reminder, you're called to be in ministry, and here's what you're supposed to do." He's picking them up, putting them back on their feet, and saying, "Go and do this." This is what it means to be the church. Paul says this, in Galatians 6:1-5, we'll read the whole text and break it down from there: **"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they're something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load."**

In this passage, we see three different things that every single minister should do. As ministers, we restore sinners. As ministers, we carry burdens. As ministers, we carry our load. Let's start with that first one. Let's start with that very first verse in the text, Galatians six, verse one: **"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."** He's saying, "Brothers and sisters", he's speaking to the whole church in Galatia, saying, "I've got a job for you to do. Whenever someone's caught in a sin, I've got a job for you to do. Brothers and sisters, the whole church in Galatia, I've got a job for you to do. You're to restore sinners."

But notice what he says. When he says, "when someone is caught in a sin," he doesn't say, "Let me know and I'll travel from wherever I am, and I'll come to restore that sinful person." He doesn't say that. And he doesn't say, "When someone's caught in a sin, tell your leaders and

they'll restore them.” No, notice what he says. He says, “If someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person.” He's saying, “All of you, if you're a believer in Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit, you are in ministry, and you should be restoring sinners.”

1. *As ministers, we restore sinners.* It's what we do as ministers, we restore sinners. And that's why we at Harris Creek believe so deeply in this idea of the biblical theme of confession. Confession sounds like an old word, it sounds like a Catholic word, something that the church shouldn't be doing today. It feels kind of old school, but we believe so deeply in confession. We think that our life group should be frequently answering three questions: 1) How have you fed your soul? Have you been growing your love for Jesus? 2) How have you fed others? How have you been serving others? 3) How have you fed your flesh? Confession?

Honestly, the confession question is the one that we get the most questions about, the most pushback about, because it's like, “Man, why do I have to confess that sin that I did in secret that no one saw? Why do I have to bring that up with my group? When I have to tell them that thing that I thought? It just feels awkward bringing it up. I don't really want to confess my sin. It feels weird.”

But here at Harris Creek, we take confession seriously because we take sin seriously. We know where sin can take you. If you just look at the language in Galatians chapter 6, he says if someone is caught in a sin. Here at Harris Creek, no one should ever have to be caught in a sin. Whenever you're caught in a sin, your sin has probably taken you much farther than you ever thought it would take you. In fact, the language there, “caught in a sin”, is very similar to John chapter 8, when a woman has been caught in adultery. Her sin took her farther than she wanted to go. We take confession seriously because we take sin seriously. And we hope that you're confessing lustful thoughts early on, so you're not confessing a full-on affair later on. We want to protect you from what sin can do to your life.

This quote is one of my favorite quotes on sin, and it's absolutely true. It says this: “Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.” Man, that's true. This week, I was trying to search it online to make sure I had the correct wording, and I was trying to figure out who said it. I'm sure someone said it before Ravi Zacharias, but the first link I clicked on said it was initially said by Ravi Zacharias. You probably don't know who he is, you might know, but he had a tremendous impact on my life. He was one of the best, most gifted Christian apologists of our day. He was a genius. The way he was able to describe our faith through reason made our faith make sense. His life was a tremendous life of impact. He impacted thousands of people all across the globe and helped them grow in their love for Jesus.

Here's what's also true about Ravi Zacharias. He recently passed away, and right before he passed away, there were a few allegations that came up. Sexual allegations about him and his ministry and himself, and he just kind of pushed it away and said, “Man, it's not true. It's not true. I would never do that. You guys know me, I would never do that.” We all thought, “Yeah, of course it's not true.” But the allegations kept coming up after his death. Finally, his ministry, Ravi Zacharias international ministries, said, “Okay, we have to investigate it.” A couple of days ago, literally days ago, they released a report on his life. While Ravi Zacharias impacted

thousands of people for Christ, he had an affair. And he had another affair, and another affair, and another affair, and another affair, and another affair. He had tens, if not hundreds, of affairs throughout his life. It was spiritual abuse, it was sexual abuse, it was sexual misconduct. When I read the report, it was disgusting to read. It was hard to read.

Here's what it's wasn't. It wasn't surprising to read, because how many times we've seen this happen? We've seen pastors, we've seen church leaders, turn away from the gospel and pursue something else. They've lived a life of secret and hidden sin and absolutely ruined their life. The only reason we know about their stories is because they had a platform, and they had articles written about them. But there are thousands of others of those same stories that happen all across the church in America. They happen in pastors' lives, and church members' lives, they're happening all over the place because the same thing happens. Whenever you keep sin hidden, whenever it remains unknown in your life, it's going to absolutely rip you to shreds.

The Scripture says that hidden sin is like a lion prowling around in your life seeking to steal, kill, and destroy every good thing in your life. This quote is true, and now that I read it, it's almost haunting to think that Ravi was telling this to thousands of people because he was living it in his own life. His sin was taking him farther than he wanted to go, keeping him longer than he wanted to stay, and it cost him more than he wanted to pay. Because when sin is hidden in your life, it's let loose, and it will destroy everything in its path.

This is why we believe so deeply in confessing sin here. This is why I love one of the phrases that Drew Greenway, one of our pastors, uses here. He says, "We need to live with rigorous honesty." We need to live with rigorous honesty. We want to uncover every single stone in our life to make sure that sin doesn't have a foothold anywhere because we believe that when we bring sin into the light, it loses its power. We believe that because Scripture says that. Proverbs 28:13 says that **"Whoever conceals their sin does not prosper. But the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."**

We want to make it abundantly clear what we do as sinners here at Harris Creek. I want to make it abundantly clear what we do with sinful people here at Harris Creek. Whenever we encounter a sinful person, we need to know what we're going to do. We will not reject them. We will not isolate them. We will not punish them. We will not kick them to the curb. Here's what we do whenever we encounter a sinful person: we restore them. At Harris Creek, we restore sinful people because this is what we're called to do and because every single one of us is a sinful person.

Scripture says that every single one of us has turned our back on God and fallen short of the glory of God. Scripture says that we were far from God's presence until Jesus came down and he moved us closer to God. This is our experience, we sinned, and Jesus saved.

All of us have experienced that. So now whenever we encounter a sinful person, all we get to do is say, "Hey, I've been there before. I've fallen flat on my face, but remember this, you're seen known, forgiven, and loved by the God of the universe because Jesus shed blood on the cross. We point them back to the restoration found in the Gospel. This should be normative here as believers at Harris Creek.

But if right now, you can't remember the last time you had the opportunity to restore a sinner, it's probably because of one or two reasons. It's probably because one, you're not in a life group. You're not in a community of people who are confessing sin to one another. Or the other option is you're in a life group, and your life group just struggles with deceit. You're not confessing sin; you're not being honest. That's a problem because we know every single life group here has a sinful person in it because every single person here is a sinful person.

This should be normative here at Harris Creek. We don't need to be afraid of confession, we should just get used to confession and restoration. Someone will confess sin in your group, and your group gets to come around them, hug them, pick them up, plan them back on their feet, wash them through Scripture and prayer, and then point them back to the restoration found in Jesus. This is normal at Harris Creek. It's not awkward, it's not uncomfortable, it's normal. All of us need to know that there will be times when we will be the ones doing the restoring. We will be the ones pointing people back to Jesus. But we also need to know that every single one of us is going to have a time in our life when we need to be restored. When we need to have our community come around us and point us back to the gospel. There will be times when you will be doing the restoring, there'll be times when you need to be restored because this is what we do here at Harris Creek. As ministers, we restore sinners.

Let's keep going in the text and see what Paul says next. Galatians 6:2, Paul writes this to the church in Galatia, he says, **“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”** He says carry each other's burdens. That word “burdens” here in Greek is like a crushing weight. It's a weight that you couldn't possibly carry on your own. The word picture here is like me underneath a bench press. I have like 10 pounds on either side so I'm struggling. I can't get this thing up. The word picture here is that you get to come along and be my spotter. You get to carry my burden. You get to carry the weight that I otherwise couldn't carry on my own.

2. *As ministers we carry burdens.* You made my message so stinking easy this week. It's one of the easiest messages I've ever had to write because y'all were doing this all week long. One of my favorite things about being on staff at Harris Creek is I just get to hear stories of y'all being deployed for missions. I get to hear how God is using each and every one of you. I just want to share what I've seen this week, what I've heard this week.

The first example came last Sunday, and it happened to me specifically. I thought I cleared off my windshield from here at church, but I hadn't cleared it off enough. There was still some liquid on and I'm like, “Man, I'm fine. I live pretty close to here.” I drove home on 84, and as soon as I started driving home that liquid turned into ice. I couldn't see, so I had to pull over on 84. I was incredibly embarrassed. I'm like, “Man, I'm from Minnesota. I should know better than this. This is ridiculous.” So, I just get out of my car and I start scraping the windshield off. As soon as I did, I got a text from one of y'all, a phone call from one of y'all, and two people pulled over. It was like the church just swarmed me. They saw a need and they wanted to meet it because as ministers we carry burdens.

A couple of days later, one of our members here at Harris Creek slipped and fell on the ice and got a concussion. She had to be taken to the hospital. They worked on her and they said, "You're good to go. You can go home." But she had no way of getting home because the roads were so icy, and nobody wanted to pick her up.

The good news was the day before someone had emailed our staff and said, "Hey, I have a truck, it has four-wheel drive, I have a chain, I have amazing tires, I will do whatever you want me to do. We were like, "Hey, would you be willing to pick up this person? We know you don't know her, but she needs help. She's at the hospital." He was like, "There's no greater joy I could have than to go and serve her." He got to serve someone who didn't know because as ministers we carry burdens.

Another thing that frequently happened this week was that we had a lot of people lose power, specifically with our older people here at Harris Creek. Those above 35, we really wanted to care for you guys. We knew you were struggling. And we had people who were asking for firewood. They were out of power, out of electricity, and they needed to heat their homes. They kept asking for firewood, and we're like, "We've got so many people who need firewood. I don't know if we're going to have enough people who are going to have firewood to help." So, we just asked the church: "Hey, do any of y'all have firewood?" We had people coming out of the woodworks asking to help. They were like, "Hey, I have firewood. Can I give mine away?" We had way more than enough because people were willing to carry one another's burdens.

I could tell 100 different stories like this, but this one specifically I was so encouraged by because it happened in a college guy's life group. I got a text from one of our leaders saying this, "Our life group was able to safely meet tonight for a meal and to bring others in who didn't have power," Man if that's not the picture of the church, I don't know what it is. We bring others in when they need help. And he continued by saying, "It has been an incredible week to see how God used these guys. Multiple are staying with each other and meeting up every day."

I know that's true for so many of you. In fact, I was talking to one of y'all this week and I was like, "I don't know what people do in Waco this week who aren't a part of the church, because it seems like every other one of you was staying in each other's houses. Although this was one of the most painful weeks in Waco history, this is also one of the most beautiful weeks because we got to see the church be the church. It kind of felt like Acts 2 to me. I don't know if it did you, but it did me because we had people sharing each other's homes, sharing each other's food, sharing your power, sharing your water, sharing your trucks. We had everything in common because the church was being deployed to be the church.

Some of you learned an important lesson this week. I was talking to one of y'all and you said you had gone without power for five days. You said you hated it. What was interesting was you said you hated it not because you went without power, but because you had to ask for help.

That phrase should never, ever, be said here at Harris Creek. We should never hate to ask for help because when you ask for help, what you're doing is you're allowing God to use other people to carry your burdens. You're deploying other people for ministry. It's our joy to serve.



It's our joy to help because it's what we're called to do as believers in Jesus, we carry one another's burdens.

Just because the crazy Texas weather of this week is hopefully behind us, doesn't mean the pain is behind us. It doesn't mean that despair is behind us. As I said before, I've been on staff now for five years, I've been in college ministry now for five years, and I have never had more parents contacting me asking me to check on their kids than these last few months. It hasn't even been close, because we've got college students who are hurting. We don't just have college students who are hurting, we have adults who are hurting, we have youth who are hurting, we have people in pain all around us. If anything, this week has shown us how to live the other 51 weeks, that our eyes be open, our heads on a swivel, looking for people to serve because it's our joy to do it. Because as ministers, we carry burdens.

How much does it matter? How much does it matter, other than me telling a story about someone serving each other and you feeling all warm and fuzzy inside? How much does it matter to carry one another's burdens? How much do meal trains matter? How much do prayer warriors matter? How much does it matter to open up your homes and give your guest bedroom to someone in your church? How much does it matter to carry one another's burdens?

Let's look at what Paul says in the text. In verse 2 he says this, **“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”** When you carry one another's burdens, you will fulfill the law of Christ. What's the law of Christ? Here in Galatians 6, Paul is specifically pointing back to Mark 12 where Jesus says that the two most important commandments are to **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”**

Jesus said, “I've got two commandments. These are the two things that are the most important things you could possibly do. You need to love God; you need to love people.” Paul says that whenever you carry each other's burdens, you're loving people well. You're doing one of the two most important things you could possibly be doing. You're loving people well, but really, you're doing the two most important things you could possibly be doing because when you love other people it's a reflection of your love for God. When you carry one another's burdens, it's just a reflection of your understanding of the gospel. When you carry one another's burdens, you're reminding yourself that God carried your heaviest burden.

Scripture says that our sin was like a millstone tied around our neck. We were crushed beneath the weight of our sin. Scripture says that while we were yet powerless, at the moment we were the most crushed, Jesus came down and he reached down and lifted our weight from us. Now we can walk free. Now that we've experienced that freedom, what now shall we do? We get to go around and lift other weights off of people's backs, we get to carry each other's burdens. When we do that, it's like we're telling God, “I get it. I get what you've done for me. I understand the gospel, that you saved me from myself and you carry my heaviest burden.”

So how much does it matter to carry one another's burdens? Don't take my word for it, take Jesus's word for it. It's the most important thing we could do because it's what you're made to do. Because point number two, as ministers we carry burdens.

Let's keep going to the text and read what he says in verses 3-5. Paul says this, **“If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.”**

Perhaps even this week, whenever people are serving each other, it can be really easy to play the comparison game and think, “I can't believe they were able to give so much money. I can't believe they were able to serve so many people. I can't believe they're able to host so many people at their house.” Or you can also say, “Man, I can't believe how little they did. They didn't do anything compared to what I do.” It's easy to play the comparison game.

Paul attacks that notion. He says, “Don't care about what everyone else does, how much they do or how little they do. Stop caring about what everyone around you is doing and focus on you. What are you doing? Don't deceive yourself, focus on yourself before you think about someone else who's doing a lot or someone else who's doing a little. Focus on yourself because you've got a task. You've got a job to do. You've got a load to bear.

3. *As ministers we carry our own load.* If you're thinking critically, this might sound confusing because the phrase, “We carry our own load,” comes directly from the text. You might be confused, you're thinking, “Nate, you just said that as ministers were supposed to carry other people's burdens. But now I'm also supposed to carry my own load without asking for help? Doesn't that seem like it contradicts? Well, it doesn't, because the word burden in the text, the Greek word for burden, means “like a crushing weight”. A weight that you can't carry on your own. But the word “load” in verse 5, the Greek word, is more like a “task”. It's like Paul saying, “Do the task that's been assigned to you. Do the load has been assigned to you. Do the job that's been assigned to you.” You can do it. He's saying, “Don't focus on everyone else's tasks, everyone else's jobs, do the job that's been assigned to you.”

You need to know that each and every season, you're going to have a different task. Different seasons will require different tasks and different loads. In fact, right now, my wife is eight months pregnant. She's in her third trimester of pregnancy. What that means is, I'm absolutely exhausted. Man, I have been through so much. I'm emotionally exhausted, I'm losing sleep because I'm just uncomfortable, people are getting up and going to the bathroom at night, and it's just exhausting to go through eight months of pregnancy. Since I'm just kind of exhausted, she's having to do a little bit more around the house. This week she was shoveling the driveway, she was doing dishes, she took the trash out because she needs to carry her own weight. She needs to do her job.

Of course not!!

She has a much bigger task than I do in this season. She's doing way more than I do because that's what this season is requiring of her. That means that I'm having to do a couple of other

things around the house because different seasons require different tasks. It's true that in some seasons you'll be able to carry more, and in some seasons you'll be able to carry less. But I do know this about every season of your life: Your task is to own your faith, it's to prioritize your relationship with Jesus no matter the season. There will be some seasons where you're going to be getting after it and some seasons where you're just having a hold on. There will be different tasks for different seasons.

So often when you're looking at your faith, and you're comparing your life to everyone else, you can look around and think, "Man, it seems like they've got the whole Bible memorized," or "It seems like they've never read their Bible." Paul is saying forget about that. Forget about those two spectrums. Forget about them, focus on yourself. You've got a task to do, you've got a job to do.

Some of you are blowing it. Some of you aren't doing your job. Paul says here that you need to step up. Stop deceiving yourself, stop focusing on everyone else. Do your job. Pursue Jesus. It's not the season of life you're in, it's you and your choices. It's been season after season, year after year, you're not following God. Here's what it looks like: You're a drain on your life group. You're a drain on your group because you get together and someone confesses sin, or someone brings something up and needs counseling, and because you haven't been pursuing Jesus on your own because you haven't been reading your Bible on your own, you have nothing to offer. You have no scripture to offer them, you have no wisdom to offer them, and you're a drain on your group.

It could also look like this in your life group because you haven't been spending time with Jesus, you haven't been presenting your requests to God. What you end up doing is you show up to life group and you present your request to life group. You just complain, complain, complain. You complain about your kids, your job, your marriage, you don't make enough, you don't like your house, you just complain because you haven't been doing your job. You haven't been following Jesus. There will be some seasons like that, but for some of us it has been season after season after season, you haven't been doing your job.

Some of you are a drain on your marriage. For some of you, your wife has been praying for years for you to want to go to church. You say you follow Jesus, but when it comes time to go to church, it's like pulling teeth to get you here. You're not doing your job. Some of you, your husbands have been desperately hoping that you would start reading the Word so you can have conversations about Jesus. But since you haven't been doing your job, you're a drain on your marriage. And for crying out loud, some of y'all are a drain on your kids. Some of you have kids who so desperately just want parents to talk about Jesus with them at the dinner table. You have got kids who want parents to pray for them at bedtime. We want parents who are pouring into our kids, but you're a drain on your kids because you're not doing your job. You need to step up.

Stop the excuses. Stop talking about what they're doing or how little they're doing. What are you doing? That's what Paul says. Are you reading the Word? Are you spending time in prayer? Are you giving generously? Are you serving? Are you doing your job? At Harris Creek, we need you to do your job because you're a minister, you're on the team. From this day on, I hope you know that you're not on the sidelines, you're in the game. In order for the church to move as far as it

possibly can, for us to be as efficient as we possibly can, we need everyone on the team to do their job. We can't have players missing practice. We can't have players not in the gym. We can't have players not watching game films. We need everyone on the team to do the job that's assigned to them. We need everyone pursuing Jesus regardless of the season that you're in because that's our job.

Our job as ministers is threefold. It's this: As ministers, we restore sinners. As ministers, we carry burdens. As ministers, we carry our own load. It sounds like a lot. I mean, it is a lot. We have to carry people that Jesus, we have to carry burdens, we have to carry our own load. That sounds like a lot. And it is a lot if you're doing it on your own. As I said before, it can feel like a lot when you're the only person who can carry other people's stuff.

A couple of years ago my wife and I bought a house here in Waco. We were excited to move in, but the weekend that we could move in, I was going to be gone. I was doing an out-of-state wedding, so I couldn't be here to move in our stuff that weekend. The whole weekend I was kind of dreading the week ahead because I was going to have to move my stuff in throughout the week before and after work, and it was going to be an exhausting week. I flew back on a Sunday night, drove back to Waco from DFW, and the very first time I opened my front door, I was expecting to see nothing there. But the very first time I opened up my front door, I turned my lights on, and every single one of my possessions had already been moved. The kitchen table was there, the bed frame was there, our dressers were there. It's because our best friends, our church, had a truck. They saw an opportunity. When I was gone and wasn't able to move my stuff, they said, "Hey, I get to serve Nate and Natalie. We get to serve them." They saw it as an opportunity because they had the ability to serve and to carry my burdens. What's fun is that we got to help them move a couple of months later.

You see, we can do more when we're in this together. When everyone is able to carry each other's burdens, we can do more, and the job becomes much more fun. That's the beauty of the church when everyone is involved. We don't have one person who can carry the weight, we have thousands who can carry the weight.

In order to hit that home, we had a generous donor donate a brand-new pickup truck to all of you today. If you look under your seat, there's going to be a key to a Ford F 150. You get a car, and you get a car, and you get a car! I've always wanted to do that. That's not actually true, no one did that, but I do have good news. God has given you a spiritual pickup truck. That's just as good, right? Come on, it's not a letdown. God's given you His Holy Spirit, and He allows you to be able to carry the weight of other people's burdens. The Holy Spirit allows you to carry other people to Jesus, and the Holy Spirit gives you the power and the strength to carry your own load, to do the task that's been assigned to you. You have what it takes to be a minister of reconciliation in this city, and in this church.

It's been said if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. I don't know about you, but I want to see the gospel go far in our city. I want to see the gospel take over the city of Waco. I want to see Baylor University turn into a disciple-making factory. I want to see hundreds if not thousands of people baptized in our outdoor baptistry. I want to see marriages repaired. I want to see poverty removed. I want to see hope restored. Don't you? That's why

we're doing this thing, we want to see God move far in our city. In order for Him to move far, we need to be in this together.

I hope you realize that you're no longer on the sidelines, you're a full-on, full-time, member of the ministry. We need you in the game. We need you ready to do whatever it takes to advance the gospel in our city. We need to be willing to do whatever God has called us to do individually, because when that's our mindset, who knows what he might do through us corporately as a church. Let's pray that it would be so of us today.

God, thank you for your Word, that it doesn't just tell us what we want to hear, but it tells us what we need to hear. That You call us to a higher standard for ourselves than we even think we are deserving of. God, you've always seen something in us that we haven't. When we were covered in sin and cloaked in sin, you saw us, and you said "I want that. I want him. I want her. He's my son, she's my daughter, I want them a part of the family".

Father, thank you for your grace, and your mercy, and your forgiveness. God, thank you for what you've done on the cross. That even when we were far from you, you took all the steps necessary to run towards us, to pick us up, and to restore our relationship with you. God, what a joy the gospel is. Father, I just pray for the people in this room, that we believe it. That we believe that we can be deployed to be ministers of reconciliation. We all have what we need because we believe in Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit who's alive and active. God, thank you for this church. We submit this church to you. We know that you're the one leading, you're the one restoring, and you're the one who carried our heaviest burdens. May we be a church that's surrendered to you, submitted to you, and may you do immeasurably more than we could even ask or imagine through this church, through this Ecclesia here at Harris Creek. God, we love you, and it's in the powerful name of Jesus that we pray, Amen.