Violent Action Needed

"Cast your burdens on the Lord and He will sustain you: He will never permit the righteous to be moved." Ps. 55:22

This is a word written for people like us who work in the Muslim World. It is because the Bible contains statements like this that it is such an immensely practical book! It faces the facts of life. It is full of stories of people in trouble. It recognises that trial, distress, sickness and sorrow are common conditions of life. Life has burdens. God's Word doesn't deny it.

If this is so, what can be the reason for these burdens? Why does our loving Heavenly Father allow them to press down on us so heavily?

The **first** part of the answer to this question is so that we will turn to God. He wants to bring us to Himself. When we have a burden too heavy to bear then we have something we must bring to God. When we feel the pressure of life, when we are dragged down by something too much for us, then we are constrained to come to God.

When everything is going well and we are free from trouble and distress then we have a tendency to forget God! We begin to imagine that we can manage quite well without Him. He drops out of our thoughts. But when trouble comes – what then?

In Psalm 107 there are several pictures of people in trouble and every time it says, ***"Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble."*** Their trouble turned them to God. When we are at our wits end, we pray. When distress and disaster shake us out of our false sense of security and confidence in ourselves to the point of a desperate sense of need, instinctively we cry out to our Heavenly Father. This is one great value of trouble and distress. This is why distress is such a common method of divine discipline. It keeps us close to God! It brings us back when we have wandered away.

There is a **second** part to our answer. Trouble not only brings us to God, it gives God the opportunity to display His power. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." In our despair when we bring our burdens to God. We find that He can carry them all. None are too heavy for Him.

Whatever is burdening you, cast it on the Lord and He will sustain you. This is the way we grow in grace and in our knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus. This was Paul's attitude to trouble. He saw that every time and in every form it gave a fresh opportunity to discover what God can do! To Paul every distress was an occasion to prove in experience that the grace of the Lord Jesus was sufficient. So when burdens press down intolerably, don't look in despair at the burden! Look for the sustaining. Look to Jesus. He will sustain you.

"Cast your burdens on the Lord." This is not just a gentle piece of advice. It is not a kindly suggestion. It is an abrupt and urgent command. It demands active obedience. The word 'cast' is a violent word indicating a great effort. It means 'to hurl'. We are commanded to exert all our energy, to stir ourselves up into a forceful effort and to hurl our load of care upon God. Why such language? Why do we need this command to energetic effort and decisive action?

I think there are two reasons for this urgent command. The first is that anxiety, worry and despair take a great effort to shift. We are prone to let them settle down in our hearts as permanent residents. We easily get to the position where we believe it is impossible to get rid of them. So unless we violently provoke ourselves, unless we stir ourselves up to the effort of getting rid of them, we will go on carrying them until they crush us with hopelessness.

There is an old story of a man with a heavy rucksack. He was given a lift by a passing car. As he rode along he insisted on wearing the rucksack. When asked why he didn't take it off and put it on the floor, he replied, 'It is so kind of you to give me a lift, but I don't want to impose on you to carry my rucksack as well!' How foolish! Yet so often we find ourselves behaving just as foolishly. We trust Jesus for our salvation but we still carry all our daily anxieties ourselves. For most of us nothing less than a violent effort will be needed to free us. We need to wake ourselves up to energetic action.

If you are carrying a heavy load, this command is for you. ***"Cast your burden…"*** Get rid of it! With a decisive effort of will and faith throw it off your back. Don't carry it a minute longer. Holding nothing back cast it on the Lord and be free!

There is a second reason why such an urgent command is necessary. If we don't get rid of our burdens they will more than weigh us down. They will harden our hearts. They will cause a 'root of bitterness' to be established there. The Hebrew word 'burden' implies 'that which is given'. A possible translation of this verse is:

"Cast that which He has given you back on the Lord."

The corrosive thought about trouble that offends us is that God allows it. This is true. This verse confirms it. God has given your burden to you. The immediate question is, 'Why?' The temptation is to moan and groan, murmur and complain and drift away from God because we feel He is unjust and cruel! The urgent command in Psalm 55:22 aims at preventing such a development.

It calls us to act at once and get rid of our burden before it begins to harden our hearts. If God has given this burden to you, then it is His. He is only testing you to see what you will do with it! Imagine a father giving his little son something to carry that is far too heavy for him. What does the lad say to his father? *"It's too heavy Dad, you have to carry it!"*

So when Our Heavenly Father gives us a burden, something more than we can carry, something that immediately begins to weigh us down and threatens to break our spirits, what are we to do? Act at once. Throw it back to our Father. ***"Cast your burden on the Lord."*** Then He will not only carry your burden. He will do much more. ***"He will sustain you"!***