

# FAITH IS ACTION

JUNE 2026 • VOLUME 65 • NUMBER 06

*A Word of the Lord...*

**TIME  
TO  
BEAR  
WITH  
PRAYER**





# TIME TO BEAR WITH PRAYER

Sharon Hardy Knotts

*“Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.... For every man shall bear his own burden” (Galatians 6:2, 5).*

Does this sound like a contradiction? Paul tells us that we should fulfill the law of Christ by *bearing one another’s burdens*, and then he tells us that we each must *bear his own burden*. We can clear up the supposed contradiction by looking at the original Greek words for *burden* in each verse.

In verse 2, the Greek word for burdens is **BAROS** and means *heaviness, weight, and even trouble*. It refers to a heavy weight that is *beyond what one can bear alone*.

In verse 5, the Greek word is **PHORTION** and refers to New Testament obligations which Jesus put on His followers, which were in contrast to the heavy precepts and observances that the Pharisees demanded.

Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30: *“Come unto me, all you 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 you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”* In verse 28, the Greek word for *heavy laden* is translated *burdened* in some translations. That’s because the Greek word is from **PHORTION**, and we saw that it means *a burden that is not too heavy for a person to carry with Jesus*.

Even Jesus, the Son of God, could not carry His cross alone. The Romans made the condemned man carry his horizontal wood beam called a patibulum, which weighed 75 to 125 lbs. Jesus was a strong muscular man in the prime of life, having been a carpenter for many years and having walked all over Israel ministering for three and a half years. But during the 12 hours from His arrest to His crucifixion, He had suffered greatly.

It began with His agony in Gethsemane when His sweat was literally tinged with drops of blood.

His head had been beaten with rods, His bloody beard plucked from His cheeks, and a crown of thorns pressed into His scalp and brow. Then, at the whipping post, He suffered the horrible, brutal beating of the soldier's whip of lashes ripping His flesh, muscles, and nerves with searing, excruciating pain. It is estimated that He lost a third of His blood volume. It is no wonder that He could not carry His cross beam. *The soldiers compelled a man named Simon to carry it for Him to Calvary.*

**Phortion** also referred to the pangs we feel in our souls when our conscience is troubled by our faults. When it comes to obedience to the teachings of Christ, they may feel burdensome when we are wrestling with our flesh. These are burdens no one else can carry for us. We just have to get the victory over our flesh.

But when we are being fiercely attacked by the enemy, and one thing after another is piling up on us, we need our brothers and sisters to come alongside of us and help us carry the burden. And in both of these verses, the Greek words for *bear* means *to lift up with your hands and carry*.

With this in mind, let us go to Romans 15:1: "*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*" First, look at the word *ought*.

Paul is not just *suggesting* that we who are strong should help our brothers and sisters when they are

going through a place of weakness and are feeling powerless to carry the burden that is weighing them down. The Greek word *ought* actually means *we owe a debt to help them*. The Greek word for *weak* is translated 8 out of 10 times in the New Testament meaning *impossible*. In other words, the burden that is on them is too heavy for them to carry alone.

This is when the members of the body of Christ are called upon to help them carry the load. Paul said in 1Cor. 12:25, that the members in the body of Christ *should have the same care one for another*. He went so far as to say that *if one member suffers, that all the members suffer with it*.

### THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

We will take a brief run through the early chapters of the Book of Acts to show what happens when the saints pray for their leaders and when they don't.

In chapters 3 and 4, now being baptized with the Holy Spirit and power, Peter and John went up to the temple to pray. There they raised up a crippled man who had sat at the gate Beautiful every day for years, begging for money, His miracle healing reverberated throughout the city, and as a result, when Peter preached, 5,000 souls were saved.

This greatly distressed the religious leaders and they called for Peter and John to question them about the miracle. This opened the door for Peter to preach to them

about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and salvation through His name. And he lowered the boom.

This infuriated them, and they threw Peter and John in jail. The next morning, they called them back to question them, and they could not find any cause wherewith they could hold them, so they threatened them that they should not preach and teach in the name of Jesus again and let them go. When Peter and John came back to the believers and told them what had happened, they rejoiced. We can be sure that they had been praying for Peter and John all night.

Now, upon their return, they prayed this corporate prayer: *“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, You are God, which has made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David has said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.*

*“For of a truth against your holy child Jesus, whom You have anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever Your hand and Your counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord,*

*behold their threatenings: and grant unto Your servants, that with all boldness they may speak Your word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Your holy child Jesus.*

*“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:23-31).*

They were on a roll and the apostles became bolder with Peter and John at the forefront. The gospel was spreading like fire. In Acts 5, the religious leaders got stirred up again, seeing how people were now coming from neighboring cities and towns to Jerusalem to hear the gospel. Once again, they imprisoned Peter and John.

That night, the angel of the Lord

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## **FAITH IS ACTION**

(USPS 184720)

The official voice of

**Sound of Faith Ministries**

**Editor: Sharon Hardy Knotts**

Published monthly by

**Faith Tabernacle, Inc.**

2422 W. Patapsco Ave., Baltimore, MD 21230

(410) 525-0969 · [soundoffaith.org](http://soundoffaith.org)

**Periodicals: Postage Paid at Baltimore, MD.**

No Paid Advertising Accepted.

Subscription \$5.00 per year.

**Postmaster:** Please send address changes to

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P.O. Box 1744, Baltimore, MD 21203.

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came and set them free and told them to go to the temple in the morning and preach. The next morning, the temple soldiers were sent to bring them back before the council, but when they came, they found the prison gates were locked and the guards on duty, but Peter and John were gone. Then they were told that they were back at the temple preaching again.

Once again, they were brought back before the council and were rebuked: *“Saying, Did not we straitly command you that you should not teach in this name? and, behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.*

*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him”* (Acts 5:28-31).

Well, this didn’t go over too good, and they were ready to stone them. But one of the wise counselors among them, told them not to touch them. In the case it was God, they didn’t want to be found fighting against God. They agreed and instead they beat them and let them go: *“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were*

*counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”* (vv.41-42).

### **THE PANTRY PROBLEM**

In Acts 6, the church had created a pantry to help widows in need, who are very near to the heart of God. Now, the enemy could not stop the apostles and leaders from preaching and performing miracles and bringing thousands of souls to Christ. But he saw the pantry as an opportunity to bring in strife. The Greek widows were complaining that the Hebrew widows were getting larger portions than they were. It reached a point that the apostles had to stop reading, praying, and preaching, to handle the situation:

*“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look you out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word”* (Acts 6:2-4).

They chose excellent men, one of whom was Stephan. He was full of the Holy Ghost and faith, and even though he was only a deacon and not an apostle, he was performing signs and miracles. So effective was his preaching, that now the religious leaders targeted him. In a rage, they

stoned him while his face shone like an angel's. The shock of his death reverberated throughout the church, and they began to scatter, leaving Jerusalem. But this turned out to be a good thing because the gospel was being spread further. However, Peter and John remained in Jerusalem.

### **EVANGELISM EXPLOSION**

In chapters 8 through 11, the Gospel continued to increase, spreading to the Gentiles after Peter received a vision from heaven not to refuse them and was sent to minister in the home of a Roman Centurion named Cornelius.

Meanwhile, the notorious Saul, who was arresting Christians to be killed, also received a supernatural encounter with Jesus Christ, and was radically converted and commissioned to join Barnabas on a missionary tour to Gentile cities and nations to preach the Gospel.

It had been 8 years since the shocking martyrdom of Steven and the church had developed into a mighty missionary machine. At this point, there was no stopping the gospel from going forth in great power, and the church was exploding with new believers. But a greater blow shook them to their core when one of the 12 original disciples of Jesus and member of His inner circle of only three, Peter, James and John, James was martyred.

Acts 12:1-5: *“Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the*

*church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers [16] to keep him; intending after Easter [Passover] to bring him forth to the people. Peter, therefore, was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”*

The church got down to business! They got down on their corporate knees and prayed day and night for Peter to be set free. They were still reeling from the beheading of James. No one thought that one of Jesus' three inner circle would be killed. And now, Peter! No way! They probably felt that the church could not survive his death so closely on the heels of James.

The way I see it, although they were devastated by James' martyrdom, they had not pressed in to praying for the rest of the leadership. They did not consider that if the devil could take out James, he could take out Peter. He could take out others in the leadership.

That's what Herod thought. When he saw that it pleased the enemies of the church, he intended to take out Peter as well. And he would have gotten away with it if the church hadn't gotten on their prayer bones and began to take spiritual authority

over the authorities of the human players and the evil powers behind them all.

*“And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird yourself, and bind on your sandals. And so he did. And he said unto him, Cast your garment about you, and follow me.*

*“And he went out, and followed him; and knew not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leads unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said,*

*“Now I know of a surety, that the Lord has sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying” (vv.6-12).*

Peter went straight to the house of one of the Saints where many were gathered in prayer for him. He started knocking on the door until finally a young girl answered, but when she saw that it was Peter, she was so excited she didn't open the door for him and ran to tell the others that Peter was at the door:

*“And they said unto her, You are mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. [His angel could have walked through the door!] But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James [the natural brother of Jesus], and to the brethren. And he departed and went into another place.” (vv.15-17).*

They were *astonished* when they saw Peter. The word means “to be astounded, to be amazed.” Why? Were they amazed because they realized that God had actually answered their prayer?

It was because they prayed without ceasing, because they prayed in corporate agreement, Peter was rescued from being beheaded like James. It was their prayers that caused God to send the angel to bring Peter out. I feel it's safe to say that going forward, the church was covering their leaders in prayer.

## **PAUL'S REQUESTS FOR PRAYER**

The great Apostle Paul was not above asking for personal prayer. His boldness in preaching the gospel, even to kings and governors and the Judaizers in the synagogues who greatly resisted him, stirred Satan up to attack him again and again. Everywhere he went, he had a target on his back. In many of his letters, he asked for prayer, and we can imagine that he also did so in person in his visits to the churches.

**Ephesians 6:18-20:** *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; **And for me**, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”*

**2 Corinthians 1:8-11:** *“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:”*

Take a look at verse 8. There were some heavy-duty burdens going on. Paul said they were *pressed out of measure and above strength*. This illustrates what we read in Gal. 6:1 and Rom. 15:1 about **BAROS**, the kind of burden that is too heavy for a person to carry alone. It had reached

a level where Paul said that they were *despairing of life*. This is when you feel you can't go on, when you don't see hope of getting out of your situation.

Folks, we know that Paul was not a baby. He was not a wimp. He was a warrior of the highest class, but even warriors like him can reach a point where they feel overwhelmed by their circumstances such as this:

*“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;*

***You also helping together by prayer for us**, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many people thanks may be given by many on our behalf”* (vv.9-11).

How did they get out of that extremely low place? Paul said that first and foremost, it was God who raises the dead. But it also required their participation: *You also helping together by prayer for us*. God was not going to let them drown in despair, but he expects the Saints to join the battle against the forces of darkness through prayer.

I believe this is why he could write later in this letter: *“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed”* (4:8-9).

In his letter to **Philemon**, Paul

expressed his desire to come and see him soon, and in verse 22, he told him to prepare a place for him to stay: “*For I trust that **through your prayers** I will be given unto you.*”

In **Philippians**, his most joyful letter written from prison in Rome, Paul expressed his gratitude for their abounding care for him. They were very concerned that he was suffering in jail, but he told them that rather than it being a disaster, it actually had turned out for *the furtherance—the advancement* of the Gospel.

First of all, some of the brethren who lacked confidence to preach the gospel in this pagan capital city, were inspired by Paul’s imprisonment to step up to the plate and preach Jesus Christ. Yes, there were also false preachers who were not truly believers who were preaching Christ, hoping that their preaching would stir up opposition and add more afflictions to his punishment. Paul was saying that even if it did, he rejoiced because either way Jesus Christ was being preached. Whether they were *true preachers, or enemies pretending to be true believers*, the gospel was being preached. And that was good reason to rejoice.

He wrote in Philippians 1:19: “*For I know that this shall turn to my salvation **through your prayers** and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.*” Notice, he was not refusing prayer, but he was actually *requesting* prayer for God to use the situation for the good of the gospel. He specifically said *through your*

*prayers and the Spirit of Jesus Christ.* He recognized that in order for the Spirit of God to move in the midst like he Him wanted to, it was going to take the prayers of the saints for it to happen.

Most of us today are baptized in the Holy Spirit and know how to pray in the Spirit, but are we doing this not only for ourselves, but for others in the body of Christ, and especially our leadership when we see the enemy is attacking?

### **SUMMON THE SAINTS!**

Paul used strong language in this request for prayer to the Romans (15:30): “*Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that **you strive together with me in your prayers** to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;*”

The Greek meaning word for *beseech* [PARAKALEO] is “to call, to summon to one’s side, especially for help.” Some translations say *to beg*. Paul begged them to pray for him. Sensing that danger awaited him in Jerusalem, having been warned several times, (with one prophecy being illustrated in Acts 20:22-23, 21:10-14), Paul knew he needed the prayers of God’s people to see him through the difficulties promised him.

*Strive together with me:* The idea is Paul wanted the Roman believers

to partner with him in ministry through their prayers. The New English Bible translates it: *Be my allies in the fight*. The New Living Bible translates it: *Join me in my struggle by praying to God for me*.

The ancient Greek text translated *strive together* is one word: SUNAGONIZOMAI—meaning *agonize together*. This is the only place in the NT where this specific word is used. Yet, its same root word meaning *agony* is used of Jesus' anguished prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: "*And being in great agony, he prayed more earnestly...*" (Lk.22:44). It means *severe mental and emotional struggle; to contend with adversaries for victory*. Jesus asked His disciples to agonize—contend with Him in prayer, but they failed at that critical moment and left Jesus to struggle alone.

### **PRAY FOR OUR LEADERS!**

We must not leave our ministers and leaders to struggle alone under enemy attacks. Pastors need the prayers of their flocks. Pastors are sustained by the power of the Spirit through the support of their congregations. With Paul, I urge you to strive in your prayers for your leaders. We need your prayers and we thank God for them.

As we have seen, Paul was not the least bit hesitant about asking for prayer for himself. Sometimes I feel that maybe people are tired of me asking for prayer and may think that I should be praying for myself. *And I*

*do*. But then I read what Paul says, and I realize that there are people whom God has gifted with an anointing to pray and to intercede, as well as every Christian has the spirit of intercession if they are filled with the Holy Spirit. I've realized that no one can do my praying for me, but there are times when I feel overwhelmed by all the circumstances surrounding me and Benny, and I thank God for the prayers of the Saints, because when I ask for prayer, and the Saints start praying, I do experience victory.

James said in Js.5:16: "*Pray one for another that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous one avails much.*" In the Greek text, the words *effectual fervent* are grouped as one word: ENERGERO which means *to be active, operative, to put forth power*. Moreover, the Greek word for *avail* is much stronger than our English word and means: *to exert, to wield power, to have strength to overcome, to be a force, to prevail*.

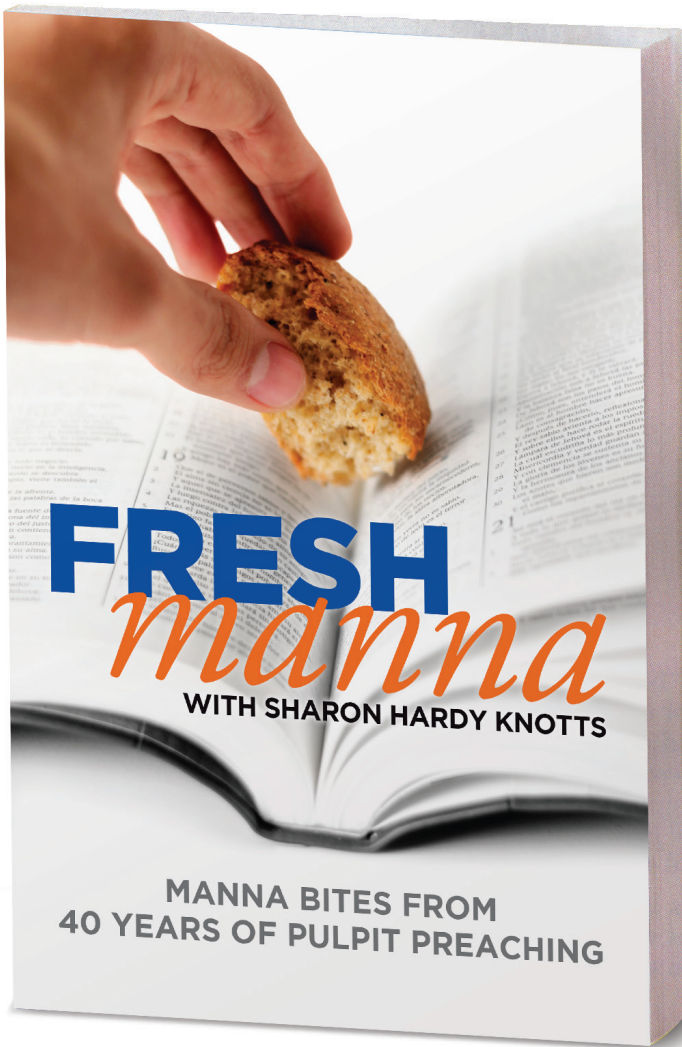
I always substitute *prevail* for *avail*, because it is more accurate in giving the idea of overcoming. To me, to *avail* is good, meaning to meet the challenge. *But when you prevail, you go over the top*. That's what fervent prayer will do.

## **CAMPMEETING 2026** **AUGUST 5<sup>TH</sup> - 9<sup>TH</sup>**

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