

BURDENS ARE LIFTED AT CALVARY

John McFarlane Moore

John McFarlane Moore was born in Kirkintilloch on 1st September 1925. He was raised by Godly parents and accepted Christ as his Saviour at the age of sixteen. He qualified in electrical engineering but sensed a clear calling from the Lord to enter full-time ministry. After having studied in a Bible college in Glasgow, he became the assistant-superintendent of the Seaman's Chapel, in Brown Street. Then for almost ten years he was the pastor of the Tent Hall in Glasgow, followed by eight years as the pastor of Inverness Baptist Church, where he met and married his wife Esther. In 1965 he went to pastor the Baptist Church in New Prestwick, and then to Carrubbers Close Mission in Edinburgh from where he was called to pastor a Baptist church in British Columbia, Canada, and finally to Willowdale Baptist Church in Toronto.

Almost up until his death on 2nd November 2017 at the age of 92, he travelled widely as a Bible teacher and evangelist. He also loved music and playing his concertina. ... He wrote over one hundred and fifty hymns, the most well-known of which is "Burdens are lifted at Calvary". He wrote it in 1952 when he was working in the Seaman's Chapel in Glasgow after being asked to visit a young merchant seaman who was critically ill in hospital. Sitting at the side of the bed talking to the young man, John Moore put his hand into his case and pulled out a tract. He didn't know which one it would be, but it happened to be based on *Pilgrim's Progress* ... And on the cover of the tract was a coloured picture of Pilgrim coming to the cross with a great burden on his back. He showed the young seaman the picture and told him the story in brief, adding that Pilgrim's experience had been his experience too. He explained to the young man that when he, - John Moore, - came to the cross of Christ, his burden of sin and his sense of guilt before God was removed. ... He asked the young man, "Do you feel this burden on your back today?" ... and the young man nodded his head and John Moore had the privilege of leading him to the Saviour.

Later that night, he was sitting by the fireside at home with paper and pen. He could not get the thought out of his mind that his burden was lifted ... and he began writing,

Days are filled with sorrow and care,
Hearts are lonely and drear.
Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
Jesus is very near.

Cast your care on Jesus today,

Leave your worry and fear.
 Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
 Jesus is very near.

Troubled soul, the Saviour can feel
 Every heartache and tear.
 Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
 Jesus is very near.

*Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Calvary, Calvary;
 Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near.*

There's a verse the apostle Peter wrote which is appropriate to this hymn, **1 Peter 5:7** Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. In the previous verse Peter has been instructing the churches, **6** Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time ... and in the verse that follows he wrote, **8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

Peter knew all about having to humble himself for he was often the disciple who insisted on having something to say ... whenever he would have been wiser saying nothing! For example, Jesus and the disciples were making their way towards Jerusalem and He was telling them how He must suffer at the hands of the Jewish religious leaders, **Mt. 16:21** ... and be killed, and be raised again the third day. ... Eleven out of the twelve remained quiet, except Peter who went on to rebuke Jesus, **Mt. 16:22** Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. **23** But he [Jesus] turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me. ... Peter was compared with the arch-enemy! ... And a short time later when they were sitting around the Passover table in the upper room, Jesus was telling His disciples He would soon leave them, **Jn. 13:36** Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. **37** Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? *I will lay down my life for thy sake* ... and Peter was deadly serious. Ultimately, he did ... but in just a few hours he *would* deny he knew his Lord.

When it came to the cross, Peter wasn't there. And on the resurrection morning he was 'somewhere else' ... and he only came to the tomb when Mary Magdalene informed him, **Jn. 20:2** They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. ... He was on the Mount of Olives when Jesus ascended into glory, and he was at the forefront of the witness

on the Day of Pentecost but then sometime afterwards he fell under the influence of the Judaizers, who taught you had to keep all the laws and customs of the Jews to be a Christian, and it was while he was fraternising with them in Antioch, Paul **Gal. 2:11** withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. ... And even more sad ... Peter had influenced other believers to adopt this false doctrine, including Barnabas (Gal. 2:14).

But there was no doubt Peter belonged to the Lord ... Yes, sometimes he spoke unwisely ... sometimes he spoke with very little attention to what he was about to say, but he loved Jesus. He worshipped Him, and the Lord knew it ... like that time at Caesarea Philippi when Jesus asked His disciples, **Mt. 16:15** whom say ye that I am? **16** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ... And the Lord knew he was speaking from the depths of his heart, and the Lord commended him, **17** Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ... On another occasion, - at the synagogue in Capernaum, - when many of the so-called 'disciples' had abandoned Him, Jesus turned and said to the Twelve, **Jn. 6:67** Will ye also go away? ... And it was *Peter* who replied, **68** Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. **69** And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

We are all very aware of how difficult life can sometimes be. Circumstances arise which throw 'our world' into confusion and despair. Maybe it is the fears associated with an illness you are battling with, or maybe you have been terribly hurt by a close friend or loved one, or maybe you are fearing for the future. ... You know, it is natural to be afraid ... how many times throughout the Bible do you find God's people *afraid*?! It is a *natural* emotion ... and it is why Jesus had to say to His disciples, *Fear not!* ... It is part of our 'make up'. You are no less of a Christian if you worry or are anxious ... it is perfectly *natural*.

Put yourself where Peter was on those occasions he had drifted from the Lord, - he had not intended to, but he had nonetheless. His heart was broken after that occasion in the high priest's garden ... when some of the high priest's staff were sitting around a fire, and he was sitting with them. One of them said, "I saw you with Jesus", but Peter shook his head, "No, woman, I don't know who you are talking about". ... You can imagine them glaring at him ... and another one spoke up, "I *am* sure I saw you with Jesus". Again, Peter denied it. ... About an hour later, around the same fire, a member of the family belonging to the man called Malchus whose ear Peter cut off with the sword in the Garden of Gethsemane was absolutely convinced, **Jn. 18:26** Did not I see thee in the garden with

him? ... **Lk. 22:59** Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. ... Once more, Peter vehemently denied it, and as he did, early that morning he heard the cock crow ... **61** And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. **62** And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

And then Satan comes along and tells you “you’re not worthy to be a Christian ... you’re not a Christian because if you were ...” and then he would give you a whole list of your failings. He keeps you away from the Saviour, - that is his intention ... and he kept Peter away from being at the side of Jesus on the cross.

Those are the times when you do realise you are *not* worthy, and you wonder why the Lord ever chose you to belong to Him. You ‘beat yourself up’ because you believe He could have done a whole lot better ... and you have ‘let Him down’. Yes, but here is why He chose you ... He chose you simply because He loves you and you are His child, a child of the King of Kings. He has taken you, - a piece of clay, - and He has moulded you in His hands like the potter. He is forming and shaping you, and smoothing you, and chipping pieces off you ... You are not worthy of His salvation, but because He loves you, He has *made* you worthy. Like Peter, you have had your disappointments and discouragements and Satan does not hesitate to try and maximise them. And, if you let him, he would keep on ‘eating away at you’, trying to take from you the joy of the Lord. And if you listen to him, he will succeed, he will ‘suck you dry’, and he will take you away. He will convince you how useless you are ... you’re no good to God ... but here is how Peter discovered the Lord heals you from your failings, **I Peter 5:6** *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time ...* It is what the prodigal son did to return to his father.

... When you became a Christian, you humbled yourself before the Lord and you repented of your sins ... you turned your back on how you used to be for like Pilgrim in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Jesus dealt with your sin at Calvary. ... At Calvary, He took away forever the burden of your sin, and you belong to Him.

No matter what thoughts the devil puts into your mind, - as Peter says, - **I Peter 5:6** *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time ...* Lay yourself in His arms. Commit yourself to Him again for you are weary fighting the battles on your own. You are all too aware of how the devil is *stalking* you, and it is his desire to destroy your relationship with Jesus. ... You cannot beat the devil on your own for he is a ferocious predator, but you

do belong to the One before whom “devils fear and flee”. ... Satan is afraid of Jesus for Jesus ‘bruised his head’ (Gen. 3:15) at Calvary, and Satan knows there is worse coming in that day in God’s plan when Satan will be thrown into the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Rev. 20:3), and not very long after that he will be cast into the burning fires of Hell forever (Rev. 20:10).

“Burdens are lifted at Calvary”, - you are saved and you belong to the Saviour so “Cast your care on Jesus today” **I Peter 5:7** for he careth for you. He feels what you are going through because there is no trial or affliction, - no matter how severe, - can *destroy* you ... And yes, many of the issues we contend with are common to this world, but the difference in being a Christian is that our God watches over His people, - He will never abandon you for He is faithful, *[and]* will not suffer *[us]* to be *[tested and tried]* above that *[we]* are able; but will with the *[trials and the testings]* also make a way to escape, that *[we]* may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10:13) ... That is His promise,

Troubled soul, the Saviour can feel
Every heartache and tear.

You will not succeed on your own but as Jesus offers to you yet again, **Mt. 11:28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** 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.

“Burdens are lifted at Calvary” ... not only the burden of sin for Calvary also reminds us we are the possession of the victorious and risen Lord Jesus Who gave His life for us. That means we are precious to Him, and He has made us a promise, **Jn. 10:10** I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly ... and that life begins the moment we believe in Him as our Saviour and extends throughout eternity.

So, listen to the words again, **I Peter 5:7** Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you ... “Burdens are lifted at Calvary”.