

# Reflections for July 5<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity

## The burdens we carry

July 5<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the foundation of the NHS – it came into existence on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1948. We can celebrate and give thanks for the vision it expresses of working together as a nation, to see that the needs of all can be met, through a sharing of our wealth, skills and resources. And the challenges that we have all faced in the last few months can only make us more aware of the importance of that.

When we look at the Bible, we can sometimes find verses that appear to contradict each other, and one of the most obvious examples is in chapter 6 of the letter to the Galatians. Verse 2 begins, 'Carry each other's burdens', but then in verse 5 we read 'for each of you should carry your own load'. I've seen long and detailed discussions about the precise meaning of 'burden' and 'load' in these verses, but the best explanation of them that I have come across is a picture.

I have an old version of the Good News Bible that is illustrated by simple line drawings, and these verses from Galatians are accompanied by a drawing of a group of people carrying burdens. But if you look at it closely, each person has their own load in their arms or on their back, and at the same time each person is reaching out to support the burden that the person in front of them is carrying. (#### see below)

The gospel reading for this Sunday includes some wonderful words of assurance from the teaching of Jesus:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest ...  
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

(Matthew chapter 11, verses 28 and 30)

At times we all struggle with the burdens that we have to carry through our lives. But we are not alone, and we can both give help when we are able to, and also receive help when we need it. And we can be assured that in all the burdens we hold and share, we are all upheld by the love of God for us in Jesus Christ.


Revd John Waller

Loving God,  
who in Jesus Christ bore the burden  
of all our sins on the cross:  
uphold us all as we seek to carry our own  
and one another's burdens,  
and so give glory to you. Amen.

Bible readings: Zechariah 9: 9-12; Romans 7: 15-25a; Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30

N.B. ### See below for the verses from Galatians with the drawing mentioned above – a group of people carrying their own loads but reaching out to help the person in front of them.

GALATIANS 6 237



*Help to carry one another's burdens (6.2)*

people who are trying to force you to be circumcised are the ones who want to show off and boast about external matters. They do it, however, only so that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Even those who practise circumcision do not obey the Law; they want you to be circumcised so that they can boast that you submitted to this physical ceremony. <sup>14</sup>As for me, however, I will boast only about the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; for by means of his cross the world is dead to me, and I am

dead to the world. <sup>15</sup>It does not matter at all whether or not one is circumcised; what does matter is being a new creature. <sup>16</sup>As for those who follow this rule in their lives, may peace and mercy be with them—with them and with all God's people!

<sup>17</sup>To conclude: let no one give me any more trouble, because the scars I have on my body show that I am the slave of Jesus.

<sup>18</sup>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, my brothers. Amen.