**Thesis:** The Bible tells us in Galatians 6 to carry one another’s burdens, but that doesn’t always stop us from feeling like we ourselves are a burden for others in times of need. Sometimes our desire to be healed or find strength is for more than our own personal benefit. This is a good and godly hope, knowing that God blesses us with the intention of using us to bless others.

**Introduction:** Welcome to The Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_ your host from Pray.com. I hope you’ve been enjoying learning about the miracles of the Messiah together. Follow the podcast on your favorite platform to stay up to date with episodes and help us spread the gospel message to others.

**Context:** Today’s episode gives us a behind the scenes look at an area of the disciples lives we may not think about often. Though Jesus called his followers to leave everything behind and abandon their old way of living, his intention wasn’t for them to abandon the people in their lives. While often on the road with Jesus, many of the disciples still had loving families awaiting them at home. One of these disciples was Peter, who traveled with Jesus as his wife and mother-in-law remained at his home in Capernaum. We might not consider it frequently, but the disciples weren’t the only ones who made a major sacrifice to follow Jesus. Loved ones also had to adapt to this new lifestyle of sacrificing for the ministry of Jesus by letting their children, spouses, and friends depart from home for prolonged periods of time, keeping them in their prayers and hoping for their safe return. As we glimpse into the home of Peter on one of his visits home, we’ll be reminded of Jesus’ love and care for all of his followers.

**Message:** The miracle of Jesus healing Peter’s mother-in-law is addressed in only a few verses in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But despite the passages’ brevity, there’s a lot to learn about Jesus’ heart for his followers, including the ones that didn’t venture with him on the roads as he visited various cities to teach, heal, and perform miracles. Each of the people in the story gives us a different perspective on how we might feel as followers of Jesus and shows us how Jesus wants to address each one of us in our needs.

First, this story reminds us of what the disciples were leaving behind when they accepted the call to follow Jesus during his ministry travels. It’s easy to wish we could have the same stories to tell that the disciples would have to share as we read through their time with Jesus, but it’s just as easy to empathize with the disciples and their families who had to say goodbye to each other and navigate life under a new dynamic. As a husband, Peter had an obligation to care for his wife, and he surely would. But the call to follow Jesus was great and came with great sacrifice to match. He had to be willing to give up time at home to spend time with Jesus. And we can be encouraged in his example, seeing that time spent with Jesus is never wasted and always makes us stronger individuals, whether that’s stronger spouses, parents, children, or friends. Time with Jesus is never wasted.

At the same time, this sacrifice wasn’t just Peter’s to make. His wife had to be willing to sacrifice time with her husband and the security he would have brought from having a steady income, being home to protect the house, and available to help out with everyday needs that arose. This would have been an especially growing sacrifice as Jesus’ and his disciples' notoriety increased along with the persecution they faced from both Rome and the religious leaders.

God is aware of the sacrifices we must make in order to follow him. In fact, some of Jesus’ earliest teachings purposely set the bar high and explain that the metaphorical road of following him in pursuing the Father’s will is narrow. In Matthew 22, Jesus tells the parable of the wedding banquet. In it, he describes a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son and sent his servants out to gather the guests who had been invited, but they refused to come. In response, the king sends his servants out to gather anyone from the streets they could find who would be willing to come to the feast.

*At the end of the parable, Jesus says in Matthew 22:14 “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”*

In context, Jesus is explaining that he invites anyone to follow him, but few will choose to come. Most often, this is because of the sacrifice they must make.

Similarly, we see this play out in Jesus’ conversation with a rich young ruler. The man comes to ask Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, explaining how he’d lived according to the law since he was a young boy.

We read Jesus’ response in *Luke 18:22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*.

There should be nothing we’re unwilling to give up when Jesus calls us to. One of the things that should give us comfort and compel us to respond with obedience is knowing that Jesus acknowledges and honors the sacrifices we make for him. He doesn’t take away anything we need, but instead calls us to sacrifice with the intention of giving us something better, teaching us more about him, and helping us grow as believers. If you’re struggling with the idea of the sacrifices Jesus has called you to make or is currently calling you to make, take some time to be with him in his word and in prayer and ask him what he’s trying to show you. Ask him for wisdom and peace, knowing that he will give both willingly and gladly. And most importantly, trust that your sacrifice will be used for a greater kingdom purpose.

Jesus knew quite well the sacrifice Miriam was making in allowing Peter to walk away from his profession and be gone for prolonged periods of time. He knew the added weight it causes and had compassion for her in her struggles of taking care of her mother during her sickness at the same time. And because she was willing to make this sacrifice for him and his ministry, Jesus was going to bless her with a miracle. He was going to heal her mother and restore her spirits. The beauty of this miracle is that it wasn’t only for Peter’s mother-in-law, Merab. This miracle was going to be a blessing used for multiple people.

Now what if we’re not in a place to make sacrifices, like Merab was? Well, first, we need to come to grips with the idea that we won’t always be in a position to be of much help to others. We’re human, and we face weak moments. We should be okay with the thought that sometimes we’ll be the one who needs help, and this isn’t bad or sinful. Nobody wants to be a burden, but the people who love us know that sharing our burdens with us is a privilege.

Allowing others to step in during our times of need requires vulnerability and humility. But at the same time, it’s a great time to grow in gratitude for Jesus and his body, the Church. Never be ashamed of asking for help or showing your moments of fragility. God wants to restore us and give us strength. He wants to lift us up so we can continue to serve others in their time of needs, fulfilling the law of Christ, as the apostle Paul says in Galatians 6:2.

As believers, we’re meant to reflect Jesus in our lives. This can happen in a variety of ways. How we speak, how we parent, how we treat others, how we use our spiritual gifts. But the foundation of reflecting Christ in all of these different ways is having a servant’s heart. If you’ve ever dreamed of being used mightily for Christ, start by asking yourself how you can serve the people around you. Consider what you’re you passionate about, what God has gifted you in, and what needs there are that you can uniquely meet. When we focus on serving, we imitate Jesus and the ministry model he set forth.

In *Mark 10:45*, Jesus says this: *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”*

Merab understood that the miracle Jesus performed for her went far beyond bringing her comfort. She knew that the freedom from her illness was an open invitation to being blessing others through serving them.

When Jesus works in our life, we should have the same mentality. As God heals us, transforms us, and empowers us, it’s all for the sake of serving him by serving others. So pray big, ask for miracles, and seek Jesus’ healing, all for the sake of being used by him. When we open up our hearts to be used by Jesus, there’s no doubt that he’s going to do something miraculous.