

A Prayer for Heavy Hearts

// Isaiah 46 //

*Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low;
their idols are borne by beasts of burden.
The images that are carried about are burdensome,
a burden for the weary.*

²*They stoop and bow down together;
unable to rescue the burden,
they themselves go off into captivity.*

God, you name the idols, you call them out. You point out the ones I carry, as well, the things I love and serve, idols that cannot rescue, cannot love, cannot protect me. I name them now as I bow before you. I admit that these idols have weighed me down to a weary crawl. These are from you to be used for you and by you, yet my sin convinces me they are mine to worship, hold high, hold close. But I am yours; I belong to you. I was bought at a price. Love paid the ultimate ransom for my freedom. Lord, I've tried to steal your glory. Forgive me, Jesus.

³*Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob,
all the remnant of the people of Israel,
you whom I have upheld since your birth,
and have carried since you were born.*

⁴*Even to your old age and gray hairs
I am he, I am he who will sustain you.
I have made you and I will carry you;
I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

Thank you, Jesus, for your love. Thank you for your ability and willingness to rescue my rebellious heart. You have carried me my whole life. Not a moment has passed without your hand guiding me. Your promise to continue carrying me brings a new peace to my heart. Your mercy is far beyond my understanding. You are my Maker, and you love what you've created. My heart is in your hands. These idols will never add value to the masterpiece you've made of me. You're the adventure. You're my prize. I choose to fix my eyes on you alone.

⁵*With whom will you compare me or count me equal?
To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?*

⁶*Some pour out gold from their bags
and weigh out silver on the scales;
they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god,
and they bow down and worship it.*

⁷*They lift it to their shoulders and carry it;
they set it up in its place, and there it stands.
From that spot it cannot move.*

*Even though someone cries out to it, it cannot answer;
it cannot save them from their troubles.*

It seems ridiculous to think for a moment that these idols could ever unburden me, save me, protect me, rescue me. It's like strapping burdensome weights on my back and wondering why it's hard to move forward. These idols cannot save, they cannot answer, and they cannot move me. They bind me useless, ineffective, and stuck. I empty my hands. Fill me with your love.

⁸*Remember this, keep it in mind,
take it to heart, you rebels.*

⁹*Remember the former things, those of long ago;
I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me.*

¹⁰*I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.
I say, 'My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.'*

¹¹*From the east I summon a bird of prey;
from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.
What I have said, that I will bring about;
what I have planned, that I will do.*

There is none like You, God. You are faithful and true. Yet I have exchanged truth for lies and I've worshipped the created rather than you, my Creator. Yet you made possible this great exchange to reverse everything we corrupted and tarnished: my sin for your perfect love. It cost you everything. You have not only carried me, but you've carried out your beautiful redemption plan. It is finished, Jesus, and I live in the glow of the resurrection, the promise kept, the Way made known to all.

¹²*Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted,
you who are now far from my righteousness.*

¹³*I am bringing my righteousness near,
it is not far away;
and my salvation will not be delayed.*

*I will grant salvation to Zion,
my splendor to Israel.*

You initiated, Jesus. You drew near, even as my sin obstructed my view of you. You made this exchange possible for me while I was still stuck, immobile in my brokenness. In you I find rest and peace and freedom and salvation. In you I find purpose, joy, and acceptance. My idols have failed me, harmed me, drained me, and left me empty. But you, Jesus, have never failed; you are faithful. Thank you that I am kept secure in you. Thank you for carrying me in love. Amen.