

Acts 4:36 (Sam Ludvick) 204418

Carolina Conference: 2022, Everyone You Meet Is Bearing a Heavy Load of Some Kind (4:36)

Open—Sam Ludvick

I want to reread something that Bob read in chapter 4. Verse 8-9. 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. There's a famous quote from long ago. I'm sure many have repeated it. It goes something like this. They said. Be kind to people you meet, because everyone you meet is bearing a heavy load of some kind. I heard a man recently say, you're driving down the highway and you see a man go past you in a Lamborghini and you go, wow, what a beautiful car. How privileged he is, how wonderful it is to be able to afford such a car. This is you don't know that he might be thinking about which tree is going to run into down the road because his life has reached that point. But I'm thinking mostly of believers. That can be, in these kinds of situations, troubled, distressed. Perplexed, even in despair. Persecuted. And feeling forsaken, cast down. Even feeling all but destroyed. I want to read something to you. And if you want to close your eyes, and as I read this, you'll see it in your mind's eye. It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strongman stumbles. Or where the doer of deeds could have done them better, the credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena. Whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood? Who strives valiantly? Who heeds? Who comes short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcoming? But who does actually strive to do the deeds? Who knows great enthusiasm, the great devotions? Who spends himself in a worthy cause? Who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement? And who at the worst? He fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat. Some of you may know who wrote them. That was written by a Christian. His name was Teddy Roosevelt. At the age of 14, he wrote in his journal. His father died and two other relatives in a short period of time, and he wrote in his journal. I would have never made it without faith in Jesus Christ. But that's often been applied to the business world. Than it is, but I'm thinking of, I asked John Kaiser. I asked John Kaiser today. Wasn't there a track that BTP has? That's called the Advocate and the accuser. I vaguely remember that. And he said, yes, there is. And I vaguely remember the message. So turn with me to Revelation chapter 12. We had this read earlier. Revelation chapter 12 and verse 10. And I heard a loud voice saying, In heaven now has come salvation and strength in the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God. Day and night. And we also had read before us. In one John. Chapter 2. Someone help me the advocate first. Is it the first part? Yes, the first verse. My little children, these things write unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous. We spoke about that earlier today and.

And then turn with me to the Acts of the Apostles. Chapter 4. In verse 36. And Josie, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is being interpreted the son of Consolation. Which side? Do you want to be on? The outside of an advocate or the side of an accuser. I jokingly sometimes tell a brother, a Christian brother of mine back home because he sometimes gets an attitude and I said stop being the get off my lawn guy. It says that guy in a neighborhood ends up the kids rolled her eyes and they just run across his lawn all the more. That kind of attitude and manner doesn't succeed at anything. In fact, it'll get your house toilet paper and eggs and everything else. That attitude doesn't help anybody. It doesn't turn anybody. It doesn't change anybody's mind or heart or anything. Yet you know what? Some Christians act that way. There that get off my lawn guy. There's no help in that. There's no comfort in that. I'll tell you a little thing that happened. I had the privilege of preaching the gospel and been sins. And the pulpit there is a square thing that's like a box. And at the beginning I was moving my arms and I knocked my bottle of water over and it went right on my Bible. I grabbed it and shipped it off. I just kept going and took some paper and brushed it off. Two things happened. A little bit time went by. I'm holding my Bible up. Two kind brothers, one came up, put a chair here and put a new bottle of water there. Brother Bill Weiss came and he got a towel and he came up and it was like a little dam. I had a little lake there and he stopped it all up, cleaned it up, did all this nice, made it clean so I could set my Bible back down, and I just kept going. Well, after the meetings, little story came around to me. Somebody decided that they would say that, well, he should stop moving his arms around like that and he wouldn't knock over a bottle of water. Somebody is a critic. Did that help me in any way, shape or form? Can I help that I have movements in my arms and I express myself that way. I'd be hard to stop. Two kind brothers came up and helped and did something, didn't say a word. And justice. It was kind and it helped me and I was helped and I was touched by it too. But an advocate or an accuser? In that story, that quote that I read, there are those who sit on the sidelines and you hear from them. You could have done it differently, you could have done this a little different. You could all, you could do that better. I often look at some of those people and go, you're not doing anything. You're sitting on the bench, you're not even in the game. My message is to those of you young and old, I don't care who you are, children, if you're seeking to do something, as our brother said, for the Lord. And you hear the critic saying something like that. Don't listen to him. Talk to the Lord about it. Brother Dan Spence told me once that he heard all kinds of criticisms and he decided that one day. He would just take it from the Lord and he would tell whoever came he was just a little guy so people will criticize him to his face. I hear about it because maybe if some of these people are coward. They pretty much are. It won't come and tell you to your face, you just hear about it behind them. But they would come to Dan and tell him this or that and he would say, well, brother or sister, I'm going to take that to the Lord and I'm going to pray about it. So I've sought to do that myself. I hear something even around the back way. OK, Lord, is there something in this? Am I doing something that I need to pay attention to? And especially if somebody's kind enough to come and face me face to face and say, dear brother, I want to be a help to you. I want to tell you or warn you about something. I love that those brothers and sisters are being faithful to me.

They're they're going to help me, that's going to help me to notice something. That I can't see or haven't seen. And then maybe I can pray about it and change something so that I can be a better servant for my Savior. So when somebody, I don't care how young you are, how small you are, I don't care if you're a little girl, a little boy, if you're doing something for the Lord. And you hear a critic saying something and chirping from the background. Go to the Lord about it. Ignore that. It's not helpful. Now, if you come to somebody and you do this, you do this from their face. Well, how much different it is if that same guy comes over, puts his arm around your shoulder and walks with you and talks

with you and shares with you. Which one do you see better? One is being an advocate. They're showing love for me. They're showing kindness for me and seeking to be a real help to me. And even if I think they're wrong, I appreciate that they're doing that. The guy who's doing this. How much help have you ever received from anybody doing that in your face? Has that ever helped you? Now, maybe sometimes moms and dads do that. And maybe they need to do it and we're wrong and we need to hear from them. And maybe it's followed by a spanking, and maybe we need that. You know, I used to think I got spanked too much. As I got older, I realized I got away with a whole lot more and probably needed it more. And when my dad used to say I'm doing it because I love you and he even it hurts me more than it hurts you, I said, I don't know if I believe that one. But if a brother or sister loves you and comes to you. In a manner that you can tell this is an advocate there for me because if there's something wrong, if there's something I'm doing, something I'm blind to or I'm not hearing and I need help, if that person comes to me and is my advocate, they're trying to really help me. And then I can be helped, I can receive it much easier. But these guys. Like I read about these critics that sit on the sidelines and snipe these armchair quarterbacks. Even in business. Ask any successful businessman, by the way, in adding to what Bob had said, if you're making a good living and you're successful, get the book Jay Letournell, mover of Men and Mountains, and read that. Wouldn't you say it's a good book, Brother, That man made lots of money. He got very wealthy. He used it to get free to serve God. And he was a banker for the Lord, to use that for the Lord. But he used it to free himself up, to be able to serve the Lord more and more and more. And he gained good employees that could help him run his business where he could be free to go to South America and places. The gospel and give vacations to people that work for him so they could go preach the gospel. Things like that. Well, there are those who are very good at being successful in business and they can use it for the furtherance of God's Kingdom. They can use it to free up themselves to be more effective and to do themselves work in the gospel work for the Lord. They can use it to help others do that as well. There is a way that God has designed to do that and that it can be very effective. But like our brother. Saying if we get all about listening to the world, that you've got to be ambitious, you've got to go forward, you've got to just be successful and do all of that. At the conference in Kentucky, it came up and I had a question for people about a father and a son, and the son was still living at home. He was working, I don't know, IHOP or someplace, and he was a Christian. And his dad was kind of trying to urge him onward to do something more. And he said I'm content. I'm supposed to be content with such things as I have, right? Well, how do you answer that? Well, nobody gave a real clear answer. There were some good things until after one meeting and Brother John Kaiser said to me.

Complacency. That's what's wrong with that complacency. Complacency is not biblical, and that's what's wrong with somebody like that. The Father is, how do I get this kid out of my house? He's going to be here forever. He's not even pursuing getting married or anything. Well, complacency is not biblical. It's not following the Lord. There's a balance with those things. You need to provide for yourself, you need to be able to earn a living and so forth. But I don't care. How old you are if your heart is being drawn towards serving the Lord in some way. In the Gospel name. I don't care how young you are, if that's really happening and you're listening to it and it's really from the Lord, then don't ignore that. How much better if somebody in their 20s decided to go to South America? Or some other part of the world and begin to give the gospel to those that are lost in such places, or go to some other place where God leads them. You know the story of Eric Liddell, the famous runner from Scotland. There was a book written about him and a movie made to called Chariots of Fire. Does that ring any bells? His parents were missionaries to China. And he was destined for China. He wanted to be a missionary to China. His sister was very close with him and wanted him to do that. But this man happened to be very fast on his feet. And in Scotland he had entered some games to run and he win, he'd win. And as the Olympics approached and his life, he was running. And all of England took notice that this Scotsman could represent. England in the Olympic Games that were going to be held in France. And he began to be famous in the newspapers. Now his sister. Had a warning for him, much like Bob gave from here a few moments ago. She was worried that her brother was getting caught up in the sports world and in the tension he was getting and so forth. But this young man would go to these events and he always required that he could speak to the crowd. And you know what he said to the crowd? He preached Christ. People wanted autographs of this and that, but first he preached the gospel. Well, his sister is still concerned and she took him aside and they went for a walk and they had a very deep conversation about it. And she said to him, you know, I'm so concerned. You're going to get distracted. You know, God is calling you to China. You need to go there. Don't, don't be distracted by all this. Oh, dear sister, I haven't forgotten while I'm here. And these Olympic Games, it's coming up to that and these events, I'm going to run in them. The Lord is giving me freedom to preach the gospel. I'm going to keep doing that. But here is something he said that just touched my heart, he says. But God made me. Now he was known for running in a kind of a gangly way, and he would be with his face in the sky, smiling. And people often wonder what in the world guys gooty or something. You know why he was looking up smiling. He says, When I run, I feel God's pleasure. Because he may be fat. He was talking about a physical activity of being able to run, that God had made him fast, that he could go and compete, and it gave him a chance to preach the gospel. There are things that are natural gifts that we've been given and built. You are unique. God made you exactly how He made you to serve him in a way that no one else can. I mean no one else. There are unique things about you that cannot be duplicated by anyone else. Circumstances and events will come to pass that. Only you can do if you're listening now. The fact is. God will use someone else if you're not available, but there are things that only you have been made to do, and it has to do with natural things. I was watching a young man behind me sketching. He's an artist there. I showed him some pictures of my wife. One of the natural gifts my wife has is an artist. She's one of the best in the world. If you've ever seen it, you know I'm not making that up. That's out of billions of people. God gave her that gift. It's a natural gift, but it's a gift and you can use it for whatever, but you can use it for the Lord.

And my wife had a chance. She's very shy. God has used her to win souls to Christ. One here, one there. One at a time. She has a terrible time speaking in front of a Crowder group. But you know what? One of the awards they give in her world of children's books is something called the Crystal Kait Award. She wasn't even entered into it. She found out about it because she was supposed to put your name forward after her book was published. And they said it's too late. The deadline has passed, as you call this little Jewish lady that was the original founder of an organ of the organization that holds it, who loves my wife. She called her and said, I didn't even know you're supposed to put your name in. And they're telling me it's too late. The little Jewish lady says, we'll see about that. So her name wasn't supposed to be in. This little Jewish lady got her name in. And guess what? She won. He that honors me, I will honor. Now she had a chance to talk, a little talk, and in it she gave credit to the Lord Jesus Christ for being the one that helped her and motivated her for what she does. Now she's got to give a speech in front of a huge crowd at the acceptance of an award dinner called the Crystal Kite Award. She was terrified. But she thought about it. She meditated on it. What am I going to say? And she kept telling me, I'm so afraid. I'm afraid I won't be able to say the Lord Jesus name. I'm afraid I'll give in to fear. And we prayed together about it. I took her to Miami. I left her there. It was a three day weekend. I drove all the way home. I got home, she called me and she's crying and she's upset. My dear wife is terrified and she said I can't do it. Will you come get me? I said OK, four hours or it just went four hours there, 4 hours back, another 4 hours OK. But we continue to talk and we prayed on the phone and she calmed down and she said no, no don't, don't do it. I'm going to. I'm going to go ahead. So she did. And she stood up in front

of those people. Shaky. She prayed and she began to speak, and suddenly peace came over. And she gave this speech. And in it. Talked about the Lord Jesus being her savior and how the Lord Jesus and her faith in Christ was what sustained her in the long hours and all the hard work it takes to produce something like that. And it does years the dedication and work to do that. And she honored the Lord Jesus and she was terrified and scared to do it. But she did it. And out of that huge crowd, there were many who said. She got a standing ovation, but there were many who came and said how courageous she was. And guess who? A small group out of that crowd who did come to see her. They were Christians who said, I, I'm so happy to hear somebody brave enough to do that. Thank you, thank you, thank you. She was fragile, she was afraid, but she trusted Christ and she went ahead and did that. One little thing out of that too, she met a Christian girl that she's kept in touch with, who she counsels and talks to on the phone and through the Internet, and that it has been a big help to She went through crisis after crisis, she lost her father and so forth, all because she was faithful to Christ. Now. There were some there who thought well. You shouldn't bring religion into stuff like this. That we're a little negative about it, but who cares about them? She was faithful and the Lord honored her and He will honor you too. When the critics come and the critics point the finger and they say you should do it different. You're not cookie cutter enough. You remember Heinz Brinkman, some of you. Heinz Brickman and I got to be good friends.

But Heinz Brinkmann used to say to me. Brother Sam, you're an enigma to me. I can't figure you out. And I said, what do you mean by that? He said, well, you're just an enigma to me. And that was at the time. This is 50 years ago. There are a bunch of people getting saved. A bunch of people got gathered. By the way, what brother is talking about in South America can happen right here, too. That little assembly in Iowa City went from six people to 150 people in less than two years because some people there believe God, who took him at his word. Never you mind that it can't happen. It can. But he said you're an enigma to me. And he says you just don't quite fit the Brethren mold. I said, well, I don't know what mold that is. I don't even know how to, what do I need to push in or push out or change to do that? I said, brother, when the Lord restored me, he restored me in a factory with rough, tough men, big guys, guys my size, rough. I was threatened to be shot. I had people threatened to fight me and at the time. I was 240 in the best shape of my life. I wasn't afraid anybody, but I have people standing face to face screaming at me, ready to throw down. More than once you think being a Christian and doing Christian work isn't fun or interesting, or at least exciting. It is. Have somebody standing here screaming at you about what's going on. In that story, this is an Indian. He's my size and if he'd have thrown down it would have hurt. He said to me you're the goody 2 shoes. You're one of those guys. You believe in that? Loving your enemies garbage. You. You think you're supposed to turn the other cheek? Yeah. You think you're better than everybody else. And I screamed right back. And I'm not better than you or anybody else. I'm as wicked as you are. I'm a Sinner like you are. I need a savior like you are. I just care about you. And there's fifty people watching us and they're thinking, boy, they're going to see a good fight. And then he says, yeah, you just believe in turning that other cheek stuff. And I said I believe the Lord gave it to me. I said I got four cheeks after I turned the 4th one. I promise you nothing, buddy. And he's paused for a second. And he just roared laughter. And it broke the ice. It was all over. The confrontation was done. And after that? He respected me. I don't know that he got saved there, but by the end of that time it harnessed figured during that period of time in my life. Finally, Jimmy Carter, very much like our president. President. It closed down the factories. Everybody was laid off, everybody was broke, and it was done. But I counted 70 young men and some older men that had gotten saved in that factory during that period of time. And those young men, nobody told them. No critic came up to him and said you can't do that. You don't know anything. You got to get training first. You got to learn a little more than that. Nobody said anything like that. They just went and started winning souls to Christ. One brother, he has a Bible in the back. He's got some notes I wrote in his Bible. Jehovah's Witness, here's some verses for death. Catholics, here's a verse for them. Mormon, Here's some verses for them. The Romans wrote, Here's some verses for that. Start with John 316. He went to another shift. He'd been saved a few weeks. He goes to another shift. What does he do? He buys Bibles, writes the same notes in the back, starts witnessing the people, and when they say, well, there's contradictions in the Bible, well, here's mud. Winning them to Christ, giving them violence. Nobody told him not to. Nobody criticized him either. Nobody said, hey, you don't know enough, you don't know anything. How can you preach the gospel? Well, you can tell what happened to you. And I'll say that to every young kid and anybody here. If you know the Lord, you know enough to tell your story. You can at least tell somebody how the Lord saved you. And there might be some little boy or little girl that that's exactly what they need to hear. The first person that I had the privilege to lead to Christ, I wasn't even trying. It was a friend of mine. I didn't have many friends because I was bullied and beat up and I was a little. I was a little guy when I was younger, but he was 16 at the time.

And I was talking to him late into the night one night, and he trusted Christ through Savior. I was never surprised as anything in my life. I've reconnected with that brother. He lives in Oklahoma now. He's my age and he's going on for the Lord, but for a lot of years he laughed at lost track of him. And he did. But he called me to thank me for leading him to Christ. When brother Bill is, Bob is talking about Eric Smith going there and meeting people, wouldn't you like to have a couple people up there that you would meet someday that you led to Christ? Wouldn't that be kind of cool? Wouldn't that be kind of exciting to look forward to that, that there's people there because you led them to Christ? Yeah, that'd be pretty cool with it. The second guy looked like a Hells Angel, weighed 350 to 400 lbs, screamed and yelled at me, accused me, hammered me, was abusive to me, and I had just been restored. Somebody sent a helper down to help him. And he was right next to me, and this helper was a Christian. He's just a little guy. And this abusive Hell's Angel looking guy just abused him, cursed him. I thought he was going to smack him. He threatened him. I'm listening to this. Now I've been away from the Lord. I got away from the Lord as a teenager. And I'm listening to this and I'm saying to myself, this kid is not doing very well. I could do better sharing the gospel. And then my heart burned within me and I said to myself, I'm not doing anything. This kids trying. And boy, is he courageous in the face of this abusive big guy. Tell me when I need to sit down, brother. This guy. This guy. Then leaves and it's like a Friday and then Monday comes in between that day and Monday. Between Friday and Monday. An interesting thing took place. The Lord restored my soul. He broke me down because I said he's doing something and I'm not. What am I doing? I know the gospel. I was raised in a Christian home and I'm not living a life for Christ at all. I'm not laying hold of eternal life. I'm not doing anything. I wasted it all. But then that Monday, I started witnessing to this guy. Same thing. Ah, you're fool. You're this, you're that, you're this, you're that. There's contradictions in the Bible. Show me one. That's a good way to talk to people that say that, because most of them can't. I don't have a Bible. I bought him a Bible. Here's a Bible. What about this? What about that? He looked stuff up. He went to the library. One day he comes in and he says. Hey, Sam, guess what happened? And I'm thinking I'm gonna hear some terrible story about his drunken weekend. I don't wanna hear it. Don't tell me. Stay away from me, he says. No, you're gonna hear this. I said what he says. I got saved last night. Now I'm wide awake. I'm listening. I said, what happened? He said. You know that movie. But Charlton Heston and MO, he plays Moses and he's holding his arms up in the water parts. Now this is where God gives faith. This fits that verse in Ephesians. He says to me. It's all true that happened. I know this is a movie, but that happened and everything Sam's telling me happened. I'm going to hell. I'm a Sinner. I'm lost. Jesus died for me on the cross. He spun around off that couch, got down on his knees and cried out to Christ and he got saved. He ended up going to 2nd shift a few weeks later. He's the one I mentioned earlier and guess what? I

don't know how many he led to Christ. But it didn't stop until he died and went home to be with the Lord about five years ago. He'll be waiting. That's a face. I'll see you after I get done looking into the Savior's face. I'll see that face. I hope you get to see many faces as well.

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