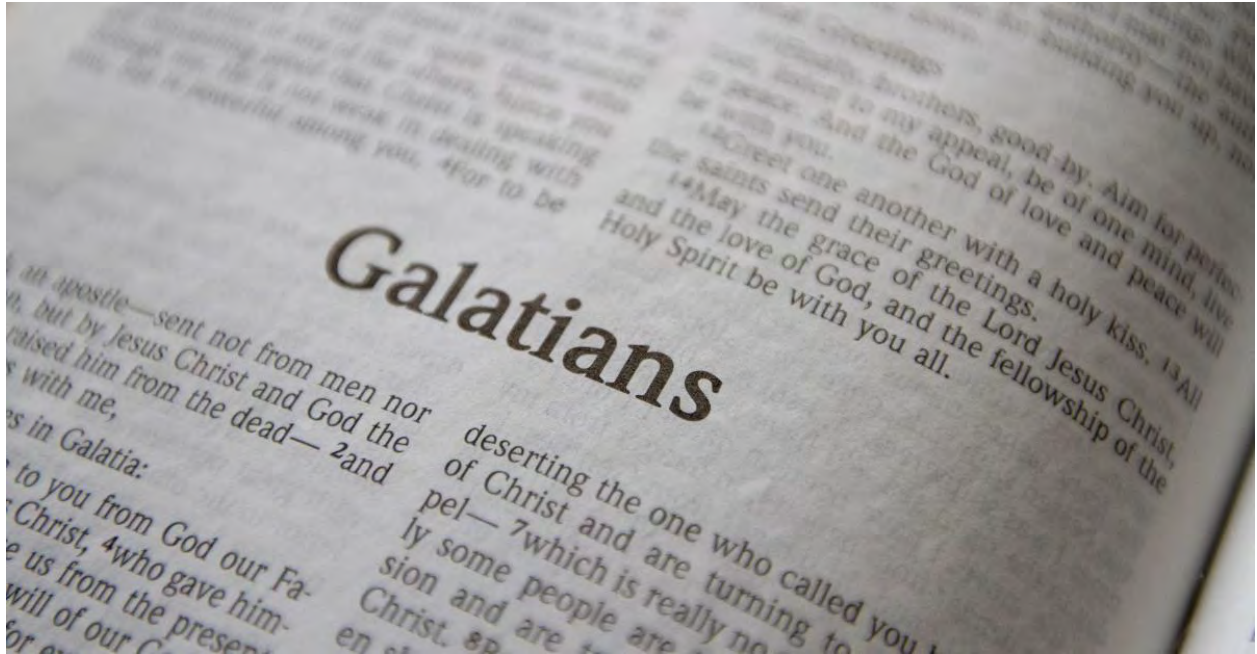


UNTO GOOD WORKS

GALATIANS 6



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Galatians 6

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Galatians 6: Introduction

Galatians has been all about grace from the get-go: “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 1.3). The Judaizers—the “circumcision party”—were robbing the Galatians of their peace by insisting that salvation was by works, not grace. Grace had a role, of course, but it was really what we did that sewed up the gift of salvation.

Paul fiercely opposed them in this letter, showing that their teaching was the way of the flesh, a mere religious coating for a life of flesh-indulgence of various sorts—none of which led to anything but self-love.

But the rule of Jesus is the rule of love, of the Word and Spirit of God working powerfully in us to bring forth holy spiritual fruit and nurture us in love for God and neighbor. We’re not saved by works; we’re saved unto them.

We hope you find this study of the book of Galatians to provide abundant stimulation for your walk with and work for the Lord.

For His glory and praise!

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1 Our Brothers' Keeper

Pray Psalm 51.14, 15, 18.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.
O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth Your praise...
Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;
Build the walls of Jerusalem.

Sing Psalm 51.14, 15, 18.

(Aughton: [He Leadeth Me](#))

Deliver us, from guilt, O LORD, You Who have saved us by Your Word;
and let our tongues Your mercy bless, and sing of Your great righteousness!

Refrain vv. 15, 18

LORD, open now our lips to raise to You sweet songs of joyous praise!
Thus let Your favor on us fall, and build and strengthen Zion's wall!

Read and meditate on Galatians 6.1.

Preparation

1. What are we supposed to do for one another?
2. How must we do it?

Meditation

Paul was an excellent leader and shepherd. He never asked or expected of anyone something he had not done or was not willing to do himself. Confronting others in their sin is difficult enough. Doing it with a view of restoring their walk with the Lord, and doing this with gentleness and humility—that's a tall order.

But Paul himself had done it with Peter (Gal. 2). Peter, for crying out loud! If Paul could restore Peter when he was "overtaken" in sin, we can restore one another.

Celtic Christians had a saying with respect to sin: contraries are by contraries cured. If someone is engaging in behavior that is *contrary* to the Law and Word of God, they must take up practices *contrary* to that to be restored. In the middle of the formula is that the "contrary" behavior should be exposed, and confession and repentance realized; and then a course of behavior "contrary" to the sinful walk should be agreed to according to the Word of God. You can see this pattern suggested in Galatians 5.16-23: not that, this.

The real challenge is the "restore" part. Because this can take some time, ongoing prayer, checking in (people don't do what you expect, but what you inspect), and walking alongside the one who is being restored until complete restoration is achieved.

And, at all times, watch yourself, guard your heart, wait before the Lord to search your soul (Ps. 139.23, 24), and be vigilant against every temptation. Keeping our brothers in the Lord begins with keeping ourselves.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“If a man is overtaken in any trespass,
you who are spiritual restore such a one
in a spirit of gentleness,
considering yourself
lest you also be tempted” (Gal. 6.1).

Paul begins with an “if”, not assuming the worst, but just in case it happens here are the guidelines for restoration.

Next, he singles out the “spiritual”, or those filled with the Holy Spirit who are steeped in God’s Word for the “restoration project”.

Third, he offers guidance on how this correction should be done, “in a spirit of gentleness”; which is, after all, one of the fruits of the Spirit that Paul just laid out.

Fourth, he recommends that this be done whilst “considering yourself”. The Living Bible has a good take on this as it reads: “remembering that next time it might be one of you who is in the wrong”

Lastly, “lest you also be tempted” warns against falling into the same sin that your restoration-needing brother has fallen into.

But I think there are some other things we could be tempted to do in this situation:

Obviously, as we have said, to fall into the same sin.

But:

To be judgmental of our fallen brother;

To be lazy about the work of restoration;

To be tolerant of his trespass;

To be complacent about his fall;

And thus, if guilty, we let him fall further into his sin:

We dare not do this, for we are our brother’s keeper.

But:

Imagine with me this “If” scenario:

What if all believers took to heart Paul’s instruction in truth— “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”? (Gal. 5.24, 25).

What if that were the case in all Churches?

What if we strove to be holy, above all, because that is what God requires of those in His Kingdom? (1 Pet. 1.16)

What if we set our hearts to follow His decrees daily, unto the very end? (Ps. 119.112)

What if we set the LORD always before us? (Ps. 16.8)

What if we love the LORD our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as we love ourselves? (Ex. 20.1-17; Matt. 22.37-40; Gal. 5.14)

What if we decided that we would never misuse God’s grace? (Gal. 5.13)

What if showing Jesus that we love Him is the preeminent thought and motive of our life? (Jn. 14.15)

If this were true, then we would never cause our brother a moment's concern about us; and maybe, just maybe, our example would lead others to live in the same way, and the busyness involved in these "restoration projects" could then be better spent on living for God's glory and winning souls for the Kingdom.

It's an If/Then Scenario deserving attention.

Reflection

1. It's hard to confront a fellow believer who is living in sin. Why? How can you overcome this reluctance?
2. How should you respond if someone comes convicting you of sin?
3. What are the best ways to help keep one another in the Jesus Path?

Paul does not say "punish" or "pass judgment" but "restore." Nor did he even stop there, but showing that he strongly desired them to be patient with those who stumbled he adds "in a spirit of gentleness." He does not say "in gentleness" but "in a spirit of gentleness," showing that this also is the will of the Spirit and that the capacity to correct another's faults is a spiritual gift. John Chrysostom (344-407), Homily on Galatians 6.1

Pray Psalm 51.15-19.

Pray that the Lord will use you today to build His Church. Prayerfully consider the opportunities before you for this day and how you might fulfill them for the Lord's glory and the benefit of others.

Sing Psalm 51.15-19.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

No sacrifice, no offering would You have us, Your people, bring;
but broken spirits, cleansed of lies, and pure hearts You will not despise.

Refrain vv. 15, 18

LORD, open now our lips to raise to You sweet songs of joyous praise!
Thus let Your favor on us fall, and build and strengthen Zion's wall!

Now build Your Church, raise high the wall of those who on Your mercy call.
And take our lives and let them be sweet sacrifices, LORD, to Thee!

Refrain

2 Burden-Bearing

Pray Psalm 105.3-7.

Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.

Sing Psalm 105.3-7.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

Read Galatians 6.1-3; meditate on verses 2, 3.

Preparation

1. How can we fulfill the Law of Christ?
2. How do we deceive ourselves?

Meditation

Commentators connect “burdens” with verse 1 and the sins we are called to confront. We bear one another’s burdens when we take it upon ourselves, with gentleness and humility (v. 3), to work for the restoration of one who has fallen into sin.

I think this interpretation is true as far as it goes. But burden-bearing is not limited to restoring another from sin. We are daily beset with many burdens—work, decisions, problems in a relationship, being a witness for the Lord, dealing with trials and temptations, illness or injury, and meeting our daily needs. Our neighbor’s burdens are no different and may be more intense. We must be prepared to “bear” such burdens as the opportunity presents. How can we do that?

Burden-bearing begins with being an attentive and compassionate listener. People will talk about their burdens—some more than others—because they are seeking a sympathetic ear. But they may be seeking more. Help with a decision. Guidance for a relationship. Assistance with a problem at work or in the home. Counsel and encouragement in seeking the Lord. As we listen, if we discern a burden, we should ask more questions and offer whatever assistance we can. We must be always ready to do good works (Tit. 3.1). That good work can be prayer, physical or material assistance,

succor or encouragement, help of one sort or another. Thus we fulfill the law of Christ, which is the law of love (Matt. 22.34-40).

And, when necessary, we must bear our neighbor's burden of sin by helping them to confess, repent, and seek the path of restoration.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God never calls us to do something He is not willing to help us do. And being involved with Him in works of "burden-bearing" is exciting work indeed! "For we are God's fellow workers..." (1 Cor. 3.9).

Listen carefully to other's burdens and:

"Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away" (Matt. 5.42).

"There is one who scatters, yet increases more;

and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty.

The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself" (Prov. 11.24, 25).

"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so.

Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,' when you have it with you" (Prov. 3.27, 28).

Again, Paul warns us to be mindful of boastfulness, if we manage to do what we are supposed to do. "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal. 6.3). When we are guilty of this, we are a lot like Naaman, who was a man covered in leprosy, who got in a huff because he was told to bathe for healing in waters he felt were lesser-than. Not worthy of a man of his stature (see 2 Kgs. 5.1-14). We dare not get that attitude whilst serving in God's Kingdom work.

And besides, love, as Paul told us, "Does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, and thinks no evil" (1 Cor. 13.4, 5). Absolutely no room there to be prideful.

And James adds another layer to Paul's instructions:

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of food, [has burdens that need to be borne by another] and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (Jms. 2.14-16).

The burdens of the world are huge. We cannot carry all of them. Hardly, even, some of them. But that is why God, in His wisdom, has called each individual Christian into their own Personal Mission Field, to bear the burdens of those within that sphere of their lives.

It is a genius plan, and we have the exciting opportunity to be part of it—in humility, burden-bearing right where we are—with all the Help we will ever need to do the work at hand.

Reflection

1. How should you prepare for each day's burden-bearing?
2. Can you think of a time when someone bore your burden with you? Take a moment to thank God and then to thank them.
3. How many different ways did Jesus bear the burdens of those He came to save?

Let arrogance be removed, and we shall all discover the greatest modesty in our conduct towards each other. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Galatians 6.3*

Pray Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11, 45.

Thank the Lord that He is faithful to His promises and bears your burdens day by day. Pray that you might be more like Jesus in this regard.

Sing Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11, 45.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

3 Bear Your Own Load

Pray Psalm 32.8-11.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will guide you with My eye.
Do not be like the horse or like the mule,
Which have no understanding,
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near you.
Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked;
But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.
Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous;
And shout for joy, all *you* upright in heart!

Sing Psalm 32.8-11.

(Hendon: [*Take My Life and Let It Be*](#))

Teach me, LORD, how I should live; sound instruction ever give.
let me never stubborn be; let Your eye watch over me,
let Your eye watch over me.

Though the wicked wail and weep, they rejoice whose souls You keep.
Trusting, we exult with praise, joyfully singing all our days,
joyfully singing all our days!

Read Galatians 6.1-5; meditate on verses 4, 5.

Preparation

1. What did Paul want us to examine?
2. Why should we examine this??

Meditation

Paul calls us to maintain an active self-watch over our work (v. 4). He doesn't just mean our job. His focus is on *all* our work, everything we do—down to eating and drinking (1 Cor. 10.31)—to make sure we are seeking the honor and glory of God and the edification of our neighbors.

The word “examine” in the Greek is δοκιμάζω (*dokimadzo*) and, according to Louw and Nida's lexicon, it means “to try to learn the genuineness of something by examination and testing, often through actual use—to test, to examine, to try to determine the genuineness of, testing.” I think we need to “examine” our work in three ways.

First, in the planning we do for each day's work. Let it be done in prayer, using a passage like Psalm 90.12, 16, 17 to guide us in preparing our soul for the day's appointed tasks, and calling on Him for strength and grace in all our work. Next, we must stay alert during our work to make sure our heart is right and we are doing our work with as much excellence and humility as we can. Then, at the end of the day, review in prayer the work we've done that day, giving thanks and praise to God and

noting areas for improvement. Here are a few you might meditate on: Did my work express excellence in line with the excellence of the Lord? Was the fruit of my work consistent with Kingdom fruit? Was my work a help or hindrance to others in doing their work? Were the fruits of my work what they should have been in terms of quantity?

This is part of how we bear the load God has given us, and how we seek always to improve our work before the Lord (v. 5).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Were the fruits of my work what they should have been?”

The answer is yes, if in fact, we are focused on living and working out the fruits of the Spirit.

Is it possible that we are confused about the fruits of a life well-lived in Christ Jesus?

Let’s examine this: Within the realm of Christendom there seems to be more emphasis put upon verbally sharing the Gospel than in living out the Gospel.

Witnessing is a process, not an event. The fruits of the Spirit are lived by bearing the characteristics of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5.22, 23). In other words, following the Law of God (Ex. 20.1-17; Matt. 22.37-40; Jn. 14.15). And imitating Jesus. Being filled with Jesus. Spreading Jesus.

By living out God’s standard of righteousness we shout the testimony of God’s goodness and grace. Our lifestyle witnesses of His merciful forgiveness and His righteous judgments. And when we speak of His salvation, through the power of the Holy Spirit, our words ring true. We don’t come across like “sounding brass or clanging cymbals” (1 Cor. 13.1); but more like Jesus: longsuffering, kind, not envious, self-serving, conceited, rude, selfish, or quick to get angry. Jesus also had no evil thoughts, ever, and found no joy in sin of any kind. What made Jesus rejoice was Truth. He bore all suffering and sin for us. He believes the best about us. His hope is based solely on the Hope that never disappoints; and He endured earth for us (1 Cor. 13.4-7).

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls” (Heb. 12.1-3).

“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
for His Name’s sake” (Ps. 23.1-3).

So that I can “help bear another’s burdens” and “bear my own load” (Gal. 6.2, 5).
For the sole purpose of living to please God,

exhibit His characteristics, for His honor and glory;
and to love, encourage, and comfort others,
and win souls through my life, love, obedience, actions, and words.

With Jesus, this yoke is easy, and the burden is light (Matt. 12.30).

Reflection

1. How would you explain the idea of “burden” to a new believer?
2. What does it mean for you to have to bear your own burden?
3. How do you “examine” your own work? Why is this important?

Here Paul shows that we must scrutinize our lives. We must test what we have done not cheaply but stringently. For example, suppose you have done something good. Consider whether it might have been through vanity or through necessity, or with animosity, or in hypocrisy, or through some other self-centered motive. John Chrysostom (344-407), Homily on Galatians 6.4

Pray Psalm 32.1-7.

Ask the Lord to examine your work—all the work you do each day to advance His Kingdom and bring Him glory. Listen for the Spirit’s prompting as you name each aspect of your work and wait on the Lord. Call on Him to enlarge your work and to give you the grace to serve well.

Sing Psalm 32.1-7.

(Hendon: [*Take My Life and Let It Be*](#))

Blessed are they whose sins the LORD has forgiven by His Word!
Pure their spirits are within; them He charges with no sin;
them He charges with no sin!

When in silence I remained, groaning in my sinful pain,
You Your hand upon me lay; all my strength You drained away,
all my strength You drained away.

I confessed my sin to You; You forgave me, ever true!
Let confession’s pleading sound reach You while You may be found,
reach You while You may be found!

When flood waters threaten me, You my hiding place will be.
O’er them I will rise above, buoyed by Your redeeming love,
buoyed by Your redeeming love.

4 Teachers and Taught

Pray Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!...
He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,
Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance...”

Sing Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

Read Galatians 6.1-6; meditate on verse 6.

Preparation

1. What are teachers supposed to do?
2. What must those who are taught do?

Meditation

Paul is straightforward here about the duties of those who teach and those who are taught. Those who teach must teach the Word of the Lord. This applies, in the first instance, to pastors and teachers in the household of faith (Eph. 4.11). They who are entrusted with the Word of God must teach it wholly, clearly, faithfully, and without compromise, as Paul himself did.

But this instruction applies to *all* who teach, including parents, schoolteachers, and all disciples (who ought to be teachers, Heb. 5.12). All teaching should be grounded in the Word of God and aimed at bringing glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. For of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things, to whom be glory forever and ever (Rom. 11.36). We must ground, develop, and sustain all our teaching within the parameters of the Word of God.

Those who are taught must show their gratitude and fulfill the obligation of sharing “all good things” with those who teach. That won’t always be in the form of financial remuneration, although

such is included where appropriate. Feedback, making application of what is taught, showing gratitude and encouragement—these are good things to share with those who teach, and you can be sure they will appreciate and be blessed by them.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Let him who is taught the word
share in all good things
with him who teaches” (Gal. 6.6).

If it seems like Paul keeps on and on about making us holy, it is for the purpose of our good and the good of others. He is a chief promoter of God’s idea and plan for His people—The Church.

Examine this Scripture, that Paul knew and wanted to impart to us: blessing upon blessing.

“Do good, O LORD,
to those who are good, and
to those who are upright in their hearts” (Ps. 125.4).

Why? Well because:

“As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways,
the LORD shall lead them away with the workers of iniquity” (Ps. 125.5).
And who in their right mind wants to go that route?

So, Paul keeps teaching, and we keep learning. Because if we don’t, we become like those Paul wrote to Titus about: “They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work” (Titus 1.16).

But we don’t want to be disqualified but qualified to do every good work that we have been called to do (Eph. 2.10). We long to be useful, and to do what is our duty to do (Lk. 17.10).

Then we must be mindful of sharing all good things with those who teach us. It is a bit like tithing, in that the money and the grace goes round and round within the Body of Christ. It is just the way things work in His Kingdom economy.

And yes, a word of encouragement is a beautiful way to share.

For both the teacher and the taught look to God, the giver of every good and perfect gift; and in looking to Him we look to His Law for guidance: “He who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (Jms. 1.17, 25).

Teacher and taught alike.

Reflection

1. Why is it important to pray for our pastors and teachers?
2. Why is it important to encourage them in their ministries?
3. Since we all are called to teach, who are the people you will teach today? How should you

prepare?

It is probable that the teachers and ministers of the word were at that time neglected. This shewed the basest ingratitude. How disgraceful is it to defraud of their temporal support those by whom our souls are fed! John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Galatians 6.6*

Pray Psalm 105.3-7, 45.

Praise God, Who supplies all our needs—spiritual and material. Pray for those by whom you are instructed in the Word, and take the time to encourage them today.

Sing Psalm 105.3-7, 45.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.

Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!

He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.

Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

5 Sow to the Spirit

Opening Prayer: Psalm 37.1-3.

Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.
For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.
Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

Sing Psalm 37.1-3.

(Neumark: [*If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee*](#))

Let not the wicked make you worry; envy not those who break God's Word.
Like dying grass will they be sorry, and fade like every dying herb.
Trust in the Lord and do His will; dwell in His grace, be faithful still.

Read Galatians 6.1-10; meditate on verses 7-10.

Preparation

1. What do we reap if we sow “to the Spirit”?
2. To whom must we do good?

Meditation

At any moment, in any situation, throughout the course of every day, we have two options before us: sow to the flesh, or sow to the Spirit. And these options entail two different outcomes: neglect to do good—and possibly do harm—or do good to others in Jesus' Name.

What is implied in the participle, *σπείρων* (*spyrōhn*)? Ongoingness. Sowing is an ongoing work—every moment, every day, and all year long. When a farmer sows, he takes the smallest of items—a seed—and lodges it in the soil. He holds in his mind a vision of the end he hopes to realize: a mature crop. He will tend to this seed as it grows, protecting it in its various stages of growth against anything that might thwart its potential and supplying it with nutrients and water to encourage growth.

Thus we also sow seeds for a future harvest, to our flesh when we allow even the smallest thought of such things as Paul mentioned in 5.16-21 to lodge in our souls, and to the Spirit as we seek His gifts, fruit, and power. To this righteous end we encourage one another, give thanks, sing to the Lord, feed on His Word and plant it deep in the furrows of our soul, and submit to and serve one another in love. Thus we expect to reap the true and eternal life of knowing God and Christ, and all the evidences that go with it.

Paul's theology of good works can be succinctly summarized. We are saved to do them (Eph. 3.8-10). God has planned for us to do them, so we should do them zealously rather than grudgingly (Tit. 2.14). We must become equipped for them through the Word (2 Tim. 3.15-17) and be always ready to do good works (Tit. 3.1), careful to maintain them (Tit. 3.8), and focused on doing them to meet the needs of others (Tit. 3.14). We must do good to all people, but especially to those who are of the

household of faith (Gal. 6.10). And, as we must not grow weary in prayer (Lk. 18.1), neither must we grow weary in doing good (Gal 6.9).

Sounds like a tall order, but if we sow consistently to the Spirit (Gal. 6.9), He will enable and empower us for every good work, working in us to do that which is pleasing to God (Phil. 2.13).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

“But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out” (Num. 32.23).

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6.7).

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds;’ eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil... but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good... for there is no partiality with God” (Rom. 2.4-11).

“But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good” (2 Thess. 3.13).

“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so” (Prov. 3.27).

“Trust in the LORD, and do good...” (Ps. 37.3).

Paul has warned us, encouraged us, and led us; we have a choice.

Most assuredly, God is not mocked, and we will not come out of this unscathed if we disobey Him. It all depends upon the seeds we sow and where we sow them.

Solomon and Paul were two folks not afraid to tell the truth to God’s people; and we, as God’s people need to take heed to their warnings. Incautious Christians run the risk of being caught up in foolishness:

“Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his foolishness will not depart from him” (Prov. 27.22).

Our choice is clear: let us choose to sow seed to the Spirit and reap everlasting life (Gal. 6.8).

“LORD, I hope for Your salvation, and I do our commandments” (Ps. 119.166).

Reflection

1. What would you say to a fellow believer who didn’t believe good works were necessary?

2. How would you respond to a believer who said to you, “After all, we’re not saved by good works!”?

3. Whom will you encourage today to love and good works (Heb. 10.24)?

Hence we are to work, and we are to work good and to work it to all so that there is no partiality toward persons. We are to do nothing except do good and good to all. For indeed if love edifies and every person is beloved, then every good that we work we ought to work on behalf of all... Marius Victorinus (28-363), *Epistle to the Galatians 2.6.10*

Pray Psalm 37.4-9.

Meditate on all the Lord’s goodness to you. Let each good thing He has done or given you point you to Him, so that you delight in Him. Rest in His joy and call on Him to make you more like Jesus.

Sing Psalm 37.4-9.

(Neumark: [*If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee*](#))

Delight yourself in God’s salvation; He’ll give you all your heart’s desire.
Commit to Him your every station, and His good purpose will transpire.
Your righteousness a blazing light He will bring forth against the night.

Rest in the LORD and wait on Jesus; fret not at those who practice sin.

Forsake all wrath till anger ceases; let anxious fears not enter in.

The wicked perish from the LORD, but they are blessed who heed His Word!

6 Follow the Rule

Pray Psalm 19.7-11.

The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;
The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;
The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
More to be desired *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them *there is* great reward.

Sing Psalm 19.7-11.

(St Christopher: [*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*](#))

The Law of God is perfect, His testimony sure;
the simple man God's wisdom learns, the soul receives its cure.
God's Word is right, and His command is pure, and truth imparts;
He makes our eyes to understand; with joy He fills our hearts.

The fear of God is cleansing, forever shall it last.
His judgments all are true and just, by righteousness held fast.
O seek them more than gold most fine, than honey find them sweet;
be warned by every word and line; be blessed with joy complete.

Read Galatians 6.1-18; meditate on verses 11-18.

Preparation

1. In what should we as Christians boast?
2. What have we become in Jesus Christ?

Meditation

Wait. There's a rule?

Hold on, we'll get to that. Paul signed off on the epistle to the Galatians in his "own hand!" (v. 11) He typically used an amanuensis as he dictated. Paul seemed to think better and to be more in touch with the Spirit when he was talking. He summed up his purpose in verses 12 and 13: Do not heed the circumcizers, even if it means being persecuted. Instead, he continued, cling to Jesus. Like Paul himself did (v. 14). Only Jesus can accomplish the "new creation" we need if we are to be free from sin and liberated into the Kingdom of God (v. 15). All this said, Paul was done with the matter (v. 17)

And this brings us to the rule (v. 16). We might call it the Rule of the Kingdom.

As followers of Jesus Christ we are new creatures, and we are called to live under a new rule, one which guides us in sowing to the Spirit and not to the flesh. We must learn to recognize temptation and resist it, so that we grow through temptation unto further righteousness in the Lord, rather than fall through it unto sin. Under this rule we put no confidence in the flesh, nor boast in anything other than the Lord Jesus. We rule our soul and body from within, by the Word and Spirit of God, unto God and His glory. Following this rule must be our daily concern, and at every moment, lest the benefits of our salvation and the joy of the Lord slip through our fingers. And we must help and encourage one another so to live as well, just as Paul did, seeking more of the grace of the Lord that we might live by the rule of His Kingdom (v. 18).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal. 6.14).

Do we have the courage of Paul to say this to God?
Forbid me?
Don't let me stray from Your rule and Your law?
Has the world been crucified to me?
And have I been crucified to the world?
Am I a new creation?
Don't let me wander from Your grace and goodness?
Yes, let this be true of me.

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1.18).

“I have been crucified with Christ;
it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;
and the life which I now live in the flesh
I live by faith in the Son of God,
Who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2.20).

“Deal bountifully with Your servant,
that I may live and keep Your Word” (Ps. 119.17).
Yes, that I may live Your Word and keep Your Word.

And understand that all this is a gift of Your grace and mercy.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves;
it is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2.8, 9).

To put it in today's vernacular, such boasting would be stolen valor, or personal plagiarism. We would be stealing the glory for something we clearly have not done or written or been. A lie to beat all lies. A person cannot save themselves from their sins. That is oxymoronic. If we sin, we are not powerful enough not to sin. How can we then save ourselves from our own sins, which we cannot stop doing? It is just silly to even contemplate.

Yet masses of people think they have done just that. Saved themselves—by good works, or by circumcision, or by going to church, or throwing money at different causes, or whatever anyone thinks just might be the ticket to accomplish the impossible. Or on the other hand, they think that they, and only they, have done something so terrible that Jesus is not able to cover their sin for

salvation. Either way, there are massive egos involved. One is too good and the other too bad. But neither understands grace. God forbid.

May we always live in a way that properly boasts only of the cross of the majestic Jesus Who died to save us.

Only He could do that as the perfect Son of God. Only He could accomplish the impossible. Only Jesus.

Boast in Him. Love Him. Live for Him. Keep His rule. Follow Him daily in His Word.

*All for Jesus! All for Jesus! All my being's ransomed pow'rs;
All my thoughts and words and doings, All my days and all my hours.*

*Let my hands perform His bidding, Let my feet run in His ways;
Let my eyes see Jesus only, Let my lips speak forth His praise.*

*Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus, I've lost sight of all beside;
So enchained my spirit's vision, Looking at the Crucified.*

*O, what wonder! How amazing! Jesus, glorious King of kings,
Deigns to call me His beloved, Lets me rest beneath His wings.
(Mary D. James, 1889)*

Reflection

1. What does the idea of a “rule” suggest to you?
2. What specific “rule” did Paul mention? Is that your rule?
3. If we don't live by this rule, which rule will govern our lives?

*Good works are to be done not because they are merits but because they are fruits and evidences of righteousness. This is the apostolic canon, this is the gospel rule that the Holy Spirit has passed down from the beginning of the world, through the patriarchs and prophets, and instituted an order that is not monastic or eremitic but Christian. Johannes Brenz (1499-1570), *Explanation of Galatians**

Pray Psalm 19.12-14.

Listen quietly in prayer as the Spirit searches your soul. Give thanks for the good work He has done and is doing there. Confess any sins He uncovers and repent of them all. Call on the Lord to make all your thoughts, affections, and values more conformed to the rule of Jesus.

Sing Psalm 19.12-14.

(St Christopher: [*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*](#))

Who, LORD, can know his errors? O keep sin far from me!
Let evil rule not in my soul that I may blameless be.
O let my thoughts, let all my words, before Your glorious sight
be pleasing to You, gracious LORD, acceptable and right.

7 The Rule of Love

Pray Psalm 122.1-4.

I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go into the house of the LORD.”
Our feet have been standing
Within your gates, O Jerusalem!
Jerusalem is built
As a city that is compact together,
Where the tribes go up,
The tribes of the LORD,
To the Testimony of Israel,
To give thanks to the name of the LORD.

Sing Psalm 122.1-4.

(Nettleton: [*Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*](#))

I was glad when they said to me, “To the LORD’s house let us go!”
Holy City, let our feet be firmly planted in your soil.
Jesus builds His Church forever, where His people sing His praise!
As Your Word decrees forever, we will thank You all our days.

Read Galatians 6.1-18; meditate on verses 2, 10, 16, 18.

Preparation

1. What is the dominant theme of this chapter?
2. How can we know mercy and peace from God?

Meditation

Psalm 122 is a song of ascents. People sang these as they made their way up to Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord. There they would be one people, not twelve tribes. There they would worship and praise the Lord together, hear His Word eagerly, and submit to His rule of love. It is a fitting psalm to sing as we wrap up our study of Galatians.

Galatians has been all about grace from the get-go: “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 1.3). The Judaizers—the “circumcision party”—were robbing the Galatians of their peace by insisting that salvation was by works, not grace. Grace had a role, of course, but it was really what we did that sewed up the gift of salvation.

Paul fiercely opposed them in this letter, showing that their teaching was the way of the flesh, a mere religious coating for a life of flesh-indulgence of various sorts—none of which led to anything but self-love.

But the rule of Jesus is the rule of love, of the Word and Spirit of God working powerfully in us to bring forth holy spiritual fruit and nurture us in love for God and neighbor. Jesus makes the grace of God effectual unto our salvation, and He is thus the One to whom we look and aspire to know

more of the life-transforming power of divine grace.

We will be truly glad to be among the people of God when grace is our common experience and goal. For where the rule of love obtains, all flourish and bear fruit as one Body, worshiping God, rejoicing to be together in Him, and standing strong together against every false gospel and wrong-believing worldview. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“You will show me the path of life;
in Your Presence is fullness of joy;
at Your right hand are pleasures forever more” (Ps. 16.11).

“These things I have spoken to you,
that My joy may remain in you,
and that your joy may be full” (Jn. 15.11).

“Those who sow in tears
shall reap in joy.
He who continually goes forth weeping,
bearing seed for sowing,
shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
bringing his sheaves with him” (Ps. 126.5, 6).

“And let us not grow weary while doing good,
for in due season we shall reap
if we do not lose heart.
Therefore, as we have opportunity,
let us do good to all,
especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6.9, 10).

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen” (Gal. 6.18).

Reflection

1. The Gospel is of grace, by grace, and unto grace. Explain.
2. How should you examine yourself before the Lord? What would you be looking for in such an examination?
3. We cannot fulfill the rule of love by ourselves. How should knowing this affect our prayer life?

By this final word he has sealed the argument of the letter. For he does not say simply “with you,” as in the other letters, but “with your spirit.” He is leading them away from corrupted things and pointing everywhere to the benevolent work of God and reminding them of the grace that they have enjoyed. By this he is able to lead them away from the legalistic error in its entirety. For the receiving of the Spirit was not for the poverty of legalism but for righteousness according to the Spirit. John Chrysostom (344-407), Homily on Galatians 6.18

Pray Psalm 122.5-9.

Thank the Father for King Jesus, ruling in love from His throne; for His Testimony and Word,

Galatians 6

guiding us in the way of love; and for the Holy Spirit, Who brings forth the fruit of love in us. Call on Him for grace to love according to His rule.

Sing Psalm 122.5-9.

(Nettleton: [*Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*](#))

On the throne of David, Jesus sits to judge the nations all.

As our holy peace increases we are safe who on You call.

Grant us peace, LORD, by Your favor; for Your people's sake we pray.

For the Church's sake, O Savior, we will seek Your good today.

Galatians 6

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. How should we as believers relate to our fellow believers?
2. Do we do good works only to our fellow Christians? Explain.
3. What's the best way to resist the temptations of the flesh? What does that entail?
4. What is the rule of love and what does this require of you?
5. What's the most important lesson you have learned from Galatians 6?

For Prayer:

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