

GALATIANS 6

Galatians 5 concluded with two statements of admonition, which follow the discussion of the fruits of the Spirit—let us walk in the Spirit; and let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another-- found in Galatians 5:22-26:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

These admonitions set the attitudes necessary to deal appropriately with our less fortunate brothers and sisters in Christ, our preachers and evangelists, the poor, and those in need of discipline. The rules are in chapter 5; the applications are in chapter 6.

Bear and Share One Another's Burdens

Galatians 6:1-5

Galatians 6:1

1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Paul gave a comprehensive list of the works of the flesh in Gal 5:19-21. The sins will, sooner or later, catch up with all Christians. When this happens what are we to do? Restore the overtaken one with a spirit of gentleness. In humility, we should always be conscious that we also might be tempted and fall into the devil's snare. Urgency and gentleness are the watch words for restoring the fallen. The gospel gives us examples of how to proceed. First we should consider ourselves, lest we too fall. Even in our prayers we are charged to forgive those who sin against us. Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6:9-15

9 "Pray, then, in this way:

'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.

10 'Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 'Give us this day our daily bread.

12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.]'

14 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Gentleness begins with forgiveness, if the sin is against us. Given that the sin is persistent, the Lord has given a process for that sin to be dealt with in Matthew 18:15-17:

15 "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 17 "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

The sin against us may be a sin not unto death, in which case, we may pray for our brother, and that is the end of it, according to 1 John 5:16-17:

6 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

Sins unto death are willful sins and continuing sins. Peter speaks of those who forthrightly turn back to the world from where they came, in 2 Peter 2:20-22

20 For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

Willful sins bear a certain condemnation from the Lord, creating the upmost urgency for resolution in Hebrews 10:26-27:

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.

For sins unto death, Paul has prescribed our action in 1 Corinthians 5:11:

11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

And again in 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15:

14 And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. 15 And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Although we must deny fellowship to those sinning unto spiritual death, we also must admonish them as brothers and show gentleness in the process. Paul elaborates on our attitude in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-16

14 And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. 15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.

Galatians 6:2-5

2 Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.

Thus, we must not only restore the one overtaken by trespass, but also bear one another's burdens. This grand effort to bear one another's burdens fulfills the law of Christ. Fulfilling the law of Christ is set in juxtaposition to the works of the flesh. James laid down the rule governing our support of one another in James 2:8-10:

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

Christ, himself, fulfilled his own law, in his baptism by John in Matthew 3:13-15

13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" 15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

When the brother is sinning or weak—overwhelmed by burdens, as it were—it is easy to gloat and hold them in disdain; yet we who look down on others are deceived, not know the devil lies in wait. We may ourselves fall, and so we must look to ourselves and not judge to be something great when compared to the weak one.

Be Generous and Do Good

Sharing with Teachers and Preachers

Galatians 6:6

6 And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.

The straight forward obligation of the church and its individual members is to support those who teach them. This includes elders, preachers, and teachers, as the circumstance dictate. When the Lord sent his disciples out on the limited commission, he charged them in Luke 10:7:

"And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages.

Of elders, Paul instructed Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:17-18:

17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." 1

It is not often the churches pays elders in this modern age. However, it is important to note that scriptures provide this option to the church. Paul included himself and Timothy with a similar admonition in 1 Corinthians 9:9-12:

9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? 10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. 11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? 12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

Paul, Barnabas, and Apollos lived almost destitute lives to preach the gospel, according to 1 Corinthians 4:11-13:

11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; 12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; 13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

Our obligation to the preachers of the gospel is as clear and pointed as any given in scripture. 1 Corinthians 9:14 teaches succinctly:

So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

Do Good to All

Galatians 6:7-10

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

The story is told that Billy Sunday, a denominational evangelist, of the 20th century, would hold huge meetings under three pole circus tents. He often started by flying down the center aisle on his motorcycle, slamming on the brakes, going into a side, jumping off and onto the stage, slapping the podium with his Bible, and yelling, "There will be a payday someday!"

This scripture teaches that what we sow, we reap. Sow to the flesh; reap corruption. Sow to the Spirit; reap everlasting life. Yes, indeed, there will be a payday someday.

Our sowing and reaping cannot be seasonal, nor just when we feel like it. But as we have opportunity, do good to all. Nor can our good works be selective; but contra wise, we must do our good to all. Yet, there is a special duty to those of the household of faith. If we do not grow weary and if we do not lose heart, we shall reap.

The Law and the Prophets hung on the premise of doing good to all to all men. Jesus was confronted with this issue Matthew 22:36-40

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Paul in chapter 5 and here affirms this as the dominate theme of the law of the gospel in Galatians 5:13-15:

13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.

Finally, James—right along with keeping oneself unspotted from the world—gives caring for the destitute the special designation of *pure and undefiled* religion in James 1:26-27:

26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. 27 This is pure and undefiled religion in the

sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Our pure lives and our benevolent lives are equal obligations before God.

Glory Only in the Cross

Galatians 6:11-13

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. 12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh.

This is Paul's summary statement:

One cannot think a good showing in the flesh (physical circumcision) is suffering for the cross of Christ. This is boasting in the flesh. Paul has explained that such suffering profits one nothing in Colossians 2:20-23:

20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using) — in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Galatians 6:14-16

14 But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

The crux of the matter is that the world—including circumcision—has been crucified to us; and these and other worldly matters avail us nothing. What does matter then? We are a new creation!

The purpose of the cross of Jesus and our baptism into his death is to create us anew:

John 3:4-8: 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Romans 6:4: 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18: 17 Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Titus 3:4-8: 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The *Israel of God* is the spiritual kingdom established by God with Christ its king just as God had promised. Romans 9:6-8 explains:

6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named." 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants

The law of the Israel of God is the gospel of Christ; and there is no other as taught in Galatians 1:6-10 where we began this study:

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. 10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Blessing and a Plea

Galatians 6:17-18

17 From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Under the gospel, the new covenant, Christians are marked as servants (slaves) of Jesus who own us by his gospel. The Greek word here is *stigma*:

Stigma (stig'-mah); from a primary stizo (to "stick", i.e. prick); a mark incised or punched (for recognition of ownership), i.e. (figuratively) scar of service: (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

Many versions use the word *mark* only which does not fully express the true relationship of the Christian servant and the Lord Jesus. We are his through the gospel.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with our spirit, if we are his.