

Galatians

Lesson 13

Ministry of Restoration

Galatians 6: 1-18 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so 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 test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.

5 For each will have to bear his own load.

6 Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Final Warning and Benediction

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

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

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

Let's begin this lesson by taking a close look at the first word in the first sentence, better known as the beginning.

Brothers..... Verse 1a.

Notice that Paul begins this last chapter by addressing the Galatians as Brothers.

This is little used in the New Testament, and always only between fellow believers.

This is encouraging because Paul has spent a great deal of time telling the Galatians where they have been going wrong.

But here, he at least implies that all is not lost.

Verse 1b, if anyone is caught in any transgression,

The Greek that the word "**transgression**," was translated from here is *paraptoma*.

The literal translation is *unintentional blunder*.

So, using this word to describe what the Galatians have done, Paul is saying that they have unintentionally stumbled and fallen into error.

Most of these people were apparently unaware that by walking into the trap of legalism, they had missed the mark.

Verse 1c, you who are spiritual should restore him

The question arises in such cases: If a person has fallen into error such as this, how can they be rescued and restored to fellowship with God and their fellow believers?

Many Christians have at times, found themselves mired in something they know is wrong, but they don't know how to get themselves delivered from it.

At times like these, they need someone who is spiritual enough to understand their need and concerned enough to show them, not so much how they missed the mark, but how to get back on track again.

I find it extremely interesting that the Greek word that we get the word, "**restore**" from means to, "*reset a dislocated bone.*"

Wow, that sounds uncomfortable.

Notice though that the bone is only dislocated and not broken.

We who are spiritual are to restore that person to the place of full usage in the Body of Christ.

Legalism puts them out of place.

Love restores them.

Verse 1d, in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Notice first that, "***a spirit of gentleness,***" is a manifestation of love, the fruit of the Spirit.

We who are spiritual (full of the Spirit of God) are to demonstrate gentleness in restoring those who have fallen.

Why? We remember the words of Solomon who warned a proud or haughty spirit goes before a fall.

We are gentle with those who have fallen because we know that if we suffer from pride, we are ourselves in danger of falling into temptation the same way as the people we are trying to help.

Among the seven sins listed in **Proverbs 6: 16-19**, as those which God hates most, number one is a *proud look*.

God does not like pride.

Verses 2- 5, Bear one another's burdens, and so 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 test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.

5 For each will have to bear his own load.

Verse 2a, Bear one another's burdens,

At first glance it may appear that verse 2 and verse 5 contradict each other.

One says that we are to bear each other's burdens, and the other says that each person must bear his own burdens.

We will look more closely at this when we get to verse 5.

Right now, let's see why we are to share in carrying one another's burdens.

Verse 2b, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

What law is Paul referring to when he speaks of burden sharing as *fulfilling the Law of Christ*?

This is the law where it says that we are to love the Lord or God with all our heart, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

If we love our neighbors as ourselves, we will not only refrain from doing them wrong, we will actively seek to do them good.

This why we are told to bear each other's burdens.

By helping our neighbor bear his burden, because we love him as ourselves, we are bearing our own burden.



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It is no longer my and his burden, it is now our burden because of Christ living and loving through us.

Verse 3, For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

When we go to lift up someone who has fallen into sin, we must be careful not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought.

We must always be aware that, “*except for the grace of God, go I.*”

This attitude will provide a level of protection from thinking that we are special and have all the answers when God is the one with all the answers.

Nowhere is humility so needed as it is in restoring a fallen one in the Body of Christ.

Verse 4, But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.

David said in ***Psalms 26: 2, Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind.***

But in the New Testament, Paul says in ***I Corinthians 11: 28, Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.***

II Corinthians 13: 5, Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

Why the difference between the Old and New Testament teachings?

The answer is almost always the same, in the Old Testament people worked with God through the limitations of the Law.

In the New Testament we had the gift of eternal life provided for us through Jesus Christ and the infilling of the Holy Spirit of God to help us examine ourselves.



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This is what Paul is telling the Galatians, “Don’t judge others by what they are able to do. Instead, examine your own work. Then you can be happy about what you done, not jealous or angry because of what someone has or has not accomplished.”

Now, let’s examine ***Verse 5, For each will have to bear his own load.***

Here is the verse that seems to contradict verse 2.

In these two verses the Greek words used for burden, (or Load), in each verse is different.

In verse 2, the Greek word is *baros*, meaning heavy burden or weight, one which a person needs help to carry.

In verse 5, the Greek word is *phortion*, which means, according to Strong’s Concordance, “*an invoice,*” or a bill of lading.

In this sense, it means, *a task or a service*, as well as an individual “*burden.*”

So then, when Paul speaks in verse 2 of our carrying one another’s *baros*, he is speaking of a large and burdensome weight, whereas in verse 5, he is speaking of one being responsible for his own *phortion*, one that we and we alone are having to bear for ourselves.

Verse 6 Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

The Greek word for share in this verse is the word *koinonia*, which is often used to indicate fellowship or family.

It is in the sense that Paul is using it in this verse.

Paul wants these people to know that they are not in this thing alone.



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He also wants them to know that nothing that they give to each other is ever really lost because God will see to it that it is returned to them multiplied in abundance so that there will be plenty for all.

These truths will be expounded upon in the coming verses.

Verses 7-8 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Verses 7a, Do not be deceived:

It is likely that this message sharing has arisen because the legalistic Judaizers who came in behind Paul were draining the Galatians of their material goods, using them to finance the spread of their erroneous religious beliefs about the Law.

In fact, it is strict adherence to the Law of tithing that is the cause of this problem.

Paul is writing to the Galatians to free them from the Letter of the Law, with its binding restrictions based on obligation and duty.

He is writing to set them free through the principle of sowing and reaping which releases from the obligation but results in multiplied blessings to the one who gives as well as to the one who receives.

Pay close attention to this truth; the *principle* of tithing is far different than the *law* of tithing.

Tithing is part of the Old Testament law, but Paul was reminding the Galatians that they were not under the Law, but grace.

He wanted them to know that giving was a part of God's overall plan, but it was never intended to be an obligation or a duty.



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Instead, it was to be the normal way of life for those whose spirit has been born anew by the Holy Spirit.

So, the reason why you and I tithe today is not because we are demanded to do so, but because we are moved to do so by love.

The Law demands but grace gives.

Verses 7b, God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

Traditionally, this verse has been taught only in the confines of sin.

For years it has been used as a warning that we are not to deceive ourselves into thinking that we would get away with sinning.

Because of this teaching, we developed a kind of “Big Brother is watching,” complex.

This understanding is not all wrong.

But, did we really need a verse to remind us that God knows everything we do?

So, there is a negative side to sowing and reaping. Right?

Yes.

However, an evil harvest only occurs when bad seed is planted.

Good seed produces a harvest of good, both for the one who sows and the one who reaps.

As a matter of fact, we often equate this message with money only, when it is just as important that we equate with sowing of God’s word.

Verse 8, For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Paul is clearly stating to the Galatians that if they sow to the lusts and passions of their flesh, they will reap lust and passion.

Giving in obedience to the Law and giving simply to get, are both means of sowing to the flesh.

The nature of the flesh is like the ground, it will produce whatever is sown into it.

Verse 9, And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

There are two ways to guarantee a crop failure when sowing spiritual seed.

The first is to sow it into the flesh.

Since the flesh is carnal, it cannot reproduce spiritual seed.

The second is to neglect the seed that is sown in spiritual ground.

Once the seed is sown it must be tended.

The ground must be cultivated, the seed watered, the grass and weeds removed.

Living by the principal of sowing and reaping requires diligence, but it is well worth it when harvesttime comes.

It is not in the spirit that we are tempted to give up, it is always in our mind.

It is there that the battle takes place.

As long as our mind is firmly set, the devil and his demons are powerless to prevent our seeds from producing fruit.

The time to rejoice is while the seed is still in the ground.

That is faith in action, faith that keeps us from digging up the seed before it has had a chance to reproduce.

Verse 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Paul teaches us that as Christians we are to do good to everyone, but most of all to other believers.

We are to love even our enemies, but not like we love our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Paul wants the Law put away because when believers become legalistic, they become judges of one another instead of those who love and care.

We love the sinner and want him to be born again, but we do not fellowship with them the same way we do with believers.

Verse 11, See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

From here on to the end of Galatians, Paul is concluding his remarks so we will find him jumping from subject to subject.

This verse has been a source of great debate among theologians for many years.

It has been used by those who hold to the theory that healing is not part of the atonement.

They cite it to prove that Paul was a sickly man throughout his life and ministry.

They go on to point out that here he admits to having to write in large letters because of vision impairments.

The truth is, whether in Greek or English, this word *letter*, is used for both an alphabetical letter and a written epistle, so it could be taken either way.

The difference is better understood like this, “See what a large letter I have written,” or, “See what large letters I have written.”

It is possible, however, there is an even more logical explanation of Paul’s meaning, especially when you consider that Galatians is not a large epistle when compared with others such as Romans, or 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Could it be that Paul had more to say than is recorded here in this one rather short letter?

At any rate, concluding from this verse that Paul suffered vision impairment is quiet the leap.

Let’s move on.

Verses 12-14 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Verse 12, It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

The meaning of this verse is made clearer in the NIV, ***Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.***

What Paul is saying here is that the only reason these people want you to be circumcised so they can gain glory for themselves for convincing you to do this, and to avoid persecution for teaching and preaching the real gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ.

Verse 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

Here Paul points out the contradiction in the message these Jews are preaching.

If the Galatians are required to be circumcised to keep the Law, then why don't their teachers keep the Law themselves.

Remember ***Acts 15: 10***, where Peter said, ***Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples (Gentiles) that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?***

In other words, Paul is asking the Galatians, "Why do these Jews demand that you Gentiles be circumcised and keep the Law which they themselves cannot keep?"

Then he gives the answer, ***"that they may boast in your flesh."***

It takes attention from their failings and places it on yours.

They can't keep the Law, but they can make themselves look righteous by subjecting other people to it.

They just want to bring glory to themselves.

Verse 14a, But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul knew better than to try to bring glory to himself.

Instead, he placed the glory where it rightfully belongs, on the One Who gave His life that we might live.

We should not glory in our faith, but only in the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Nor should we glory in our salvation, but in the One Who purchased our salvation for us with His blood.

Remember ***Psalm 51: 12, Salvation belongs to the Lord.***

Glorying in our prosperity or our health or our success is also wrong because none of these were originally ours.

We have simply received them from God's hand.

Off the top my head, I remember that Paul said, God forbid that I should glory in anything other than the cross of Jesus Christ.

Verse 14b, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Notice that there is a double crucifixion referred to here.

Paul said that the world was crucified to him, and that he was crucified to it.

As far as the world is concerned, we are dead.

That's fine, as long as we remember that, like the flesh, the world with its lust and affections is dead to us.

The life we now live in the world we live to the glory of the One Who loved us gave Himself for us.

Verses 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

Notice that it is only in Christ Jesus that circumcision counts for anything.

In the spiritual realm, that outward physical change is of no consequence at all because God looks not on the flesh of a person but at the heart.



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Verse 16a, And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them,

So then we are under law, just not the Mosaic law, the law written in stone, but the law, written in our hearts, the law of love.

When we live by this rule of new life in Christ Jesus we have peace and mercy ruling in our lives.

Verse 16b, and upon the Israel of God.

This part of the passage refers to the born-again Jews.

Even though Paul is the Apostle of God to the Gentiles, he never lost his burden for, and love for his fellow Jews.

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

Paul is saying, "If you want to know what these religious Jews are really like, look at my body."

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

There is nothing that should be added to Paul's parting words.