

Series: Grace Is Everything
Sermon: “Restore Them Gently”
Scripture: Galatians 6:1-10

After we covered Galatians 5:7-15 two weeks ago, I had a few people come to me and ask, quite sincerely and lovingly, if it’s true that our job is to echo the spirit’s voice of welcome, then how to we correct and rebuke those in error? A fantastic question, and one that Paul sees coming and addresses in today’s verses.

6:1 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.

[PRAYER]: Father, we know that all our flesh and glory are grass and flowers which fade and fall; but your Word endures forever. So, find us here where the frailty of humanity meets with the fullness of divinity, in Christ Jesus our Lord. And send his Spirit to bear fruit in our lives, that we might be fit to restore one another with the gentleness you’ve shown toward us. **Amen.**

INTRO: Demetri Martin - “I like video games, but they're really violent. I'd like to play a video game where you help the people who were shot in all the other games. It'd be called 'Really Busy Hospital.’”

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- I. The Task
- II. The Trap
- III. The Telos

I. **The Task:** *6:1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.*

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression

- We're probably already off track here. Because I'm afraid what you heard was, "if any of you busts someone doing something naughty."
- We have to remember that sin is not merely wrong actions, but an idolatrous dependence on the flesh. Which means, there are sinful habits of thought and desire that precede actions.
- "We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer."
— **Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison***
- **We get ensnared in the sowing patterns of wickedness.** To be caught in sin means you don't want to be there but cannot free yourself. It is an immense burden you can't lift.
- *Those* are the things that are catching us. You're not the one doing the catching. So, it's not caught like busted, it's caught like ensnared. You're running through bear traps together.

you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

"You who are spiritual" – A spiritual problem needs a spiritual solution

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
being called by the spirit, keeping in step with the spirit, bearing the fruit of the spirit.

Gentleness – tamed strength "His gentleness was uncompromising; because he would not compete for dominance, he was indomitable." — **Ursula K. Le Guin, The Dispossessed**

Ted Lasso – I don't have to know the game – I know how to bring the best out of people.

Not downplaying sin. Rightly viewing it.

- NCC18 - Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished? NO.
- *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.*

"Run unto him, and reaching out your hand, raise him up again, comfort him with sweet words, and embrace him with motherly arms." – Luther, Lectures on Galatians

Restore is like to set a broken bone.

II. **The Trap: *Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.***

Muhammad Ali – "Superman don't need no seatbelt" ... "Superman don't need no airplane"

- **There are landmines of the flesh in this work.** Restoring is dangerous for all involved.

- *3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*
- “Every individual needs revolution, inner division, overthrow of the existing order, and renewal, but not by forcing them upon his neighbors under the hypocritical cloak of Christian love or the sense of social responsibility or any of the other beautiful euphemisms for unconscious urges to personal power.” — **C.G. Jung**, *Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology*

Two unconscious urges to personal power that masquerade as “helping”:

1. **Those who don’t care enough** - If your response to someone caught in trespass is anything but compassion in light of *what they suffer*, you’re not the right person for the job.
 - Sowing to the flesh in this instance looks like arranging the community around your own proclivities, both to boost your ego and minimize your exposure. You are relying on your own flesh to save you and so you expect others to do the same. You are sowing to the flesh and not to the spirit. God will not be mocked.
 - ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.
 - Self-glory – provoking (challenging) envy (from the bottom) – jockeying for position – that calling out is in contrast to the calling that Jesus is doing. He is welcoming you in, not calling you out.
 - Comparison is the thief of joy
 - *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.*
 - “Don’t compare your beginning to someone else’s middle” – Jon Acuff
 - And the reverse: don’t compare your middle with someone else’s beginning.
- If you can’t see each other’s burden with empathy and compassion, it’s because you can’t see yourself that way. You are loving your neighbor as yourself right now more than you realize. The reason you don’t love your neighbor is you don’t love yourself.
 - “Looking inside ourselves, we can anticipate only harshness from heaven. Looking out to Christ, we can anticipate only gentleness.” — Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*
 - That’s why those who are spiritual should do the restoring. That is, those who receive the Spirit’s welcome.
2. **Those who care too much**
 - “Teach us to care and not to care” - TS Eliot, Ash Wednesday
- West Wing - “Twenty-Five” – The president’s love incapacitates him.
 - You who see your children and others you love in error - all the compassion in the world but your fear for them and yourself has turned to raging and controlling. You can’t see straight.
 - Let me gently restore you, brothers and sisters: keep watch on yourself. You are going to harm the people you love.
- “You who are spiritual” is PLURAL – we need to be connected to spiritual people who won’t be incapacitated by our burdens. Community Groups are great for this.

III. The Telos: - ²Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

We’ve talked so much about the Law this year, and I hope you see it now more clearly – We are all afoul of the law, and yet the work Christ is doing in us is actually rehabilitating us to the point that we’re able to restore one another, which is the whole thing the law is pointing to!

"To consider the church already completely an in every respect holy and spotless when all its members are spotted and somewhat impure--how absurd and foolish this is!... It is true...that the church has been sanctified by Christ, but only the beginning of its sanctification is visible here on earth." – Calvin

- **We are becoming who we already are.**

- *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.*

No contradiction with v 2. We have to bear another's load in such a way that we are training them to bear their own. Being taught – catechumenate - Response to harsh correction is not passive toleration but gentle restoration

- **The thing we're teaching people is gentleness.**
- "The art of gentleness toward ourselves leads to being gentle with others" - Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child*
 - If the end result of healthy spiritual life is the fruit of the spirit, then conflict must be the curriculum of the church. One of the reasons it's so important for you to be healthy is so you can be helpful. But that is so exhausting.
- *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.*
- The sowing language flows from the fruit language. This is a cyclical orchard. You must die to nourish the future fruit of another in the orchard. Dying and resurrecting, giving life and receiving it.
 - Don't be as concerned with having people keep the law, the parts of which are easiest for you to keep usually being the only ones you can see, thereby making it impossible to judge by comparison. Instead, think of the law as love, and encourage one another.
- The loving restoration of a brother is one of the reformation's marks of a true church, just behind preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments.