

Galatians 6

Good evening and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your Bibles to Galatians 6? We're finishing this incredible epistle to the galatians tonight, and then we're going back to the OT as we'll begin our study in both 1 and 2 chronicles-we'll do them both on Wed nights starting next week.

The title of tonight's message is Be like Christ.
Let's pray

It's amazing when we pause and think about how times have changed isn't it? **SHOW PIC** A couple months ago for back to school shopping, a new popular item was flying off the shelves, and it's a bulletproof backpack. Proof of the perilous times in which we live. **CLOSE PIC**

Not only are these perilous days for our world—but for believers as well. Jesus said in **Matthew 24:12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.** We see how the love of many has grown cold haven't we?

As we live in these last days, it's no surprise when we see people who were once on fire, once being used in ministry, once plugged in to fellowship, but no longer are. It's heartbreaking to watch, but really not surprising.

We should remember that we're in a spiritual war, and just like in any war, we need to prepare for the casualties and the wounded. How do we do this?

By realizing and remembering that the church is to be a place of refuge, a hospital for those who are wounded.

If someone's sick—a hospital is exactly where they should be!

SHOW PIC Imagine you walk into UC and see a hospital administrator saying, “Check out our hospital. There are no bad odors in our halls, no stains on our linen, not a bedpan on the premises.”

“Wow! This place is immaculate,” you'd say. “How do you keep it this way?”

“It's simple,” the administrator would answer. “We don't admit anyone who's sick. We want only a sterile environment.” **CLOSE**

PIC

That's a ridiculous scenario, yet exactly the way some folks want to churches today.

But, if we are to be what the Lord wants us to be, we should rejoice when He sends sick people in our direction. But it's hard right, because sick people need. They need attention, they need love, they need support, they need time. Dealing with the sick can be challenging!

But now, picture the other extreme. Imagine visiting a hospital where bedpans are overflowing, dirty needles are stacked up, and all of the bandages and blankets have blood on them.

Imagine you ask why the hospital is like that and the administrator says, “We're really not into cleanliness. We're just into helping

people.” You’d be appalled. Because we know that if dirty needles are used, and bedpans overflow; if you never mop the floor or wash the linens, you will actually be doing more harm than good because infection will spread and problems will compound.

And this what we have to remember. Absolutely we need to be cognizant of our calling to welcome all into our midst. On the other hand, we are to make sure we are not being infected by allowing disease to spread throughout our congregation. There’s a needed balance, and Paul uses this medical imagery as he writes

1 Brethren, 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.

The word translated "trespass" here refers to "a lapse", or a "stumble", or even a "slip up."

To be clear verse 1 isn't referring to a false teacher who deliberately spews false doctrine. The Bible is clear-those are to be cast out. Nor is it speaking of the person who's headlong into sin and is non repentant. For they too are to be removed according to 1 Corinthians 5.

Verse 1 is describing the person who's fallen victim to a weakness, we're told to restore them.

The word restore is a fascinating word. It's the greek word KATARTIZO, and it's used in the NT to describe the setting of a broken bone.

Setting of a broken bone is a task that needs to be done very tenderly. It involves a careful evaluation of the break - and then a gentle manipulation of the bones.

Which is the reason this is not the job of a novice. Paul is specific in verse 1, "You who are spiritual restore such a one..." and how do we do it... "in a spirit of gentleness."

The word "gentleness" is translated in other places as "meekness" which means strength under control, or firmness tempered with love.

Last year my son Caleb flipped off his bike and broke his arm. He came into the house and blood was everywhere on his knees. But through the agony of his tears he kept talking about the pain in his arm as he clutched it. Do you think I yelled at him for crashing his bike? Do you think I grabbed his arm and began squeezing it? Of course not. But he was crying so I had to be firm and take control of the situation and exude love at the same time.

When we're restoring those who have fallen, the best way to strike that balance between firmness and love is to take heed to what comes next in verse 1... **"considering yourself lest you also be tempted."**

It's wisely been said "be humble or you'll stumble." We must never underestimate our own ability to blow it!

Legalism creates a self-righteous, judgmental church, while grace produces a healing environment.

But after the restoration, our job isn't over...

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

When Paul brought up the idea of the one overtaken in any trespass, it painted the picture of a person sagging under a heavy load. Here he expanded the idea to encourage every Christian to bear one another's burdens.

The idea here is NOT to expect others to bear our burdens. That is self-focused, and always leads to pride, frustration, discouragement, and depression. Instead, God always directs us to be others-focused, and says, "Bear one another's burdens."

This is a wonderfully simple command to obey! Look for a brother or a sister with a burden, and help them with it. It's not complicated, and it doesn't take a huge program or infrastructure to do it. Just look for a burden to bear and bear it.

Now look at the last part of verse 2. **Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.** You'll remember that through this whole letter Paul was confronting the legalists among the Galatian Christians. Here, he hit them again. Paul essentially said, "Do you want to fulfill the law? Here is your law to fulfill. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

John 13 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Too often our pride can keep us from bearing one another's burdens. See pride isn't just thinking I'm above others, pride is ultimately self focus.

But of course pride also causes people to refuse to receive help when someone reaches out and offers to help bear their burden.

4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. To make sure we're not deceiving ourselves, it's important to examine who we are and what we do before the Lord. Why? Because this will help reveal any areas of self-deception.

If we aren't willing to peel back the layers and allow the Lord to search us, then we may think our works are approved before God, when really they aren't. Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties;

24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

But the reason for this isn't only to bring change, it's to bring rejoicing! Verse 4 says examine his own work and he will have rejoicing in himself alone. I can rejoice, even if the results aren't what I thought they would be, because I did my work for the Lord.

5 For each one shall bear his own load. At first this sounds like a contradiction? I thought we were to bear one another's load. Now we're going to bear our own load?" Which is it? The answer is both. We're responsible for each other, but my responsibility for you never supersedes your responsibility for yourself.

Paul used two different Greek words to describe these two kinds of burdens.

The burdens in verse 2 are excessive burdens beyond the normal burdens that we endure as we go through life. An example would be the pain associated with unusual experiences or situations is an excessive burden.

But the load in verse 5 is our normal burden of responsibility. We must bear these burdens ourselves rather than expecting other people to carry them.

Weirsbe described this best with this: "If my car breaks down, my neighbor can help drive my children to school, but he cannot assume the responsibilities that only belong to me as their father."

Now the topic shifts to spiritual investments,

6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. In this context of caring for one another, Paul instructs those who are taught to support (share in all good things) those who teach them.

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. Here's a natural law that also applies to the spiritual realm. Sow corn and you'll be up to your ears in

corn. A farmer understands this principle. He would never sow corn and expect soybeans. You reap what you sow.

This is a scary verse as we look at the state of our nation today. Look at what we are reaping from decisions made just 50 and 60 years ago...

1950's top 5 issues in school-chewing gum, not putting paper in trash, and too much noise in the halls. Now we have to worry about kids shooting up schools, prevalence of pornography, complete lack of respect...

We've given our stamp of approval for sex outside of marriage by watching shows and movies. Sin is never satisfied, it always wants more. And make no mistake, we reap what we sow.

8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Here's an easy to remember rule of thumb... Garbage in, garbage out. Fill your head with impure images or filthy talk and it will impact you.

When you download a song, or stream a movie, or browse a website - remember, you reap what you sow! And realize what's so deceptive about the Law of Sowing and Reaping - you seldom reap in the same season that you sow. If harvest came the day after the planting, farming would be easier - but it doesn't. A farmer rarely reaps in the same season that he sows.

And this is also true spiritually. What we sow today can take years to sprout its fruit. Sin is pleasurable for a season, but the consequences can be brutal.

On the other hand, studying our Bible, and learning to pray can be hard - like planting on a hot day. But when you harvest its riches it's all worth it.

If you want to grow a strong faith, sow good seeds. Log on to Bible teaching, and Christian music, and take walks with God, and think God's thoughts... the more you sow to the spirit the more you'll reap godliness

9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Our biggest obstacle is weariness. We get tired, and discouraged, and we're tempted to give up. We need endurance.

In a manufacturing town in Scotland a young lady began teaching a Sunday school class to poverty-stricken boys. The most unpromising youngster was a boy named Bob. After the first two or three Sundays Bob didn't return. So the teacher went to look for him.

Although the superintendent had given young Bob some new clothes they were already worn and dirty when the teacher found him. The teacher gave him more new clothes and he came back to Sunday School.

But soon he quit again and the teacher went out once more to find him. When she did she discovered that the second set of clothes had gone the way of the first. "I'm completely discouraged about Bob," she told the superintendent. "I guess we must give up on him."

"Please don't do that," the superintendent pleaded. "I believe there is still hope. Try him one more time." So they gave Bob a third change of clothes, and this time he began to attend regularly.

It wasn't long until Bob became a Christian, and he eventually grew up and even taught in that same Sunday school. Who was that obstinate, ragged boy who for a time seemed so unreachable? He was none other than Robert Morrison, who later became the first Protestant English missionary to China. He translated the Bible into Chinese and brought the Word of God to countless millions of Chinese people.

How wonderful it was that that Sunday school teacher did not become discouraged and weary in doing good. Remember, it's always too soon to quit!

10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Christians have a responsibility to do good to all people, including the unsaved. But we have a special responsibility to do good to other Christians as we have opportunity, namely, when we hear of a need and have the resources to help.

Like in a home, family needs come first, then those of our neighbors. See we must be careful to make sure that taking care of fellow Christians doesn't make up all of our good works-we're to do go to ALL

Notice the spiritual life is anything but passive. We're to be active and busy about our Fathers business.

Paul begins his closing...

11 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! ” We know that Paul dictated his letters through a stenographer. He then signed them with his own signature to assure their authenticity. **2 Thessalonians 3:17 The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.** But Galatians seems to be the exception.

It appears that Paul was so passionate about this letter - its subject, God's grace, its recipients the Galatians - he wrote it with his own hand. And some folks think Paul wrote in large letters because of his eye problems. Perhaps his "thorn in the flesh" had flared up

Of course it also could've just been an attempt to make sure the Galatians read every word.

At the bottom of the Declaration of Independence the words "John Hancock" are in abnormally large letters. Hancock used large script to make sure King George saw his name. This also might've been Paul's motive.

Paul closes his letter with a final word regarding the motives of the legalists among the Galatians.

12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. The legalists paraded around their motivation as being from concern for the ones they tried to bring under the law. But Paul saw through this deception and saw their motive was really selfish, simply desiring the honor and glory of a good showing in the flesh. Legalists often desire the submission of others so it can be like a merit badge.

Remember, faith in the cross makes all rituals, including circumcision, obsolete. If circumcision or any other religious ritual can save, Jesus never had to die. The cross put an end to religion. Today, it's all about a relationship with Jesus

13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. The false teachers were hypocrites. Though they guilted the Galatians into circumcision there were other areas of the Law they ignored.

14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom^[fn] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Before he came to Christ, this world's power, wealth, and religion had a hold on Paul. But at the cross the world was exposed for the evil it is.

At the cross all the world's systems - government, religion, education - joined forces to execute an innocent Jesus for no other reason than their own jealousy and fear.

Now after seeing what the world did to Jesus, Paul will never be enchanted by this world and its charms again.

Author Neil Strait makes a penetrating observation, "Christ on our cross is the way Calvary really reads. He died for us - in our place. We, then, are debtors. Strange, that so often we act like we owe nothing..."

We have a debt, for sure, but it's not to this world - our obligation is to our Savior hanging on the cross

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. For the legalists, circumcision was a big issue because it was their initiation to living under the Mosaic Law. But to Paul, circumcision didn't mean anything. All that mattered is that person's conversion to Christ- **2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new**

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. Just as Paul was willing to pronounce a curse on those who taught false doctrines (Galatians 1:8-9), he was also willing to give a blessing to those who walk according to this rule. These are those who are the true Israel of God, the descendants of Abraham according to faith.

17 From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. The false teachers in Galatia had not only questioned the legitimacy of Paul's message, but also the sincerity of his ministry.

Now Paul rips off his shirt, and shows them the scars on his torso - results of his stoning in Lystra. Paul's scars were proof of the suffering he'd endured to bring the Gospel to Galatia. Some think "let no one trouble me" was Paul's way to say to the Christians of Galatia, "Don't be a trouble to me by continuing to play around with these false doctrines — I've suffered enough already."

The story is told of Adoniram Judson who was a Christian missionary to Burma. For seven years he was imprisoned, and kept in leg-irons and handcuffs for preaching the Gospel. His wrists and ankles were severely scarred.

Upon his release Judson asked the Burmese King if he might be granted permission to preach about Jesus. The king responded, "My people are not fools enough to listen to anything a missionary might say, but I fear they might be impressed by your scars and turn to your religion."

Paul also boasted in his scars for Christ

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. We're saved, and stand, and live, and grow - all through faith in God's amazing grace! We need to be on guard about

drifting into legalism, we need to remember we're to be a grace place.