

## The Call to Restoration

### Galatians 6:1-2

Nothing could be more central to the Christian faith than the Gospel. And nothing is more central to our living out the Gospel than how we respond to sin. On one side of the coin, living out the Gospel involves how we respond to the sins we ourselves commit. Do we grieve our sin, confess our sin, repent of our sin, and seek forgiveness for our sin trusting in the merits of Christ alone?

The other side of that coin involves how we respond to the sins of others – especially when the sins others commit impact us personally. Are we faithful to confront them humbly and lovingly for their good and not out of any sense of vengeance? When others repent and seek our forgiveness, do we grant it eagerly, joyfully, in the same way we ourselves have been forgiven in Christ?

Much of the present dire state of the church as a whole in America today can be traced back to a lack of faithfulness to the Gospel in how individual churches have responded to the sins of their church members. And that lack of faithfulness to the Gospel has compromised the witness of far too many churches in our country.

On the one hand, many churches refuse to deal with sin in a straightforward, biblical manner. Instead of confronting sin, many churches just ignore it and turn a blind eye to it. They try to sweep it under the rug and just pretend it didn't happen. Or worse, some churches celebrate their tolerance of sin and applaud themselves as being progressive, open-minded, accepting, and loving – at least in the way the world defines those terms.

They ignore the clear teaching of Scripture that calls sin “sin” and the Bible’s instructions to believers as to how we are to address immorality with loving confrontation and rebuke for the good of the sinner and out of genuine concern for their eternal soul.

Such churches would do well to remember Paul’s rebuke in 1 Corinthians 5. He says there in verse 1...

*It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles.*

Paul’s concern was that the church was supposed to be set-apart from the world in holiness. But instead, the church at Corinth was known for its toleration of sin. And so, Paul rebuked them in verse 2 saying...

*You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.*

Christ's church is to be characterized by its purity. It is to be clearly distinct from the immorality of the culture around it. So, when believers sin, that must be addressed – hopefully resulting in the sinning party's repentance. But if not – if that person continues in sin – then as Paul stated, they are to be removed from the church. But again, even the step of excommunication is done in the hope that the person who sinned will yet repent. As Paul goes on to say in verse 5...

*I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh... Why? ...so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Paul's goal in putting the sinning person out of the church was to bring about their repentance. It was a remedial act, not a punitive one. But until that repentance might occur, the sinning party's removal maintains the purity of the church and its testimony to the corrupt world around it.

Unfortunately, far too many churches today are more concerned with being accepted by the world than they are with being a testimony of godliness to the world. And so, one rut believers can fall into is the rut of tolerating sin.

But there is another rut on the opposite side of the road. And more and more believers today are falling into that rut. It's not the rut of the tolerance of sin, but of the in-tolerance of the repentant sinner. What is postulated by a growing number of believers today is that forgiveness of an individual does not necessarily lead to the restoration of that individual.

*I can forgive you for your sin without being reconciled to you. I can forgive you while continuing to withhold fellowship from you. I forgive you, but I don't want to have anything to do with you. You are persona non grata – unwelcome and unaccepted.*

Now I ask you brethren, is that the way Christ has dealt with us? Did He forgive us only to say, "Depart from Me. I want nothing to do with you"?

No! In fact, He did the opposite. The purpose behind Christ's death on the cross was not merely to pay for our sins. While His sacrifice certainly did accomplish complete and total forgiveness of sin for anyone who places their trust in Him for salvation, that was not the ultimate goal. The pinnacle reason Christ died was to bring us into relationship with God. Forgiveness of our sin and the imputing of Christ's righteousness to us were necessary means to an end – that end

being our reconciliation to God. Had He only forgiven us, but not reconciled us, we would still be relationally separated from God!

Thankfully, Ephesians 2:13 tells us...

*But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near... by the blood of Christ.*

And Colossians 1:21 & 22 proclaim...

*<sup>21</sup> And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.*

The full Gospel is not merely that Christ died to forgive us of our sins, but that He did so to bring us into a new covenantal relationship with God, that we would be adopted by Him as His children, and enjoy relationship with Him for all eternity. That is what makes the “good news” good news!

And even though every genuine believer continues to sin, their relationship with God is not thereby forfeited. Now, yes, their ability to *enjoy* that relationship is certainly disrupted, which is why believers confess their sins and repent of them, so that the joy of their relationship with God is restored. But restoration is never withheld from them by God, nor should it be by His people. In fact, the restoration of a sinning believer to God is made visible to the world through the restoration of that person to the body of Christ – the church.

Now, I know that such definitive statements often stir up questions. And I want to be clear about what the Bible teaches. So, let me add some clarifications to what I just said. First, when we talk about restoration of an individual, that person’s repentance is a pre-requisite. In fact, we can only communicate forgiveness to a person who seeks it confessing their sin. If they are not repentant, then telling them they are forgiven and restoring them would put us in the first rut we talked about this morning – that of tolerating the person’s sin. Where there is no repentance, there can be no extending of forgiveness. And without that transaction of forgiveness, there can be no restoration. Those principles are illustrated for us in Matthew 18:15-20.

But we need to be careful that our reason for withholding restoration is because of definite unrepentance on the offender’s part, and not un-willingness to restore them on our part. If the individual is bearing fruit of genuine repentance, then we are commanded to forgive them. And gospel forgiveness has as its goal restoration.

Now, if the person is *not* repentant, we should still forgive them in our heart by letting go of our desire for vengeance and entrusting the matter to God who judges righteously. Such “heart forgiveness” as it is often termed does not depend on the repentance of the offender, but helps prevent us from becoming embittered towards them and prepares us to grant them forgiveness if they eventually do repent. But again, that transaction of expressing forgiveness that leads to restoration can only happen if the offender is evidencing genuine repentance.

Now, I also want to clarify that not all consequences of sin can be undone by forgiveness. Where the damage caused by sin is particularly devastating, there may be lasting consequences for both the offender and the ones impacted by their sin. For example, sin very often breaks trust. And so, sometimes reconciliation must take that into account. Wise boundaries may need to be established to both benefit the person who sinned by providing them with helpful accountability, as well as to provide protection to those whom they hurt and who could be vulnerable to being hurt again. But such boundaries are not set up as roadblocks to restoration. Quite the opposite – they create an environment in which trust and relationship can both be rebuilt.

Now, in extreme cases, the damage done by some sins may prevent a relationship from being rebuilt completely in this lifetime. But we should recognize that, where both parties are believers, there will be complete restoration in glory. And that should encourage us to strive towards restoration in the here and now in order to bring the most glory to God before the watching world around us as we can. Where wounds are great, the infinitely greater grace and power of God are put on display when genuine believers reconcile.

It is also important to recognize that while forgiveness of a repentant individual should be offered quickly, restoration is often a process that can take time to bring to fruition – especially when the offense has been serious or the sin has been a pattern in the person’s life for some time. But as the person continues to bear fruit of repentance, our love for God and our love for the Gospel should move us forward in the process of restoration to whatever extent the Lord would make possible.

In fact, turn in your Bibles for a moment to 2 Corinthians chapter 2. There, Paul expresses his concern that the withholding of restoration would create an unbearable burden for the repentant sinner. He says in 2 Corinthians 2:6-9...

*<sup>6</sup> Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, <sup>7</sup> so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. <sup>8</sup> Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.*

So, notice first Paul's concern that the repentant offender be both forgiven and comforted to prevent them from being overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. And so, the church wasn't merely to forgive the person, but then keep him at arms distance. They weren't to shun him or treat him as wearing a scarlet letter. No, they were to *stop* treating him as an outsider to the faith. They were to draw near to him and reaffirming their love for him. In other words, they were to restore him.

And Paul didn't stop there. He goes on to say in verse 9...

*<sup>9</sup> For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.*

Paul wanted to know if the Corinthian believers would be obedient – not obedient to Paul personally, but obedient to the Gospel. Now, they had already been obedient in their discipline of the offender while he remained in sin. But then, when he repented, would they be obedient to restore him and to love him as well?

That same test is faced by every follower of Christ living today. When we are touched by the sin of another, will we be obedient to the Gospel in how we respond? Will we be obedient to confront, and will we be obedient to restore? Will we pass the test in being obedient to all things pertaining to the Gospel?

Now, that was a rather long introduction. But it's necessary that we first see clearly that Scripture calls us to forgive and restore repentant sinners. And I also wanted to address up front some of the caveats and questions that commonly arise, so that we can now focus on what biblical restoration entails.

So, understanding all that, turn with me if you would to Galatians 6. And as you turn there, let me provide us with a little context from chapter 5 of that book. In chapter 5 verse 16 Paul writes...

*<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.*

What Paul is saying is there is a battle taking place inside every believer between the Holy Spirit who indwells us and our flesh – that aspect of us that remains unsanctified and is still enticed by sin. And Paul concludes that section in verse 25 saying...

*If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*

That is, if we have been redeemed and born again to new life by the Spirit, then that should be evident in how we behave. Believers' lives are to be characterized by holiness, not by sin. At the same time, Paul also recognized that as a result of this internal struggle, believers will indeed still sin at times. This side of glory, no believer lives a fully-sanctified life. So, that being the case, what are we to do when one of us who *lives by the Spirit* fails to *walk by the Spirit*, and instead gives into the flesh and sins? How are we to handle that?

Well, Paul answers that question in the passage we are studying today – Galatians 6 verses 1 and 2...

*<sup>1</sup> Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.*

Now, notice the command Paul gives in this passage is to restore, not just forgive. To be sure, restoration *involves* forgiveness, but it doesn't stop there.

The Greek word translated here as "restore" (*katartizō*) means *to mend* or *to return to its proper condition*. It was used of setting a broken bone or putting a dislocated limb back into place. The idea of restoration implies making someone useful again by setting straight that which has become twisted in them. And that's the idea presented here in verse 1.

We are commanded to be our brother's keeper. When a brother or sister falls into sin we are to actively help them to be restored – first to God, but also to God's people. In this passage Paul gives us 5 insights about restoration that every believer needs to understand and practice. Five insights about restoration, and the first of those insights is this:

### **1) The Scope of Restoration is All-Inclusive.**

Paul begins verse 1 with the words...

*<sup>1</sup> Brethren, even if... anyone is caught in any trespass.*

With the words "*even if*" Paul is setting up a hypothetical situation that relates back to what he's just been talking about in chapter 5, in that someone has failed to walk according to the Spirit, and instead has given into the flesh. And he says *even if* that should occur, *even if* someone sins, here is the course you – their brethren – are to take.

And I want to draw your attention to the words "*anyone*" and "*any trespass*" because that is where we see just how all-inclusive the scope of restoration is to be. The Greek word translated

as “anyone” is *anthropos* which simply means *a man or a person*, but depending on the context takes on the meaning of *someone* or *anyone* as it is rendered here in the NASB, the ESV, and LSB translations.

The idea Paul is conveying is that any believer is capable of being caught in sin. And where that is the case, all believers are to be dealt with in the same way. Restoration isn’t a command that applies to some but not others. There are no exception clauses here.

You know, we can sometimes find it easier to forgive those whom we are closest to or more invested in. Those whose relationship we value more because we interact with them more, have more in common with them, or respect them more. We may be tempted to be quick to restore those people whom we like, but less inclined to restore those whom we find difficult to bear-up with.

This passage teaches us that there is to be no favoritism shown in how we handle the sins of fellow believers. All are to be treated alike. It doesn’t matter how long they’ve been a believer. It doesn’t matter if they are male or female, young or old. It doesn’t matter what their ethnic background is, or their economic standing. It doesn’t matter what ministries they serve in, or what spiritual gifts they have. If *anyone* is caught in sin, the church is to pursue their restoration.

And not only does the scope of restoration extend to all people, it also extends to any sin they may have committed. Notice again that verse 1 says, “*Even if anyone is caught in ANY trespass*” (*emphasis added*).

Just as we may find it easier to forgive certain people than others, so too we can find it easier to forgive certain sins than others. Maybe we find it easier to forgive sins that are “socially acceptable” or at least more commonplace. Or perhaps we find it easier to forgive sins that we too have struggled with ourselves. But we find it hard to forgive others when *their* sin seems darker or more egregious to us than anything we could imagine ourselves doing.

Now, as we see in the Old Testament Law which God gave to Israel, not all sins were dealt with the same way. Some sins had more serious consequences than others. So, it is certainly true that some sins are more challenging than others in the breadth and the depth of damage they cause. In emphasizing the need to forgive and restore the repentant sinner, we never want to be dismissive of the very real damage those sins may have inflicted on others. We want to care well for those who have been deeply hurt by sin.

But what sets believers apart from the world is that we can do both. We can deal seriously with the wounds of the offended while offering forgiveness and restoration to the repentant offender. With the help of Christ we do not need to neglect one in order to be faithful to the other because through His sacrifice Jesus provides both healing for the hurting as well as forgiveness for the sinner. In other words, Christ provides everything that is necessary for forgiveness and restoration to take place. Which is why, when believers are restored to one another, it brings God glory!

The words “anyone” and “any trespass” reflect the Gospel truth that Christ died to provide forgiveness AND restoration to all manner of people who have committed all manner of sin. So, for us to utterly refuse to restore a repentant believer based on *who* that person is or *what* they have done runs contrary to the Gospel we profess to believe.

Now, while the Scope of Restoration is All-Inclusive, the Responsibility of Restoration is Selective. That is our second insight from this passage:

## **2) The Responsibility of Restoration is Selective.**

While anyone can find themselves in need of restoration, not everyone is in a position to provide what restoration requires. Notice, verse 1 begins with the word “Brethren.” And by using that term it’s clear that Paul was addressing everyone in the church. But then Paul narrows the field. He says, “*You who are spiritual!*” which implies there were some in his audience who *may not* have been “spiritual.” So, he’s going from addressing every one of the brethren to now addressing a qualified subset of people.

But what does Paul mean by describing some of these believers as “spiritual”? Well, let’s begin to answer that question by ruling out what Paul does *not* mean. He does not mean those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, because being indwelt by the Holy Spirit is true of every believer. There would not be some believers who had the Holy Spirit and others who did not. No, everyone whom Paul could truly address as “brethren” were indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

But the fact that all the brethren *had* the Spirit does not mean all of them were walking *by* the Spirit. Remember, at the end of chapter 5 Paul warned all the brethren to walk by the Spirit so their lives would be characterized by holiness. So, the context of chapter 5 gives us the answer to the question “who are these people who are *spiritual?*” It’s those who are walking by the Spirit, not by the flesh.

And that makes complete sense, doesn’t it? Only those believers who are themselves walking by the Spirit are in a position to help others to walk by the Spirit. On the other hand, anyone

who is carrying out the deeds of the flesh is not in a position to help anyone else. In fact, rather than giving help, those who are not spiritual need help themselves to become spiritual.

Now, a word of clarification here... being “spiritual” is not synonymous with being “mature.” Even the newest convert can walk by the Spirit and bear fruit of the Spirit despite not having the maturity of faith that only comes with time and experience. As MacArthur states...

*“Any believer, at any point in his growth towards Christlikeness, can be a spiritual believer who helps a sinful believer who has fallen to the flesh.” (MacArthur, Galatians, pg. 177)*

In fact, since the letter to the Galatians was written within just a couple of years of Paul’s first missionary journey to that region, it’s doubtful that many in this letter’s original audience had been believers for very long. But they could still be believers who were walking by the Spirit. So, by the phrase “*you who are spiritual*” Paul is not talking about some higher order of Christians. Every believer should be a spiritual believer who walks by the Spirit bearing fruit of the Spirit.

Paul’s instruction to the Galatian church was that *walking by the Spirit* involves coming along side of brothers and sisters who are caught up in sin and working to return them to a state of spiritual well-being.

But notice just what this qualification of being “spiritual” means. It means our restoration of another actually begins with examination of ourselves. *Am I a spiritual believer? Am I walking by the Spirit, not according to the flesh?* Because I cannot be effective in removing the speck from my brother’s eye while I’ve got a beam sticking out of my own. I cannot help another to stand if I can’t keep from falling myself.

And so, being aware of the selective responsibility of restoration requires me to take stock of my own walk first. And that look in the spiritual mirror should cause me to recognize that, if I am walking by the Spirit, then it’s the Spirit – not me – who gets the glory, because I can’t live that way in my own strength. And that realization should humble me in my approach to others who are caught in sin.

That leads us to the 3<sup>rd</sup> insight about Restoration.

### **3) The Spirit of Restoration is Meekness.**

The command Paul gives us in verse 1 is to...

*...restore such a one... in a spirit of gentleness.*

So, notice that restoration is not just about *what* we do. It involves *how* we do it. Now, Paul could have simply said restore such a one *gently*. But by his repetition of the words “*you who are spiritual restore [...] in a spirit of gentleness” Paul is making an unmistakable link back to his teaching in chapter 5 where he called the Galatians to walk in the Spirit and bear fruit of the Spirit, of which gentleness is a part. This is why Paul calls upon those who are spiritual to restore the one caught in sin. It’s because only those who are spiritual are capable of bearing fruit of the Spirit in dealing gently with the repentant sinner.*

So, if we are to restore in a spirit of gentleness, we should ask ourselves what does “gentleness” look like? The Greek word for “gentleness” can also be translated as “meekness” as I’ve used in this third point this morning. And in 2 Corinthians 10:1 Paul describes Christ as being meek and gentle. So, to be gentle is to reflect the nature of our Savior.

In contrast, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:21...

*What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?*

So, there a *spirit of gentleness* is contrasted with harshness and vengeance. Bitterness and retaliation cannot co-exist with gentleness.

Perhaps one of the best ways for us to understand what biblical gentleness looks like is by seeing how it is used in Colossians 3:12. There Paul commands us to...

*...put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

Now, while those other characteristics that Paul lists are not necessarily synonymous with gentleness, they are clearly in harmony with gentleness. In other words, the opposites of those other traits would be incompatible with gentleness. We can’t be merciless and be gentle. We can’t be unkind and be gentle. We can’t be proud or impatient and be gentle.

Gentleness is antithetical to pettiness. It’s not condescending or self-righteous. Those approaches flow from a heart that sees the sinner as being *nothing like me*— as being beneath me and deserving of my contempt. But gentleness is driven by love and humility.

In James 3:13 we read...

*Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.*

So, where the Proverbs repeatedly speak of the fool as being hot-headed and abrasive, James presents gentleness as a quality of true wisdom. And because it bears evidence of wisdom,

gentleness is not to be confused with naivety or sentimental weakness. It is instead a wise and rational response to understanding the tremendous grace we ourselves have been shown in Christ. It reflects a humility that recognizes, “But for the grace of God, there go I as well.”

And that realization of our own spiritual fragility leads to a 4<sup>th</sup> insight from this passage. That being...

#### **4) The Warning of Restoration is Sobering.**

Take note of Paul’s warning at the end of verse 1...

*...each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*

Now, what’s clear about Paul’s statement here is that, in pursuing the restoration of another, we ourselves may face temptation to sin. What’s not clear is what exactly the source of that temptation might be. There are two possible dangers of temptation that Paul may have in mind here.

First, there is the possibility that we may be tempted by the other person’s sin to follow after them in committing the exact same offense. We need to be careful anytime we deal with the sin of another not to allow ourselves to be enticed by what they’ve done, especially if it is something that is naturally tempting to us. We need to be on guard and not expose ourselves unnecessarily to lurid stories of the person’s involvement with that sin so that we are not seduced by it ourselves.

So, one form of temptation is that we could be lured into committing the same sin. But there is another temptation that Paul mentioned specifically in the verse just prior to our passage. In chapter 5 verse 26 he warns...

*Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.*

Or as the ESV translates it...

*Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

This would be the temptation of dealing with a sinning brother from a position of arrogant self-righteousness. Looking down on them, feeling superior to them, or gloating over them, thinking we have a leg-up on them because we haven’t done what they did. We may become like the Pharisee in Luke 18 who prayed...

*God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.*

If our hearts are full of conceit or envy of others, if we desire to be exalted above others and thought much of, then we may very well cave into that temptation when someone else is brought low by their sin.

Nothing tempts the prideful human heart to think much of itself more than seeing the failings of others. There's just something about the fallen nature of man that causes us to want to compare ourselves to others. And we can always find someone whose moral performance is worse than our own to compare ourselves to. But 1 Corinthians 13:6 tells us...

*Love... does not rejoice... in unrighteousness.*

So, we should feel no satisfaction over the sins of others. We should not allow ourselves to feel proud because they fell and we didn't. And of course, such comparisons are a delusion anyway because in God's economy we aren't evaluated on the basis of how we compare to other fallen people, but on how we compare to God's perfect holy standards. And all of us come up short against that standard. This is why Paul says in the verse right after our passage – verse 3...

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

Whether Paul intended his warning to guard us from falling into the exact same sin or to keep us from the sin of self-righteous pride that leads to divisiveness, what we can say for certain is exactly what we said before, that our restoration of another actually begins with examination of ourselves. *Where am I weak? How may I be tempted to sin?* If we're going to be faithful in the call to restore a brother or sister, we need to keep a watchful eye on our own hearts.

Finally, we come to verse 2...

*Bear one another's burdens, and thereby... fulfill the law of Christ.*

The command to bear one another's burdens can certainly be understood in a broad sense of helping and providing for one another's temporal needs. But in the context of this passage, the clear implication is not caring for the *physical* needs of one another, but caring for each other *spiritually* – helping the fallen brother to get back up. Again, this command is about restoration.

We aren't merely to passively tolerate or put up with one another's spiritual struggles. We are to actively, strenuously help and support one another by laying our spiritual shoulders against each other's struggles.

And notice, Paul says that in doing so we thereby fulfill the law of Christ. What is this "law of Christ" Paul is referring to? It refers to Christ's summary of the Law that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as ourself.

And Jesus did not just command us to love one another, He exemplified how to do it so that in our obedience to this command we would be conformed to His image. As He Himself said in John 13 verses 34 and 35...

*<sup>34</sup> "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

This provides us with our final point this morning:

#### **5. The Motivation for Restoration is Obedience.**

Now, certainly, in restoring the other person, we are helping to return them to a state of obedience to God. But it's not the other person's obedience that Paul has in mind here – rather it's ours. As we restore a repentant brother or sister, we are fulfilling the Law of Christ. We are being obedient to Jesus' command to love one another. Which implies that when we ignore the call of restoration, we are being *disobedient* to our Lord and Savior.

Do you see why this current trend in the American church today of separating forgiveness from restoration is so dangerous? Neither the rut of tolerating sin nor the rut of being intolerant towards a repentant believer is in keeping with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, aren't unbelievers capable of doing those two extremes? Of tolerating sin, or writing off anyone who sins against them?

It is only by the power of Christ that believers can forgive and be forgiven. That we can undertake the difficult work of restoration even when the other person's sins have hurt us deeply.

When we've been wounded it can be easy for us to see the other person as un-deserving of restoration. Paul knew that. And so, he points our eyes towards Christ and uses the believer's desire to please and honor our Lord as the motivation to restore. After all, Jesus is always deserving of our obedience. And we can't look to Christ without being reminded of just how undeserving we ourselves are of the restoration He brought to us by grace.

As Ephesians 4:31 and 32 state...

*"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."*

*"Just as."* To the same extent, in like manner, and for the same outcome. Our devotion to Christ is revealed in the extent to which we obey Him in forgiving and restoring repentant sinners.

The good news of the Gospel is that whatever sin you may be caught up in, you can be forgiven. You too can be restored to God and to His people when, trusting Christ, you confess your sin, turn from it, and earnestly seek forgiveness.

But church, that promise of the Gospel can only be experienced if you and I are committed to the call of Galatians 6:1 & 2 the call to restore repentant sinners. With Christ's help and for His glory, may we be found faithful to that calling!