

Freedom – My Brother's Keeper

9/27/26

Galatians 6:1-10

Sunday AM

Over the past few weeks, we've been talking about one of the great themes in the Bible – **FREEDOM** – and we've discovered that true freedom begins at the cross where Paul explains that – *we've been crucified w/ Christ and we no longer live, but Christ lives in us.*

TBS – the Christian life isn't about trying harder to make ourselves acceptable to God, it's about trusting Jesus, who's already done for us what we could never do for ourselves. So, we don't obey God to get into His family; we trust/obey b/c we're already in His family.

Still, Christian freedom isn't just freedom **FROM** something; it's also freedom **FOR** something. This is where our culture often gets freedom wrong. We think freedom means independence to *do whatever we want and nobody has any right to tell us what to do.*

Sadly – we now live in a culture where – *mind your own business* – has become the 11th Commandment.

Yet Biblical freedom is quite different. Freedom in Christ doesn't isolate me from others; it connects me.

So, in Galatians 6 we find something very different. Paul says that if you're my brother in Christ, there are moments when your life actually is my business – not b/c I want to control you, but b/c I love you in Christ.

He explains that freedom doesn't say – *your life is none of my business.* It says – *b/c you're my brother in Christ, your walk w/ God matters to me.*

This takes us back to one of the oldest questions in the Bible. After Cain killed Abel, God asked – *where is your brother?* Cain replied – *am I my brother's keeper?* Galatians 6 answers: Yes, you are.

NOW – we're not their Savior or the H.S., but b/c they're our brother/sister, and b/c we belong to Jesus; we also belong to each other. So, Paul shows us what it looks like in (4) actions. He says we're to: **PICK Up. LIFT Up. SOW Up. SHOW Up.**

I **PICK UP** the Fallen

If someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person w/ a gentle spirit. But watch out, or you also may be tempted.

Now I don't know about you, but I don't enjoy confronting others – and even less, I don't enjoy being confronted. Yet there are moments when God's love requires us to step into each other's lives b/c we want God's best for each other.

So, when Paul says – *if someone is caught in a sin.* The idea is someone who's been overtaken by sin. It refers to a person who's gotten out of step w/ the H.S. and now needs help getting back into alignment w/ God.

This occurs b/c while the H.S. is living w/in us, we still battle w/ the flesh, So, if we feed things like bitterness, lust, pride, greed, or selfishness long enough, they'll eventually take us in a direction we never intended.

So, what are we to do? Paul says we're not to gossip about others, avoid them, embarrass them, expose or cancel them. Instead, *we're to seek to restore them.*

The word **restore** was used for setting a broken bone. The doctor identified what was broken then set the bone in correct alignment for it to heal. This is biblical confrontation – working to restore what’s broken.

Biblical restoration isn’t pretending the bone isn’t broken. It’s loving others enough to help set it straight.

Sadly though, I fear we can become quite gifted at identifying who’s fallen yet very poor at helping them stand again. **Listen** – the church should never be better at identifying who fallen than we are helping people stand again. Truth is – it’s easy to point out the fallen, but true H.S. filled people help others up.

And notice Paul’s next words – *you who are spiritual*. This doesn’t refer to a person who knows the most Bible or has been in church the longest. It refers to the person presently walking in the Spirit.

IOW – before you confront somebody else’s flesh, make sure you’re not operating in yours.

This is why Paul says restoration must occur gently. **Gentleness** is a fruit of the Spirit – so we must be in the Spirit to share it. *It’s having the strength to speak truth to help w/out using it to wound*. It means confronting spiritual bondage honestly while staying close enough to help the person make things right.

Paul continues – *watch yourself, or you also may be tempted*. IOW – never try to restore someone from a position of superiority. Don’t approach them thinking – *how could you do that?* Approach them realizing – *apart from God’s grace, I could’ve done worse*.

So, being my brother’s keeper means that when someone falls – we help to pick them up. We don’t excuse their sin, but neither do we abandon them. We love them enough to tell them the truth and then stay close enough to help them get back on their feet.

Who loves you enough to tell you when you’re wandering – and do they have permission to do it?

II **LIFT UP** the Heavy Laden

...carry one another’s burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

The word **burden** describes something excessive and crushing as in something too difficult for one person to carry alone. **LBH** – sometimes life gets heavy.

Marriage gets heavy. Parenting gets heavy. Financial pressures get heavy. Caring for aging parents gets heavy. And in these moment even strong, godly people can begin to buckle under the weight.

When this occurs, Scripture says we’re not to stand by and offer commentary, but get underneath the weight to help bear the load. See – God never intended for us to carry every crushing burden alone. So, being my brother’s keeper means – *I refuse to let you carry alone what we can carry together*.

In doing this, Paul says we fulfill – *the law of Christ* – which is *loving others as Jesus loves us*. This means we’re to **get under the weight** to help solve a problem, meet a need, offer accountability, or give support.

But v. 5 also says – *each person should carry his own load*. Is Paul contradicting himself? **NO**. He used (2) unique words. In v. 2, **burden** refers to a crushing weight. In v. 5, **load** refers to personal responsibility.

Think of two hikers. Each carrying his own backpack. Now, if your backpack weighs 75 lbs. b/c you packed a cast-iron skillet and ½ the garage – that’s your load. I’ll pray for you, but I’m not carrying it. But if a boulder falls on you, that’s different. Now you’ve got a burden, and I’m getting under it w/ you.

In Biblical community, we help w/ what's crushing others while still carrying what God's entrusted to us. Then Paul warns – *If anyone thinks they're something when they're not, they deceive themselves.*

The reason Paul inserted this warning is b/c helping someone who's fallen or who's carrying a burden can easily tempt us to feel superior to them.

Point – God hasn't called you to run someone else's race – He's called you to faithfully run yours but humbly and selflessly help others along the way.

So being my brother's keeper doesn't mean looking down on somebody. It means walking beside them to pick them up should they fall and lift them up when the load of life becomes too heavy.

III **SOW UP** Instead of Down

Don't be deceived: God can't be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; and whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Paul brings us right back to the war b/w the flesh and the H.S. in **Galatians 5** b/c every day, we're feeding on one or the other. The flesh pulls us downward toward our ambitions/appetites while the H.S. leads us upward toward trust, surrender, and holiness to Jesus.

Here's the principle: Don't sow down to the flesh. SOW up to the Spirit.

To do this, Paul says – *don't be deceived* – b/c we're good at convincing ourselves that the rules don't apply to us. We think we can sow corn and harvest apples – yet *God won't be mocked*. Thus, while we can fool ourselves and other people, we'll never fool God.

Why? B/c God has built a principle into life that's as certain as gravity – ***we will reap whatever we've sown.*** Meaning every choice is a seed. Every thought, habit, and word are seeds. Our money/time are seeds. Every click/post are seeds.

Which brings us to the law of the harvest. The law of the harvest works in (3) ways: ¹We reap **WHAT** we sow. That is – we can't plant bitterness and reap intimacy – or sow sin and reap blessings. But if we sow godliness – it'll shape us into the image of Jesus.

²We reap **LATER** than we sow. This is where sin becomes deceptive. Sin deceives us b/c consequences are often delayed. But just b/c the harvest hasn't arrived doesn't mean the seed isn't growing. Good or bad, there's always a payday someday for either blessing or destruction. It depends on what we plant.

³We reap **MORE** than we sow. Seeds multiply. Thoughts become actions, actions become habits, and habits shape character. **Sin compounds – but so does obedience.** One prayer, one morning in God's Word, or one conversation w/ your child may seem small, but over time these seeds multiply.

This is why we **SOW** up. We're to feed what draws us toward God rather than what pulls us toward ourselves. Why? B/c the flesh promises life but only produces decay; while the sowing to the Spirit calls us to surrender but produces life.

So, being my brother's keeper means we care about the seeds each other are planting b/c we care about the harvest we're all going to reap. Who are you helping and who is helping you?

IV **SHOW UP** Until the Harvest

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we don't give up.

Why does Paul say this? ***It's b/c doing the right thing gets exhausting when you can't see the results.***

Like when we pray and nothing changes. When we disciple and our apprentices stray away. When we parent faithfully and our kids wander. In these moments it's hard not to think – *Does this matter?*

Paul says – *it matters and don't grow weary*. Can I just say that sometimes we just get tired. In fact, there are days when we don't need another inspiration quote – we just need a nap. And it's in these moments Paul encourages us to ***keep showing up***.

Think about a farmer planting seed. One day he plants yet sees no results for his labor for weeks. This doesn't mean nothing is happening. Beneath the soil, roots are forming and life is developing. Spiritually, some of God's greatest work occurs when/where we can't see it. So, **never confuse invisible w/ inactive**.

Truth – we don't know which prayer, conversation, or act of kindness may come just before the breakthru, so we're to keep showing up. And if we do, Paul says – *at the proper time we will reap a harvest*. Maybe not immediately, but eventually. Until then, our charge is to be faithful; while God's job is to be fruitful. Our responsibility is to show up, while the harvest belongs solely to God.

Think of it like chopping down a tree. Nobody knows which swing of the axe will finally bring the tree down. It wasn't just the last swing – but the 100's of swings before it too.

This is why faithfulness matters. We don't know which prayer, conversation, encouragement, invitation, or act of obedience may be the one God uses. ***We don't know which swing will be the last one – so keep swinging***.

Which brings us to Paul's final thought – *as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers*.

v. 9 speaks of the ***proper time*** for harvest; while v. 10 speaks of the ***opportunity*** to do good. Both carry the idea of an appointed season. Meaning – God controls the season of harvest; while we're responsible for the season of opportunity.

Now – in closing, let me ask – not a theoretical, but personal question: Who is your brother? Who are the people you refuse to let fall alone, hurt alone, wander alone, or quit alone?

And maybe the harder question is this: Who is your keeper? Who knows you well enough to recognize when you're wandering, strong enough to tell you the truth, loving enough to help carry your burden, and faithful enough to keep showing up?

To do this we have to learn to **PICK** up when a brother falls. **LIFT** up when the weight gets too heavy. **SOW** up when choices need to be made; and **SHOW** up and keep showing up until Jesus returns.