

XLVI. Traveling Route 66: The Bible in Biblical Perspective
The Journey with Christ, the Promised One
“Galatians—The Book of Gospel Clarity”

Dr. Harry Reeder

February 24, 2013 – Evening Sermon

We will start this study by looking at Galatians 1. Since we are going through the New Testament it would be good to make sure that you not only grasp our journey with Christ as we take one book of the Bible each Sunday night, having already done the Old Testament, the journey to Christ, but that you all know your books of the Bible. So we're at Galatians now and what have we covered? Not counting the Old Testament, we've covered Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians and II Corinthians. Now we're at Galatians. When I was a youth pastor we used to have sword drills. I would give a reference in Genesis, then Matthew and then I'd throw in Hezekiah 3:4. Some kind of looked at me a little strangely and this wonderful little Jamaican girl who had come to Christ that year said “You know I was just reading that last week in my devotions.” I didn't have the heart to say “I don't know what Bible you're reading because it's not in there.” The way I taught the youth to remember the next set was to remember General Electric Power Company – G.E.P.C. – Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. So we'll be adding one every single night.

Now let's go to the book of Galatians where the Apostle Paul, again does an exposition of the Gospel as he did in Romans, but this time he is doing Galatian's exposition in response to the attack on the Gospel and the attack upon himself, his own ministry, the churches in Galatia. In your Bible, six different times the Apostle Paul uses his own personal testimony. It would be good to go to each one of these times, write them down and as you put all six together you start to get a feel for how he was converted, what happened after he was converted, and the process that the Lord brought him through. He was probably converted around 33 to 34 A.D., about two to four years after the ascension of Christ. After he is converted the Lord puts him through a process and you'll see some of that as we go through Galatians.

The other thing we'll be dealing with in this study is the Galatian heresy which was kind of an intentional commitment to what was called the Heresy of the Judaizers. I'll explain that a little bit more, later in the study. You would understand it as a Gospel error of legalism. In the Gospel preaching there are two errors that the New Testament warns us about. Think of the Gospel as the road that we travel. On one side is a ditch that you want to avoid. On the other side is a ditch that you want to avoid. One ditch that you want to avoid is legalism. That means that God's Law and your relationship with it and your obedience is necessary to merit your salvation or merit the efficiency of your salvation. In other words, you're saved by the merits you accrue through obedience to God's Law. So if you're not properly obedient then God can't save you. So instead of obedience being the evidence of your salvation it becomes the ground of your salvation. That is called the error of legalism. That is exactly what Paul is confronting with the Galatians.

There is another error and I John, Jude, II Peter, and Romans warns against it. It is a warning against the opposite problem, the opposite side of the road, another ditch and that is known as libertinism. Libertinism is the notion that I'm saved by grace and that's

wonderful condition so I can live like I want and I've still got remission. In other words, since being a Christian means I'm not saved by my works then it really doesn't matter what I do. Think of it this way. You get a bucket of sin and two buckets of grace to overcome the sin, then if you want more grace just go sin more. The more you sin the more grace you get. I want four buckets of grace so then let's go get two buckets of sin so I can get four buckets of grace. That's the idea behind libertinism and it's a callous view of sin and a wrong view of obedience.

We want to say no to both of those – legalism and libertinism. We want to say no to legalism that I'm saved by my obedience. We want to say no to libertinism that in fact that now that I'm saved, my obedience doesn't matter. The Apostle Paul helps us say no to both of those in the book of Galatians, although primarily he is dealing with the error of legalism that had worked its way into the church at Galatia. Let's start by looking at the opening verses in Galatians 1.

Galatians 1:1-5 says *[1] Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—[2] and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: [3] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, [4] who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, [5] to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.* Now watch what he says.

Galatians 1:6-10 says *[6] I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—[7] not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. [8] But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed (anathema). [9] As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.* (So two different times he calls down the malediction of eternal judgment and condemnation upon anyone who would distort the Gospel.) *[10] For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

Paul is basically telling them “Don't come to me with who said what for when it comes to the issue of the truth of God's Word in general and the Gospel in particular, I am not a man pleaser. I must remain faithful to God and declare to you the whole counsel of God. I must deliver unto you what is of first importance (which he said to the Corinthians) and that's the Gospel because the Gospel is foundational to every other doctrine, every Christian duty in life and every Christian endeavor to life.” If you get the Gospel wrong everything else will be wrong. While there are secondary doctrines that we can still get wrong and people will still be saved, this is one that you can't get wrong. For it brings you from your sin to trust fully and alone in Jesus Christ. Now let's do a little house keeping around the epistle to the Galatians.

Who wrote it? We saw this in the opening verses of Galatians and that is Paul. Paul, who has been called of God, affirmed by the church and empowered by the Spirit of God. Paul also gives a little of his testimony. Galatians 1:11-16 says *[11] For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. [12] For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.* (In other words, the risen Savior taught Paul personally the Gospel.) *[13] For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the*

church of God violently and tried to destroy it. [14] And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. [15] But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, [16] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; [17] nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

So he is letting you in on that after his conversion he was taken out across the Jordan into Arabia, the area of the wilderness which was the same area that Jesus went out into when He was tempted after His baptism. Then the Lord Himself teaches Paul and disciples him just as He did the other disciples. You'll notice next that Paul was discipled for three years which was how long Jesus discipled the other Apostles.

Galatians 1:18-24 says *[18] Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas (another name for Peter) and remained with him fifteen days. [19] But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. [20] (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) [21] Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. [22] And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. [23] They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." [24] And they glorified God because of me.* Paul's testimony doesn't stop there.

Galatians 2:1-2 says *[1] Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem (his second visit to Jerusalem) with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. [2] I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.* You don't have to be a Presbyterian to get to heaven but this is one of the biggest reasons I became a Presbyterian. It was the only system I found that you could do what the Bible commanded you to do and that is that every person, member, church and leader is accountable to somebody. Here is someone who is saved by God's electing grace, discipled by the Lord personally in the wilderness for three years, then fourteen years and then as Paul begins his ministry he goes and submits to the Apostles to make sure that he had not run in vain. Here you see his submission to those who had gone before him, the Apostles whom the Lord had put in place directly for His earthly ministry. Let's continue.

Galatians 2:3-10 says *[3] But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. [4] Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—[5] to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. [6] And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. [7] On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised [8] (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised (the Jews) worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), [9] and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to*

Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. [10] Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Everything seems to be wonderful where he's in submission and everyone is honoring each other and affirming each other's ministry but now look at what happens. Galatians 2:11-21 says *[11] But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. [12] For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. [13] And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. [14] But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"*

[15] We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; [16] yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

[17] But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! [18] For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. [19] For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. (In other words, the Law had a good purpose for it brought me to an end of myself and it sent me to Jesus. It wasn't my obedience that saved me. The Law showed me I was a sinner and I couldn't save myself that I might live to God when I came to Christ.) [20] I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. [21] I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

In other words, if my obedience to the Law could save me or was necessary for my salvation then why did Jesus come under the Law and die for all of my sins? Why didn't God just say to me "Harry, start doing better" but He gave His Son to save me, so I am not saved by the works of the Law. I'm saved by the finished work of Christ. Why does the Apostle Paul give us this piece of his testimony here? I'll answer that in just a moment but I want to go a step further here to make sure we have our hands around this epistle.

The second question is where did Paul write Galatians? I'm not sure for we have two possibilities. He either wrote it from Antioch or from Ephesus. I'm not going to solve it yet but I will tell you what I think in just a moment. Suffice to say Biblical scholars are divided on this. Why are they divided? The reason they are not sure where he wrote this is because they are not really sure who he wrote this to. Who were the objects of this letter? Was it to the Northern Galatians or was it to the Southern Galatians? Did Paul write this to the churches in South Galatia which he had planted or did he write this to the churches in Northern Galatia which likely Peter had planted? Which one did he write it to? If he had written it to the Southern churches then that means he probably wrote this in Antioch, after the first missionary journey. Who planted the churches in South Galatia? Paul did on his first missionary journey and when he finished planting those churches (in Lystra, Derby etc), what did he do? He and Barnabas came back to Antioch and it's possible he wrote to these Galatia churches.

If that's not the case and he wrote to the Northern Galatia churches, then that means he wrote during his second missionary journey while he was at Ephesus, before he went over for his Macedonian call. So where and how did he write? I don't want to necessarily come down on any side here but let me go to a fourth question.

When did Paul write this? When he writes it depends again on where he was when he wrote it and who wrote it. If he was writing from Ephesus during his two to three year ministry there and to the Northern Galatia churches then that means he writes sometime between 54 and 56 A.D. But if he's writing to the Southern Galatia churches, from Antioch then that means he wrote this between 46 and 48 A.D., much earlier. In fact, if he's writing to the Southern Galatia churches from Antioch during that time frame then very likely this is the very first epistle he wrote. It would even predate other epistles that we think he might have written first, such as Thessalonians.

The last question is why did Paul write this? We can see why he is writing this, from his testimony. There are certain people that have come to these churches in Galatia and here's what they are saying. Paul taught you wrong. You can't be saved in Jesus until you first submit to Moses, the Law and circumcision. You can't be baptized into Christ and salvation until first, you are circumcised. Once you are circumcised you embrace the Law and then you can come to Christ, but as a Gentile in Galatia you can't be saved until you become a Jew. Embrace the Law of God with obedience and particularly the requirement of circumcision. Now we see why the Apostle Paul brings out in his ministry why he wouldn't let Titus be circumcised even though one of Titus' parents was a Jew.

So you are probably thinking "Harry, what is it that finally turns it for you?" This problem with the Judaizers that you have to become a Jew in order to become a Christian, had to be addressed in the early church. This is actually addressed in your Bible of whether someone had to become a Jew, embrace the Law through circumcision and become obedient through Moses' direction and the Law in order to be baptized unto Christ to become a Christian. This is found in Acts 15. It was the first general assembly of the church and all of the churches sent their commissioners to it. They met and dealt with a number of issues. Those who said you had to become a Jew made their case. Those who said circumcision was fulfilled in Christ and just as a Jew who is in Christ is no longer bound by ceremonial laws then Gentiles do not have to submit to them in order to come to Christ, made their case. Then the entire general assembly stood and affirmed the fact that you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone and Christ is our circumcision.

That's why that contributes to my decision on who this is written to and when it's written, because as you read the book of Galatians the Apostle Paul never refers to the Jerusalem council. Would not you if you were handling a theological error, a heresy, and the church had already spoken to that heresy, quote the church to that heresy? Wouldn't you say "Galatians, why are you doing this? The church and its leadership have already decided this. You don't have to be circumcised to be a Christian." Paul never refers to the Jerusalem council so that tells me that this probably took place before the Jerusalem council, while he was still at Antioch after the first missionary journey. That's what I believe. So if he is at Antioch after the first missionary journey then the Southern Galatia churches were the ones that were in existence at that time. The Northern ones had not

been planted yet. Paul had already planted these Southern Galatia churches with Barnabas during this time.

Now Paul has come back to Antioch and the very problem they will have to address at the Jerusalem council in just months or perhaps a year, has already hit the churches in South Galatia. In other words, right behind him these Judaizers had come in and said “This thing that Paul is preaching, this salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone is not true. You have to be obedient to the Law which means you have to be circumcised and until you’re circumcised you can’t become a Christian.” So, Paul is taking that on that issue, even before the Jerusalem council speaks to it. So I believe Galatians is written sometime between 44 to 48 A.D., preferably around 45 to 46 A.D., while he is at Antioch, prior to the Jerusalem council and prior to his second missionary journey.

By the way, after his second missionary journey, after the Jerusalem council, Paul says to Barnabas, “Let’s go back and tell them what the council said.” In other words, he is going to go back to the Southern Galatia churches and he’ll tell them “Remember that heresy and I wrote to you to correct it. The church has now spoken and Barnabas and I have now come to tell you that what I wrote, that epistle to you, was accurate and the church has affirmed it.” I believe their findings were given to these churches after the book of Galatians not prior. If the council had already taken place I believe Paul would have referred to it in this letter because he refers to Peter, James and John, all of whom would have been at that council, which I believe was yet to occur.

So I believe he wrote Galatians from Antioch after his first missionary journey. I believe he was writing to the Southern Galatia churches and that he wrote it around 44 to 46 A.D. Why did he write it? It was to defend the Gospel of grace and he had to defend his own apostolic ministry.

What did he write? I’ll give you an outline and then I’ll sum up what I’ve brought to you. There is the prologue in Galatians 1:1-5. Then there is Paul’s Gospel rebuke of error which takes place in Galatians 1:6-9. Then there is his appeal to the Gospel truth in Galatians 1:10 through Galatians 2:21 which we read earlier. Then comes his Gospel apologetic where he goes back to show that the Law can’t save you and you’re not saved by the works of the Law. That begins in Galatians 3:1 through Galatians 5:12. Then Paul concludes his last major section talking about the Gospel life. What are the deeds of the flesh? What’s the fruit of the Spirit? What do you do when someone gets caught in a sin? How do you minister to them in the church?

Paul walks them through those issues and by so doing he highlights a number of things. The first thing he does is enunciates the Gospel of saving grace where we are not saved by our works. That doesn’t mean we’re not saved to good works but we’re not saved by our works. We are saved by the finished work of Jesus Christ. You are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Now is grace and faith ever alone? No faith is manifested through works. Grace has a changed life. If any man is in Christ he is a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17) but the works of a Christian are not the ground of their salvation. They are the evidence of their salvation. The right use of the Law is the Law is used evangelistically to show you that you’re a sinner and you can’t save yourself. Then it is used as a director. It has no power but it tells us how to love the Lord and one another. It gives direction to our Christian life but no power for the Christian life.

The second thing he has in place is a reputation of legalism. You are not saved by your works. It says that Abraham was saved by grace through faith and he quotes Genesis 15:6 that says *Abraham believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness*. When did Abraham get saved? It was in Genesis 15. When did Abraham get circumcised? It is found in Genesis 17. Even your father Abraham was saved apart from circumcision. Obedience to the Law? When did the Law come? It came through Moses. When did Abraham get saved? He was saved 430 years before Moses. So it can't be the Law that saves you. It can't be circumcision that saves you and all I need to tell you is to look at your daddy Abraham. He was saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone but because he was saved when God spoke His Word, whatever that Word was He wanted him to be obedient. His obedience was the evidence of his salvation, not the cause of his salvation.

This brings us to number three. He is saved how? He is justified that is declared innocent by faith alone. Let's look at Galatians 3:1-9 which says *[1] O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. [2] Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? [3] Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? [4] Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? [5] Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—[6] just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? [7] Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. [8] And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” [9] So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

In other words, who are the children of Abraham? It is not those who are circumcised in the flesh, but those who are circumcised in the heart. So my dear friends, you are children of Abraham, if God has given you a new heart. In what I'm about to say I'll probably come across as controversial here. I believe that God is going to do a great work of grace among the Jewish people before Jesus returns but I do not believe that in God's economy at any point, is there a return to the temple, the sacrificial system and circumcision. I am amazed at all the Christians who are fascinated at becoming Jewish. I love to study those feasts but they hold no appeal to me. I have the One they pointed to, Jesus. It would be obvious that circumcision would not appeal but neither does the Passover. By the way, we don't really know what they did. I know people will tell you they do know but go talk with Orthodox Jewish people for they will tell you they don't really know how they did the Passover.

I am all for Jewish evangelism, the music, the teaching and going back to the Old Testament to see how it points to Christ, but this fascination that we need Jewish churches, I don't see. I understand when we have language that separates us for you have to have a church in a heart language but we don't live under the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant was the foundation for the New Covenant. You live in the fullness of the New Covenant in Christ and that's what Paul is telling the Galatians. Praise God for His Law for it pointed to the Savior and it tells you that you can't save yourself and that you need a Savior but you come to Christ, not to the Law for salvation. You don't even go to the moral law for salvation. The moral law sends you to your knees. Mount Sinai sends you

to Mount Calvary. Jesus then says “Now you can use My commandments because you’re not trying to be saved through them. You’re just living them because you love Me, your Savior.”

It is this affirmation of justification by faith alone which then leads to the whole doctrine of Gospel sanctification. Let’s look at Galatians 5:16-21 which says [16] *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17] For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. [18] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. [19] Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* This profile kind of describes the culture we live in today and it shows the absence of the Spirit of God, the deeds of the flesh. What happens when the Spirit of God is poured out upon you when you come to Christ by faith?

Galatians 5:22-26 says [22] *But the fruit* (notice it’s singular, not plural – this isn’t an a la carte menu where you get to pick what you want, this is all together) *of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. [25] If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. [26] Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

What is Gospel sanctification? It is by faith in Christ, surrendering to the power of the Holy Spirit and then seeking to honor Jesus. Certainly His Law shows me how to do that but I’m not under the Law. I may have the Law and the works of the Law written upon my new heart, but I’m not under the Law. I’m under grace. Now I can use God’s Law because I have a Savior and it’s not the Law. I also have the Holy Spirit and not the flesh. Put no confidence in the flesh for it the Spirit who gives life. My words are Spirit and life, Jesus said. The fruit of the Spirit is a wonderful study. Why are those nine things there the way that they are? It’s a marvelous study and I hope to do it sometime if God will allow me to do it.

Then there is the Gospel relationship of justification and then sanctification. I want to refer back to Galatians 2:20. What is the key to the Christian life? Galatians 2:20 says [20] *I have been crucified with Christ. (I’m dead) It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Paul, this just isn’t making sense. Being a linear guy, this just crawls all over me. Are you dead or living? You said you died and then you said the life I live. Are you dead or living? Paul would look at me and say ‘yes’. I died to sin, self, Satan and the world and I not only did it at my conversion but I do it every day and I live by the power of the Son of God.

So the Christian life isn’t that you sit over here and wait until the Holy Spirit moves you to obedience. No, you live your life and flee sin. You pursue Christ. You live your life but you don’t do it in the power of the flesh. I die to myself and I don’t put my trust in my obedience. I put my trust in Christ. I endeavor in my life simply to lift up

Christ or as it says in the book of Kings, “O Lord, our eyes are on You.” That of course is the Gospel life in the Spirit and then he talks about the Gospel life in the church.

What do we do in a Gospel church when people get caught up in their sins because Christians do get entangled in sin? Christians do fall back. They don’t fall away but they do fall back. They do fall down. So what happens? Here is what we do. Galatians 6:1-2 says [1] *Brothers, if anyone is caught in **any** transgression (and it seems to have overtaken them), 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* (that we love one another).

People say to me “Pastor did you read how Paul wrote the ‘love one another’? Be devoted to one another, care for one another, love one another, pray for one another... Isn’t that great?” I say yes but Paul didn’t start that. Jesus did. Jesus said in John 13:35, [35] *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* So he commands us to serve and love one another.

Paul goes on to say in Galatians 6:3-6 [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.* As a teacher of the Word I am well supported here and that I’m grateful for but what is Paul saying here?

Here is what should happen. When one of us falls down into sin we go to them and we seek to restore them. The Southern translation would say “ya’ll who are spiritual” which means there is a plural there. Very seldom have I ever singularly assisted a brother or sister caught in a sin. It’s always been a team effort, almost always. We are to seek to restore them. Restore means to put back straight. It’s where we get the orthopedic term of setting bones back in place. We restore them.

I had one of these great moments in baseball where I was pitching and I needed to go to the plate because the catcher had fallen down, to take the throw and tag the runner out. I slipped and fell and heard my arm snap. There it was in an “L” shape. I’ll never forget that. I walked two miles home and as my mom saw me she said “Now son, take it easy it’s probably just sprained.” That’s called a motherly lie to try and calm her son down for a moment. They took me to the doctor where we had to wait about an hour and a half for the doctor to get there for he had been called in from a game of golf and he wasn’t happy about getting called in. The doctor looked at my dad and said “We need to put him to sleep.” My dad said “We do? Does that mean he needs to stay overnight?” The doctor said “Yes.” My dad said “How much will that cost?” The doctor told him and my dad said “Is there another way?” The doctor said “I can give him a shot” and he pulled out the biggest needle that has ever existed in all of humanity and put it in my arm. He went away for fifteen minutes and literally got up on the table, put one knee in, grabbed my arm and pulled it twice. Then it was back in order.

Why am I telling you that? Sometimes it hurts to get things back in order but God’s grace is sufficient. I’m glad that was my doctor that got up on that table and not my daddy. *You who are spiritual*, that’s Paul’s term for maturity. Get a team of mature people and bring the Gospel remedy to people. That’s what Gospel churches do. We may have to eventually move to church discipline in the elders, but what do we do? We reach out when a member of the body is hurting. We want to help and get it back straight.

Very seldom can you do it by yourself. Get some mature people around you and help that person get back straight and point them to Jesus all the time. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for this marvelous epistle. How rich it is! We could literally spend three to five years studying it, so please forgive us of our course that has said we're going to take a 50,000 foot view. May Your people be encouraged to go to its depths and hear its wonderful call, away from legalism, yet not laying a trap for libertinism, but reminding us that we do not want to do the deeds of the flesh. We surrender to the Spirit, who has been given to us by faith in Christ that we may walk in the Spirit, dead to ourselves, living unto Christ, knowing it is not our life that saves us but Jesus, who now gives us a new life. I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.