

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 7TH, 2024 // GALATIANS

## THE LAW OF CHRIST (GALATIANS 6:1-5) WE ARE FREED TO LOVE OTHERS

Paul's letter to the Galatians was written to remind the church that **freedom comes by grace** (Ephesians 2:8) **and not the law.**

- To end his letter, Paul will now indicate that through the gospel of grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, **we are free from self-centeredness and self-righteousness so we can love others.**

### "IF SOMEONE IS OVERTAKEN IN ANY WRONGDOING"

*Overtaken* communicates the idea of someone *falling into sin*, being **overtaken in a weakness of the flesh and not habitual, premeditated, or deliberate sinful nature.**

- There is a difference between those described here (6:1) and those described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:13, where **we are told not to fellowship with unrepentant sinners claiming to be Christian.**

### "YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL, RESTORE [THEM]"

**Our brothers and sisters who have been overtaken need to be restored.** The verb used is a medical term for setting a fractured bone ("*to put in order*") and applied to the apostles mending their nets ("*to restore to its former condition*") in Mark 1:19.

- We cannot ignore the need for restoration or take delight in it.**

### "SO THAT YOU ALSO WON'T BE TEMPTED"

Restoration is to be sought **gently, biblically, and after careful self-evaluation.**

- The mature Christian attempting to restore a fellow Believer must do so **following the example of Christ** (Matthew 18:15-17), after **honest self-evaluation** (Matthew 7:3-5), and with a **gentleness born out of our own weaknesses and propensity to sin.**

## THE LAW OF CHRIST FULFILLS THE LAW OF MOSES

The Judaizers required the Gentiles wanting to come into the faith **to adopt all of the Jewish customs and laws in order to be part of the family of God, which created burdens.**

- Essentially, Paul says, **"You want to require people to fulfill the law? Here is the law you need to worry about fulfilling; bearing one another's burden to fulfill the law of Christ."**

### "IN THIS WAY YOU WILL FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST"

Jesus told the scribes who tried to trick him that the most important commandment is to **love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.** Then, similarly, **we are to love our neighbor as ourselves** (Mark 12:28-31). Jesus went on to say that **all will know that we are his disciples by the way we love one another** (John 13:34-35).

### "CARRY ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS"

Verse 2 does not say, **"Expect everyone else to bear your burdens,"** which is *self-focused* and causes pride, frustration, discouragement, and depression.

- We all have burdens, and God does not mean for us to carry them alone. We should be *others-focused*, **looking for a burden to bear and bearing it** (Philippians 2:4).

## A BACKPACK VERSUS A HEAVY BURDEN

There is no contradiction between verses 4-5 ("*carrying his own load*"), and verse 2 ("*carry one another's burdens*").

- There is an allowable pride in meeting our responsibilities, because it frees us up to be able to help others. **We must not compare ourselves to others and become deceived into believing that we are better than them.**

## REAPING WHAT WE SOW (GALATIANS 6:6-10)

### "SHARE ALL HIS GOOD THINGS"

In the context of bearing one another's burdens, **Paul writes to make sure that those who are ministering to them are not neglected.**

- Though this has the idea of financial support, it is not limited to it. Instead, it communicates **the giving of a portion of all physical goods to the ministers not as a payment but through thankfulness and generosity.**

### YES, THERE ARE ABUSES OF THIS PRINCIPLE!

Paul taught often that **those who feed you and bless you spiritually should be supported by you financially** (1 Corinthians 9:11, 9:14; 1 Timothy 5:17).

- Just because some take advantage of generosity does not mean we must stop being generous. **Use wisdom and discernment in your generosity, but trust that God will bless your obedience.**

### "WHATEVER A PERSON SOWS HE WILL ALSO REAP"

To back up his teaching, **Paul shared the concept of reaping and sowing with those who were hesitant to share all good things with those who teach them.**

- This imagery of planting and harvesting is communicating that **giving all good things with those ministering isn't throwing goods away, it's planting.**

### "GOD IS NOT MOCKED"

*Mocked* means to **disregard as if it is worthless and not worthy to be taken into account or to turn up one's nose.**

- Paul says this here to essentially say, **"You can snub God if you choose, but that will never change truth."** The **"law of the harvest"** (*reap what you sow*) is a fact that is unchanging and should not be ignored.

## A FARMER REAPS WHAT HE HAS SOWN

Though **the relationship between what is planted and harvested is exponential, you do not harvest exactly what was planted.** Planting one apple seed does not give you a hundred apple seeds but a hundred apples.

- When we sow to the Spirit, we reap spiritual things, and when we sow to the flesh, the flesh will increase in size and strength.**

## OUR TENDENCY IS TO BE SELFISH

Paul gives us two principles applicable to doing good: **don't lose heart and don't neglect those who belong to the household of faith.**

- When the work is hard and painful, it is **easy to lose heart, but it is dangerous when the work is unfinished and unrewarded.** Not losing heart, **we do good with our resources, especially to those in God's family.**

## NEW CREATION (GALATIANS 6:11-18)

### A PERSONAL TOUCH

As was customary for Paul and the ancient world, **he personally wrote the end portion of the letter,** instead of a scribe, to authenticate his letter.

- Paul points out **his writing was done with large letters.** Some believe this was just to **add emphasis**, while others believe **this was due to poor eyesight.**

### THE SELFISH MOTIVES OF THE LEGALISTS

Paul ends by **contrasting the impure motives of the Judaizers with his proper motives.** The legalists wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised through selfish motives **because it made them look good to the other Jewish believers,** and they wanted to **avoid persecution from other legalists and Rome** by advocating for obedience under the law and not the work of the cross.

### MISPLACED EMPHASIS

The Judaizers put such an emphasis on the external practices exhibited by those in the family of God that they neglected the internal (Matthew 23:27-28).

- The external practices of circumcision or uncircumcision were not what was necessary. **What is important is the internal transformative power of the Holy Spirit.**

### SERVANT OF CHRIST AND NOT THE LAW

Paul closes his letter by claiming, **"[He] bear[s] on [his] body the marks of Jesus."** Paul is not saying that he literally has nail marks in his hands and feet and a pierced side, but that he bears the marks or "brand," indicating he belongs to Christ.

- Paul identified with Jesus through his suffering** (Philippians 3:10-11).

## A NEW CREATION

- We must be careful not to impose unbiblical external practices on those wanting to be a part of the family of God.
- Our works should be a byproduct of transformation, but they are not a guaranteed indication of transformation.**
- Christianity is not something we do for God, but it is something God does in us.**