

Faith Fellowship Church
Notes for Cross Training 5/12/20
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Bear One Another's Burdens

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, 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. 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. 7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Restoring those overtaken in sin.

If a man is overtaken in any trespass: Paul recognized that there may be those among the Christians in Galatia who had been overtaken in a trespass. Paul didn't seem to exclude the overtaken one from the brethren, yet they should never stay in the place of being overtaken.

Paul's wording here speaks not of a determined and hardened sinner. Instead, the idea is of someone who has fallen into sin, finding themselves trapped in a place they never thought they would be. Overtaken "Contains the idea of falling. It is not the deliberate, the planned, aspect of sin that is stressed here, but rather the unwitting element. Mistake rather than misdeed is the force of the word, though without absolution of responsibility." (Ridderbos, cited in Morris)

Restore such a one: The overtaken ones need to be restored. They are not to be ignored. They are not to be excused. They are not to be destroyed. The goal is always restoration.

Stott on restore: "The verb is instructive. Kataritzo means to 'put in order' and so to 'restore to its former condition'... It was used in secular Greek as a medical term for setting a fractured or dislocated bone. It is applied in Mark 1:19 to the apostles who were 'mending' their nets."

This job of restoration is often neglected in the church. We have a tendency to either pretend the sin never happened, or we tend to react too harshly towards the one who has sinned. The balance between these two extremes can only be negotiated by the spiritual. It should be normal to do what God says here, but it isn't. It is all too easy to respond to someone's sin with gossip, harsh judgment, or undiscerning approval.

Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness: Restoration must always be done in a spirit of gentleness, with full understanding of our own weakness and corruption. Those doing the restoring must guard against the temptation of pride, as well as the same temptation the overtaken one struggled with.

(Gal 6:2-5) Bearing each other's burdens and bearing our own load.

Bear one another's burdens: 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.

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

And so fulfill the law of Christ: As we bear one another's burdens, we are fulfilling the simple law of Christ: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35).

If anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself: Pride prevents us from bearing one another's burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ. It is often pride that keeps us from ministering to one another as we should.

As much as anything, pride is self-focus. Pride doesn't necessarily say, "I'm better than you are." Pride simply says, "I'm more important than you are, so I deserve more of my own attention and love than you do." Instead, Biblical humility tells us, "I am no more important than you are. Let me care about your burdens and needs."

He deceives himself: There are few things more self-deceptive than pride. To be proud is to be blind – blind to the freely given favor and gifts of God, blind to our sin and depravity, blind to the good in others, and blind to the foolishness of self-centeredness.

This helps explain the greatest deception of the greatest of deceivers – Satan himself. If there was anyone who thought himself to be something when he is nothing, it was Satan both before and after his fall. And if there is anyone who deceives himself, surely it is Satan – who works on and on against God in the self-delusion that he may one day triumph.

But let each one examine his own work: Instead of deceiving ourselves, we must take a careful and a sober examination of our works before God. If we don't, and if we carry on under our self-deception, then we may think our works are approved before God, when really they aren't. We want to have our work approved before God, so that our rejoicing on the day of reward can be for our own work (himself alone), and not in the work of another.

(Gal 6:6-10) Doing good to others in the household of faith.

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.

To share in all good things has the idea focused on financial support, but not limited to it. “Of the variety of interpretations of Paul’s words here the most common is also the most likely: this takes share in the sense of active giving and all good things in the sense of physical goods (Luke 1:53; 12:18-19; 16:25).” (Fung)

Paul’s point is that God’s people should not share in all good things with him who teaches because it is good for the teacher. They should do it because it is good for the one who is taught and shares, and the principle of reaping and sowing demonstrates this.

The farmer reaps the same as he has sown, but not exactly. The apple seed doesn’t just grow more apple seeds, but more apples with seeds. Even so, when we sow to the Spirit – even with material things – what we reap is not necessarily material things, but something better: of the Spirit we reap everlasting life. So we don’t give as a crude “investment” or money-making scheme, though we are completely confident we will never be the loser for giving.

Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap: This principle has application beyond giving and supporting teachers and ministers. It has a general application in life; what we get out of life is often what we put in. Yet, Paul is not promoting some law of spiritual karma that ensures we will get good when we do good, or always get bad when we do bad. If there were such an absolute spiritual law, it would surely damn us all. Instead, Paul simply relates the principle of sowing and reaping to the way we manage our resources before the Lord. He used the same picture in 1 Corinthians 9:11 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-10.

We may fool ourselves by expecting much when we sow little, but we cannot fool God and the results of our poor sowing will be evident.