

Galatians 6:2,6-11—“2Carry each other.s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ... 6Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. 7Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. 11See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!”

Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ...
6Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

. C. K. Barrett that Gal 6:6 “may be the earliest reference to any kind of paid Christian ministry.”¹

. Why do you suppose Paul felt it was necessary to give this particular word of instruction?

o It could be that the Judaizing agitators had attacked the ministry of these men, who were far less able than Paul to defend the truth of the gospel against such interlopers.

o In turn, many of the Galatians may well have withdrawn material support from these church leaders in their infatuation with the new theology advanced by Paul.s opponents.

. Does a verse like this have anything to say to US today? Oh yes!

. This passage indicates the primary responsibility of pastors is to teach and preach the Word (“instruction in the word”).

. William Perkins, “There are so many needy, poor wandering Levites, which would gladly serve for a morsel of bread, or a suit of raiment, it is a pregnant proof that there is very small devotion in men for the maintenance of [true godliness].”²

. Statistically, when people leave a church the first thing to “go” is their giving.

¹ C.K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 82.

² William Perkins, *A Commentary on Galatians* (New York: Pilgrim, 1989), 479.

7Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

. What does it mean when it says, “God cannot be mocked!”? The same thing a good father means when he says “I will not be spoken to in that tone of voice.”

. In staccato-like fashion: “Be not deceived... God.s not mocked ... you.ll reap what you sow!”

. Clarence Jordan puts it so well, “Don.t let anybody pull the wool over your eyes—you can.t turn up your nose at God!” (Cotton Patch, 103).

. John Brown, “Christians frequently act like children in reference to this harvest. They would sow and reap in the same day.”³

3 John Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Evansville: Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1957), 344.

4 John Stott, *The Message of Galatians in The Bible Speaks Today* series, John Stott, ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1968), 167.

5 John Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians*. Trans. T.H.L. Parker, in *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries*, 22 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 11:114.

8The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

. The old adage is true: “Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.”

. John Stott: “To „sow to the flesh. is to pander to it, to cosset, cuddle and stroke it, instead of crucifying it. The seeds we sow are largely thoughts and deeds. Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fantasy, or wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we linger in bad company whose insidious influence we know we cannot resist, every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up and praying, every time we read pornographic literature, every time we take a risk which strains our self-control, we are sowing, sowing, sowing to the flesh.”⁴

. Paul had in mind here the final consummation of salvation.

. The splendor of the age to come and the glory of heaven beckons us forward just as the lights of the Celestial City summoned Bunyan.s Christian toward the final goal of his pilgrim travels.

. Why did Paul feel it necessary to persist in reminding the Galatian believers to practice the plain duties of the Christian faith? Calvin offers several answers to this question:

. Calvin: “This precept is especially necessary because we are naturally lazy in the duties of love, and many little stumbling-blocks hinder and put off even the well-disposed. We meet with many unworthy, many ungrateful people. The vast number of the needy overwhelms us; we are drained by paying out on every side. Our warmth is damped by the coldness of others. Finally, the whole world is full of hindrances which turn us aside from the right path. Therefore Paul does well to confirm our efforts, so that we do not faint through weariness.”⁵

9Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

. This is the same dilemma many of you face today: either legalism or

antinomianism.

o Paul's message to the Galatians is quite simply, "Don't quit!" Faced with the temptation of legalism on the one hand and libertinism on the other, many of Paul's converts in Galatia were beginning to lose heart.

. Paul added a word of motivation: "For at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

. Timothy George: "One of the greatest frustrations in the Christian ministry, and a principal cause for „weariness in well doing,. is the inability to calculate the spiritual outcome of faithful labors in the work of the Lord. For this reason we must be cautious in putting too much stock in what we often call „visible results..”⁶

. William Carey arrived in India in 1793. For seven years he proclaimed the gospel message faithfully week after week, month after month, with not a single native of India converted to Christ. He wrote:

. Carey: "I feel as a farmer does about his crop: sometimes I think the seed is springing, and thus I hope; a little blasts all, and my hopes are gone like a cloud. They were only weeds which appeared; or if a little corn sprung up, it quickly dies, being either choked with weeds, or parched up by the sun of persecution. Yet I still hope in God, and will go forth in his strength, and make mention of his righteousness, even of his only.”⁷

. On December 28, 1800, Carey baptized in the Ganges River his first Hindu convert, a carpenter named Krishna Pal.

. William Ward, who witnessed the dramatic deliverance of this man from the grip of paganism, wrote in his diary: "You gods of stone and clay, did you not tremble, when in the Triune Name one soul shook you from his feet as dust?"⁸

⁶ Timothy George, Galatians: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture in The New American Commentary (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 426.

⁷ Timothy George, Faithful Witness: The Life & Mission of William Carey (New Hope, 1991), 116.

⁸ George, Faithful Witness, 132.

¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

. The thought is that just as the time of reaping will come "at the proper time," so now we must make good use of the present "opportunity" to sow to the Spirit rather than to the flesh.

. John Brown, "Every poor and distressed man had a claim on me for pity, and, if I can afford it, for active exertion and pecuniary relief. But a poor Christian has a far stronger claim on my feelings, my labors, and my property. He is my brother, equally interested as myself in the blood and love of the Redeemer. I expect to spend an eternity with him in heaven. He is the representative of my unseen Savior, and he considers everything done to his poor afflicted as done to

himself. For a Christian to be unkind to a Christian is not only wrong, it is monstrous.”⁹

⁹ John Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Marshallton, Del.: Sovereign Grace, 1970), 348.

¹¹ See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!”

. Paul now takes his pen from his secretaries hand (i.e., the amanuensis), in order to add a personal postscript. Usually this was just to append his signature as a guarantee against forgery (see 2 Thess. 3:17). On this occasion he writes several final sentences in his own handwriting.

Application

. What is at stake in this text is eternal life; not merely sanctification, but also final salvation.

. I understand my role as a pastor-teacher to be not merely a means to your sanctification, but also a means to your salvation.

. My goal in life is to be a faithful teacher of God.s Word for the good of his people and the glory of his name. I don.t see how I could be faithful to this text and not tell you that if you grow weary in well-doing and lose heart, you will not reap eternal life. If you forsake the Spirit and rely on the flesh, you will reap.

. Perhaps the Galatians had made a good start, and now they were growing weary in well-doing—the well-doing of supporting the teaching elders in the church. Perhaps some were arguing that they are free in Christ and can use their money for other things. “Who needs teaching, anyway? We know enough of the truth. Money is scarce; these are hard times.”

. God is mocked when his messengers are treated with scorn (2 Chronicles 36:15, 16).

. There is always a time lapse between sowing and reaping.

. Your disregard for his Word and your use of his trust fund for personal indulgences will come back upon your head like an avalanche.

. But if we are deceived and think that more happiness comes from spending that money on our private pleasures, then we mock God, and our greed will come crashing back upon us. We will reap what we sow.

. Piper: “What is at stake in your attitude to the teaching of God.s Word and the use of your goods is eternal life. I know that for some that sounds like a return to salvation by works which Paul has demolished in this letter. But it isn.t.

Works are the attitudes and actions of a heart that looks to itself for the achievement of virtue or contentment, which expects to be credited for its achievement. Nobody can save himself by such works. But love is not a work of the flesh; it is a fruit of the Spirit...Genuine conversion to Christ is not a

mere human act of calling Christ our Savior. (“Many will say to me in that day, „Lord, Lord. . . . but I will say, „Depart from me. I never knew you!..) Genuine conversion is a divine act by which a Spirit of sonship is made to dwell in our heart (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6), giving us a hatred for sin and a love for righteousness (Ezekiel 36:27).”¹⁰

. There are attitudes toward money and toward the teaching of God.s Word which cannot continue to coexist with true saving faith in the all-sufficiency of Christ.

. Do you get up in the morning and feel a need for the power of the Spirit and seek his filling in the Word and prayer? Or when you get up, do you feel like there is no time to seek his fullness, and besides, this is a pretty normal day and I don.t need much help. A prayer on the stairs will do!

. When you get your paycheck, do you look to the Spirit for how to turn this money to best advantage for God.s kingdom, or do you invest it in the field of the flesh for your own private use? Sowing to the Spirit means recognizing where the Spirit aims to produce some luscious fruit for the glory of God and dropping the seed of your resources in there. One of the places where the Spirit has promised to yield 30, 60, 100 fold is in the teaching of God.s Word.

¹⁰ John Piper, “Do Not Grow Weary in Well-Doing,” August 1983, http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/7/401_Do_Not_Grow_Weary_in_WellDoing/

