

Sharing and Serving

Galatians 6.6-10 ~ April 18, 2010

➤ Galatians Series

- 17 messages on Galatians in Lincoln last year (1 thru 5)
- 3 messages from chapter 6 (~~March~~, April and May)

➤ Galatians Review

- 1 ~ Paul defends his apostleship and the gospel
 - There is only one gospel message
 - In **1 Corinthians 15** is a great exposition of the gospel message
 - Charles Spurgeon said: *“Our sins deserve punishment; God must and will punish sin; Jesus Christ came into this world and was punished in the place of all that believe on him.”*
- 2 ~ Paul was prepared to confront James, John and Peter c/gospel
 - He did confront Peter c/hypocrisy of not eating with Gentiles
- 3 ~ He states that salvation has always been by faith – not works
 - The law that came 400 years later did not undo this
 - Nature, ground and instrument of our justification
 - The nature of justification is that it is judicial ~ innocent / guilty
 - The ground of justification is the substitutionary death of Christ
 - The instrument of justification is faith ~ means of appropriation
 - *Why then the law?* ~ It restrains sin and reveals sin
- 4 & 5 ~ Yes, we are free from condemnation
 - but serve God with that freedom
 - fruits of evil and fruits of Spirit contrasted
- 6.1-5 ~ You who are spiritual restore the erring . . .
 - This calls for honest self-examination

➤ Reread Text for Today

- Paul has just advised them to look out for one another spiritually
- Now he tells them to look out for one another physically
- Our spiritual and physical interests are to be united in service to God & others
 - Jesus said, *“where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...”*
- **Reread** verses 6 through 10

Xition: Let's look at the first phrase . . .

- **v6 ~ “let the student share good things with the teacher”**
 - “him who is taught” & “him who teaches”
 - **Eph 4.11-12a** *“He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry...”*
 - “the word” ~ It is the teaching of the word of God that is rewarded
 - This phrase (v6) seems rather bland . . .
 - But when we read on we see Paul is very worked up . . .
 - There is more to this sentence (v6) than may at first appear . . .
 - *Why does Paul have to remind the Galatians to give?*

- **Because most people are not naturally generous . . .**
 - !!!: I know people who have annual household incomes of over \$150k
 - Yet more than once I’ve seen stinginess ~ this surprised me . . .
 - !!!: Collecting money for brother of co-worker w/cancer – not even \$20
 - I can understand this outside of the church ~ but less so inside . . .
 - **Mt 18.21ff** tells the story of a man forgiven a huge monetary debt
 - But he then demands repayment of a tiny debt owed him
 - The main message is of forgiveness - but also of generosity

- **Now let’s put this back in our biblical context**
 - Paul has just said the taught are to share good things with the teacher
 - So we’re talking about a church member supporting a pastor
 - Judaizers have been undermining the Galatian church
 - This unrest has resulted in some members not giving / not tithing
 - The full-time pastors in Galatia are now in financial jeopardy
 - There are many ways to destroy a church . . .
 - One way is to starve it for finances

- **Responsible Tithing**
 - Members here are expected to tithe ~ we’re very upfront about it
 - But though people leave in good standing – they often stop tithing
 - *Do they tithe to the churches they visit?*
 - *Do they save their tithe up and bless their new church with it?*
 - *Do they send it to a favorite parachurch organization?*
 - *Do they just not tithe?*
 - I don’t know . . . But they are neglecting their covenantal obligations . . .

➤ **“Why do people feel justified in doing this?”**

- We feel justified in breaking this covenantal obligation because . . .
 - For those that move away (*out of sight – out of mind*)
 - For those of us seeking a new church locally
 - We rationalize that the church has broken faith with us . . .
 - *Why would we otherwise be seeking a new church?*

➤ **Let me dig deeper into 2 reasons why this happens . . .**

- 1) Lack of generosity and 2) Meanness of spirit
 - I’ve already mentioned generosity . . .
 - Let me now speak to meanness of spirit . . .

➤ **v7 “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked”**

- I propose that this **“mocking of God”** is *“meanness of spirit”*
 - Each mean-spirited act a Christian performs is an affront to God
 - Each petty mean unkind act of ours it is a slap in God’s face
 - We’re behaving like spoiled, self-centered, bratty children . . .
- !!!: Reflecting on this last week an example from driving came to mind . . .
 - I was reluctant to share it ~ I’ve shared such insights before . . .
 - But then it happened to me the next morning . . .
 - So I feel God wants me to share it . . .
 - Millard Ave – need to be in right lane to go east on L towards freeway
 - *What if a person wants in front of me that had cut me off earlier?*
 - Do I speed up to cut them off – or slow down to let them in – choice!
 - Devil: That’s the guy! That’s the jerk! Squeeze him out!
 - Angel: No Rod... Let him in... It’s the right thing to do...
 - Devil: Don’t be a sap! Teach him a lesson! That’s how he’ll learn!
 - Angel: Don’t return evil for evil... Let him in...
 - Devil: He doesn’t even know you’re a Christian! He won’t know!
 - Angel: But God will know...
- Cutting him off would have been conduct unbecoming a Christian . . .
 - conduct unbecoming a child of the King . . .

➤ **So let me speak very plainly**

- To withhold financial support from the church - when they do something you don’t like - is conduct unbecoming a child of the King . . .

Xition: Let’s go on to sowing and reaping . . .

- **v7b ~ “whatever a man sows, that will he also reap”**
 - Paul points us at self-interest for doing what is right and good . . .
 - Paul doesn’t just smack us upside the head and condemn us . . .
 - He shows us that doing what is right, will benefit us . . .

- **v8 ~ “sowing and reaping” ~ The Laws of Harvest**
 - Pastor Kayser preached an extended series on this topic years ago . . .
 - Sowing and reaping are always done in different seasons
 - Farmers must sow seed . . . then work . . . work . . . wait . . . wait . . .
 - Until the harvest season comes . . .
 - There is no short cut . . .

- **v8 ~ “reaping what we sow” ~ The Laws of Harvest**
 - And we also can reap only what was sown . . .
 - If we have sown corn, it is only corn that we can harvest
 - If we have sown oats, it is only oats that we can harvest
 - We do not harvest what we have not sown
 - If we do not teach and model Christian virtues to our children
 - We will not harvest Christian virtues in our children’s lives
 - But when we persist we will harvest what we have sown

- **v9a ~ “let us not grow weary while doing good”**
 - III: Zia explaining dirty jobs (at Panda) to me . . .
 - He started out as a good worker ~ doing menial tasks wo/complaint
 - But many others came to regard these tasks as Zia’s responsibility
 - But his manager does notice ~ Not all managers do . . .
 - But remember our ultimate employer is God ~ God always notices

- **v9b ~ “in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart”**
 - Weariness at **doing good** begins in our hearts
 - III: Story of young man at monastery in Mount Serat Spain
 - Young monks allowed to speak only 2 words every 2 years
 - “Food terrible” ~ “Bed lumpy” ~ “I quit”
 - Priest said: “I’m not surprised . . . All you ever do is complain.”
 - Jesus said “*your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly*”

Xition: Let’s look at the last verse of our text . . .

- **v10a ~ “as we have opportunity, let us do good to all”**
 - Our obligation is to all of humanity – not just our blood relatives
 - Not just our Christian brethren – not just our neighbors . . . but all
 - Joseph Shepherd’s heart went out to the people of Haiti
 - The Russian adoptee has had many Russian families want to adopt him
 - We are to look for such opportunities
 - We are to prepare for them . . .
 - We are to respond to them . . .

- **v10b ~ “especially to those who are of the household of faith”**
 - Our obligation is to all of humanity – yet Christians are family . . .
 - III: Airplane crash ~ The healthy roam around calling out names of loved ones
 - From an efficiency standpoint they should help the injured near them
 - But as supportive as I am of efficiency, that just won’t work
 - Our hearts just don’t work that way . . .
 - III: Thanksgiving in California
 - 1/3 of those in SF Bay Area go to LA ~ vice versa
 - Wouldn’t it be easier if we just traded families?
 - You visit my family in Vista, CA and I’ll visit yours in Oakland . . .
 - This is why government bureaucracy cannot resolve human needs
 - The social welfare worker doesn’t usually love the people in their care
 - It takes kinship to foster love ~ and shared citizenship isn’t enough
 - When in combat? Sure . . .
 - After 9/11 drove by a radio station and put \$20 in a collection box
 - My good will lasted until I heard how the NYC unions were behaving
 - In normal times kinship prevails . . .

- **Doing good is not always appreciated . . .**
 - That’s why Christians are sometimes derisively called “do gooders”
 - People do not like being shown up as uncaring, unloving, unsupportive . . .
 - Such people may resent your efforts at kindness and oppose you . . .
 - But this is included in v9 “**let us not grow weary while doing good**”
 - We must persist because God wants us too . . .
 - We must persist despite a lack of appreciation . . .
 - We must persist despite active opposition . . .
 - Movie Recommendation: **Saving Grace** (1986)

➤ **Let us pray . . .**