

24. Galatians 6:1-5 The Burden of Restoration

November 30, 2008

We have finished our look at Galatians 5, but to remind you of what we covered in that chapter and to bring to mind a thread that will continue to be seen into the next chapter, I want to begin by sharing a quote from Warren Wiersbe that will help set the stage for this morning. Wiersbe wrote, "Liberty does not mean license, rather it means the freedom in Christ to enjoy him and become what He determined us to become.... We obey God because of love not law." This morning we will focus on another aspect of becoming what He determined for us to become and we will see our love as the means of that obedience. This morning we enter the final chapter of Galatians, and it is my intention to cover chapter 6 in 2 weeks – this morning and Lord willing, next week. Since I am only planning to be in chapter 6 for two weeks, I would like to read the entirety of the chapter this week, but this week we will be focusing on only the first 5 verses of chapter 6. If I had to sum up chapter 6 in one word, that word would be ministry. Chapter 6 is all about ministry to others and others ministering to us.

Galatians 6:1-18 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For every man shall bear his own burden. 6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. 11 ¶ Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. 12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. 17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. 18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

I would remind you once again that early on in our study, I said that a fourth theme of the book of Galatians is learning how a Christian should live in freedom and thereby display the only means of restoring those mesmerized with erroneous doctrine. As I said many months ago, it does us no good to identify enemies or fellow believers in error and "yet not wish them the same joy and the same understanding of the truth that we have. If we value the truth as we ought, our desire will be that others are brought to that truth as well." Our text this morning, beginning even in the very first verse is all about the ministry of restoration. And we must be both willing and able to participate in this process of restoration. Paul has been well demonstrating both his willingness and ability to do so throughout this entire book and I believe that he is confident of the success of his efforts. This book began with immediate warnings and pleas and you will recall that the opening was lacking the affection found in the other epistles of Paul. But now as we come to chapter 6, the first word we encounter is "Brethren". After all of the struggle and all of the arguments he has put forth, he still calls them brethren. We would do well to learn this lesson that those who name the name of Christ are still our brothers and sisters even when we see that they have failed to do what is right. And here in the opening of chapter 6 Paul draws the attention of the Galatians away from themselves and places their sights on a brother in need.

Whether you admit it or not, we are all people watchers and shamefully, when it comes to other Christians, we are many times the first to point out the failings of other believers. But Paul is encouraging us to be a people of compassion. The KJV uses the word overtaken and the other translations typically use the word caught but even these words indicate to us that help is needed. They are caught or overtaken by sin and they cannot escape easily on their own. And the word sin or trespass or transgression, depending upon your translation, is not the typical word for sin but rather a word that means to fall beside, to lapse, or deviate from truth. In other words the picture in verse 1 is like seeing someone trip and fall down before our very eyes and knowing that they cannot manage to get back up. And hopefully there is not a one of us who wouldn't help even a stranger if we saw them fall down so severely. Now think back in your Christian walk and think about whether or not you have ever been overtaken with a fault. Have you ever stumbled and fallen spiritually? I think to some degree or another we all have. But some in the name of Christ deny that believers ever sin, but this is so well handled, I think, by John MacArthur once again in his commentary: "Sin is a reality in every Christian's life. 'If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us,' John warns believers. In fact he goes on to say 'If we say that we have not sinned, we make [God] a liar, and His word is not in us' (1 John 1:8, 10). 'We all stumble in many ways' (James 3:2). If Christians were not subject to sin they would not need 'the full armor of God' in order to 'stand firm against the schemes of the devil' and 'to resist in the evil day' (Eph 6:11, 13). Nor would they need to heed James's warning about being tempted and carried away by their own lusts or his admonition to put 'aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness' (James 1:14, 21)." So in other words, the battle with sin is not over when we are made believers in Christ. And woefully, we all have moments of failure. But when we realize we are in such a state, the last thing we need is for a Christian brother or sister to come up and rub our noses in it. Now that does not mean that we should never point out sin, for sometimes a Christian does not see that they are in sin and they need to be gently rebuked. But if a believer truly sees their sin and is struggling, our duty is not to condemn them, make them feel worse, or throw them overboard. Seeing a brother in sin does not justify ourselves.

In fact I think this goes along with the last verse of Galatians 5 just before our text. "26 *Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*"

We are not in the role of judge. As Romans 14:4 says "4 *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.*" As Galatians 6:1 and Romans 14:4 teach, our Christian duty, is to restore them not judge them.

This is also what Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians 2 in dealing with the man he discussed in 1 Corinthians 5 who was now sorrowful for his sin. Spurgeon points out that Paul is not commanding Christians to spy on one another for sake of noticing faults. And on that point he provides a story about one of the Wesley brothers. The anecdote goes like this. Spurgeon says: "I think I have heard a story of Mr. Wesley going several times to a certain town, where he thought that there was a band of earnest Christian people; but he was met by a brother, who told him how dead they all were, what a little life there was in their meetings for prayer, and how much of inconsistency there was amongst them.

When he got there, he did not notice anything of this; so, the third time he went, he said to this brother, "How is it that you always meet me, and tell me of these things about the brethren! Nobody else ever seems to say it." "Well, you see," he said, "Mr. Wesley, I have a rare gift of discerning spirits." "Oh!" said the good man, "then wrap that talent up in a napkin, and bury it, and you will have done the best thing possible with it. The Lord will never ask you what you have done with it if you will only keep it to yourself."

Perhaps a modern day equivalent would when a Christian hears that his brother has sinned, instead of going to the brother, he shares the sad news with others so that then they can pray more intelligently about it.

To add to the support of this teaching, Martin Luther in his commentary wrote “Brethren, saith he, if a man be overtaken with a fault, do not trouble him to make him more sorrowful: be not bitter unto him: do not reject or condemn him: but try to amend him, and to raise him up again; and by this lenity [mild temper, gentleness] and mildness restore that which in him is decayed and weakened by the deceit of the devil, or the infirmity of the flesh.”

So this is how you should not deal with them, but what is the right way to minister to our brethren. Our job is restoration and the word in Greek is used for mending a net or setting a broken bone. In verse 1, Paul provides some guidance given as to who can restore and how they should restore their fallen brethren. But don't look at this list as your excuse out of this process, but rather recognize that these conditions should be true of all of us, else we ourselves need restoration. Christians capable of restoring their brothers and sisters are to be the norm not the exception. First, to be a restorer, you must be spiritual. This simply means that you must be Spirit filled and led as we saw in our study of chapter 5, That means we must be producing the fruit of the spirit. A second criterion is an obvious thing – the desire to restore, not the desire to be a judge, hero or lord over our brethren. Thirdly, restoration requires meekness, which again is part of the list of the fruit of the spirit, so in some regard this is redundant to the word spiritual. But I liked what John Gill said on this phrase “spirit of meekness”. He said this is “with a meek and humble spirit, not bearing hard upon them, and treating them in a supercilious and haughty manner, upbraiding them with their faults, aggravating them, and using them roughly, and with sharpness.”

Again, our intent must be restoration of them not making ourselves look better than another person. The final guidance Paul gives is that whoever wants to be a restorer must, without exception, be careful themselves of not falling into the same sin. As Christians, we are all sinful flesh saved by grace and not one of us has become immune to temptation. As Augustine said “there is no sin which any man hath done, but another man may do the same”. Also on this point, Robertson in his NT Word Pictures says “Spiritual experts (preachers in particular) need this caution. Satan loves a shining mark.” Certainly we should not be surprised that in causing a weaker brother to fail that Satan has an ulterior motive of bringing down an even stronger brother. We must be walking in the spirit always, which includes those times that we are trying to restore. Our own walk depends on it.

Throughout this entire book Paul has been living out what this first verse says. And I would remind you of what Paul wrote in Galatians 4:12 “12 ¶ Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*: ye have not injured me at all.” Paul has seen the Galatians overtaken in their fault; he has expressed his concern for their spiritual best; He has struggled to restore them in a spirit of meekness, and I also believe he has thought about his own situation so as to avoid the temptation of falling into the same error. We would do well to follow Paul's example of restoring the Galatians. And his example is one of complete and utter dependency on justification by faith in Jesus.

But why should Paul care or why should we care if a brother or sister is in sin? As opposed to judging, some go to the other extreme of ignoring sin in their midst. MacArthur again puts it so well when he writes “The most important pursuit for all Christians, individually and corporately, is holiness. The first mission of the church is to honor and glorify God, and He can be honored and glorified by His children only as they grow to be like Him in character. Although evangelism is the cutting edge of the church's ministry, holiness is the only foundation on which effective evangelism or any other ministry can be built.” How much we need to hear these words this morning. If Covenant Baptist is to be used, we must as a corporate body pursue holiness and we must sometimes do this by restoring a fallen brother or sister.

Before we move on, there is one other thing I would share with you about verse 1. According to Wiersbe, even in this final chapter Paul is waging war against the legalists as he clearly points out multiple differences between himself and the Judaizers. And as I go through these differences, think about your responses to a brother in need and see if you are following Paul's example or the way of the legalist:

- 1) Instead of trying to restore the erring brother, the legalist will condemn him and then use the brother to make himself look good.
- 2) The legalist rejoices when a brother falls, and often gives the matter wide publicity, because then he can boast about his own goodness and how much better his group is than the group to which the fallen brother belongs.
- 3) The Spirit-led believer approaches the matter in a spirit of meekness and love, while the legalist has an attitude of pride and condemnation.
- 4) The legalist does not need to 'consider himself' because he pretends he could never commit such a sin. But the believer living by grace realizes that no man is immune from falling.

Now let's move on in our text. When we come to verse 2, Paul makes a very clear and important command to the Galatians. He says "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." As Wiersbe wrote "'One another' is one of the key phrases in the Christian's vocabulary. 'Love one another' is found at least a dozen times in the New Testament, along with 'pray one for another' (James 5:16), 'edify one another' (1Thess 5:11), 'prefer one another' (Rom 12:10), 'use hospitality one to another' (1 Pet 4:9), and many other like admonitions. In the section before us, Paul adds another phrase: 'Bear ye one another's burdens' (Gal 6:2). The Spirit-led Christian thinks of others and how he can minister to them."

Again Wiersbe points out another contrast between Paul and the legalists from verse 2. The legalist is not interested in bearing burdens. Instead, they add to the burden of others. Wiersbe continues by saying the legalist is always harder on other people than he is on himself, but the Spirit-led Christian demands more of himself than he does of others that he might be able to help others. The burden that the legalists were pushing on the Galatians was the law by which no man can be justified and Paul saw them sinking down under its weight. As I said earlier this chapter is about ministering – ministering to others and being ministered to. And I believe that verses 2 through 5 as a whole continue the theme of verse 1 on how we should properly minister to fellow-Christians. Yet in these verses, there is an important contrast that we need to look at. And it is that contrast that we will look at for the rest of this morning's lesson.

Verse 2 begins "Bear ye one another's burdens" but verse 5 tells us that "every man shall bear his own burden" or "load". So which is it? Should I bear my own burden or should I bear someone else's? How can we reconcile these two thoughts? The explanation is found in the fact that Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is using two different words. In verse 2, the word translated burden is the Greek word βαρος *baros bar'-os* (922) meaning a heaviness, weight, burden, trouble and it implies the idea of a crushing weight or a weight that causes someone to sink down. In other words, it is a burden that an individual cannot carry themselves. They are not being lazy and failing to pull themselves up by their own boot straps, but rather they are overwhelmed with something they never should have laid upon their own shoulders. To better understand this word look at another verse that uses this word. Turn quickly to 2 Corinthians 1:8 "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:"

But before we look at the second word, I want you to see that verse 2 does not provide anyone with an excuse for laziness or utter dependency on others to care for them. John Gill well answers the question of how we should bear the crushing burdens of our brethren. John Gill says it is done “by gently reproofing them, by comforting them when overpressed with guilt, by sympathizing with them in their sorrow, by praying to God for to manifest his pardoning grace to them, and by forgiving them themselves.”

And according to verse 2, when we properly bear one another’s burden we are fulfilling the law of Christ, which is what we should all be striving to do. And what is the law of Christ. Put most simply, John 15:12 “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” This also points us back to what we studied previously in Galatians 5:14 which said “*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*”

This is also well summed up in the very opening of Spurgeon’s sermon entitled Burden Bearing, which he preached on August 26, 1886. On the text of Galatians 6 verses 2 and 5 Spurgeon opened his sermon like this:

“Observe, dear friends, that the apostle says, in the second verse of this chapter, ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.’ These Galatians had been trying to bear the heavy burden of the law of Moses. They had, as far as they could, put themselves again under the old ceremonial law. They had forsaken the gospel way of justification by faith, and had sought to be made perfect by their personal obedience to the law. Now, the apostle, as though he would expel one affection by another, says, ‘You want a law; you wish to be under a law; well, here is the law of Christ, yield yourselves to it. Instead of observing the outward ceremonials of the Levitical law, here is a living law, which touches the heart, and influences the life, obey that law. You are Christians; you have come under law to Christ by the very fact that you are not your own, but have been bought with a price by him; now see to it that you yield implicit obedience to the law of Christ.’” Oh, that we at Covenant would yield such implicit obedience to the law of Christ.

But the burden of verse 2 is not the burden or load of verse 5. In verse 5 he uses the word φορτίον *phortion for-tee'-on* (5413), which means a burden or load. It is the word used for the freight of a ship. Lightfoot on these two words says “βάρη points to a load of which a man may fairly rid himself when occasion serves, φορτίον to a load which he is expected to bear. Thus φορτίον is a common term for a man’s pack.” Wiersbe expands this by saying this word describes a soldier’s pack.

And as verses 3 and 4 point out, there is a burden every man must bear on his own. Every man must bear on his own the eternal condition of his soul. Every man must prove his own work or as Philippians 2:12 states, every man must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. This is the burden that God expects you to be able to carry. You cannot save your brethren. That is the work of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And this individual burden is something Paul writes about in two other epistles. In Romans 14:10 he writes that “*we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*” And similarly, in 2 Corinthians 5:10, we read “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*” This is the burden we must all individually bear.

This morning we have looked at two different burdens – one that cannot be lifted by an individual and one that must be. And it is all done because of what Christ did for us in bearing all of our burdens.

To conclude this morning, I want to take you back to our opening hymn: **Hymn #17 Come Thou Fount**. But what I want to discuss is an alternate, lengthier arrangement of this hymn that I found while preparing this lesson. It has what we have as the second verse as actually being the end of a different second verse and the beginning of a different third verse. Let me read it to you, as I believe this longer version speaks so well to what is conveyed in this morning's lesson:

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of Thy redeeming love.

<Sorrowing I shall be in spirit,
Till released from flesh and sin,
Yet from what I do inherit,
Here Thy praises I'll begin;>

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Here by Thy great help I've come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home. <end of alternate verse 2, beginning of our verse 2>

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood; <beginning of alternate verse 3, end of our verse 2>

<How His kindness yet pursues me
Mortal tongue can never tell,
Clothed in flesh, till death shall loose me
I cannot proclaim it well.>

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

<O that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in blood washed linen
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,
Take my ransomed soul away;
Send thine angels now to carry
Me to realms of endless day. >

And we all await that time when all of our burdens will be completely lifted. I'll end this morning with my fifteenth way to finish Wiersbe's statement: **If I want to be a really good Christian I must pursue my fellow-Christian's highest good, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. And I'll do this all because Christ bore my burden.**

25. Galatians 6:6-18 Be Not Deceived – Concluding Galatians December 7, 2008

After 24 lessons since early April, this morning we come to the end of our study together in the book of Galatians. In addition to covering the final 13 verses of this book, it is my intention this morning to also provide a brief summary of our entire study.

Just as last week, I would like us to read the entire sixth chapter of Galatians but we will be picking up our study in verse 6.

Galatians 6:1-18 ¶ Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For every man shall bear his own burden. 6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. 11 ¶ Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. 12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. 17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. 18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

I said that last week, that I would sum up chapter 6 with the word ministry as so much of this chapter is about ministry to others and others ministering to us – both sides of this are included in the ministry of restoration that we looked at last week. And I believe we see more examples of these ministries again this morning in our text. And this morning we will also see the conclusion of Paul's battle waged against the legalists. And as I thought about this I realized again how consistent, how sincere, and how loving Paul is toward the Galatians. And one proof of this love demonstrated in our text is verse 11 where Paul says that he wrote the letter himself. While some, such as John MacArthur, think that when he refers to how large the letter he is again alluding to an eye disorder that requires large characters, others, including Martin Luther, point out that in other letters Paul had involved an amanuensis, sort of a secretary who takes dictation. But as John Brown wrote, "He meant obviously to bring before the mind of the Galatians the fact of the deep interest he took in them, as expressed by his writing such a letter."

Paul loved them enough to rebuke as well as instruct the Galatians and for that reason he provides them with some important teaching in verses 6 through 9. Good teaching is the central idea in this section. And good teaching is both a way to help restore a believer who has been overtaken, as well as a way to prevent someone from being overtaken, so in verses 6-9 Paul turns his attention once again to who was teaching the Galatians.

Verse 6 says: *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.*

Verse 6 instructs us about taking care of those who labor in teaching and preaching to us. But I'm curious, is there anyone here with a translation that something other than "every" or "all good things"? Even though the translations agree on this interpretation, the meaning of this phrase is not absolutely clear. So what does it mean to communicate or share all good things. Well I will try to more specifically answer that question in a few moments.

But first on this section of Scripture, Martin Luther teaches the importance of supporting those who minister to the members of the local churches - teachers and preachers. Yet he also says something rather sobering that also may be convicting to us today. Luther wrote: "As often as I read the exhortations of Paul, whereby he persuadeth the churches to nourish their pastors, or give somewhat to the relief of the poor saints, I do greatly marvel and am ashamed that so great an apostle should be constrained to use so many words, for the obtaining this benefit of the congregations." In other words, we benefit ourselves when we support those who minister to our spiritual wellbeing.

And yet so often Christians are stingy to themselves by failing to support their pastors and teachers. I believe this is really what he is relating in verse 7 when he says "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*" In fact Warren Wiersbe writes "God does not command believers to give simply that pastors and teachers (and missionaries, Phil 4:10-19) might have their material needs met, but that the givers might get a greater blessing (Gal 6:7-8). The basic principle of sowing and reaping is found throughout the entire Bible." And to add to Wiersbe's testimony, Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon on this same passage entitled "The Cause and Cure of Weariness in Sabbath School Teachers" to the Convention of the Sunday-School Union in November 1877, in which he himself commended the sacrifice of Sabbath School or as we refer to them Sunday School teachers (although he offers quite a bit of counsel to them to not be discouraged even if the people are indifferent).

But back to the lesson at hand – if we don't prepare for ourselves by having good pastors and teachers, we will reap as verse 8 describes corruption. In other words it is in our best interest to be discriminating in who we allow to preach and teach to us and to be grateful for those who do. Perhaps the reason Christians are so lacking is that they are not supporting those who are ministering to them. Does it matter to you what is taught and preached to you? If so, then you better be discriminating about who teaches and preaches to you and you must support their efforts. Luther defines the one who sows to flesh as "he that he that giveth nothing to the ministers of God's word, but only feedeth and careth for himself, in his own flesh, that man shall of the flesh reap corruption, not only in the present life, but also in the life to come." So Paul is saying that we should be careful to who we listen to because if we are not careful the results will be nothing but corruption. Luther also defines "he that soweth to the spirit" as "he that supports the teachers of God's word". As John Brown wrote, "maintenance and extension of the institutions of Christianity involve not only labour, but expense." Many including Luther and John Brown make it clear that if you experience invaluable blessings, you should want to supply the temporal wants of those who minister, but am I trying to advocate for churches to pay Sunday School teachers? No – what I am advocating is something that we often practice. I am advocating that we support our preacher and our teachers with prayer and encouragement. We cannot expect to receive good teaching at no cost to ourselves.

John Brown provided to me the most intriguing interpretation of this verse and as I read it, it seemed to make the best sense. He wrote “The concluding phrase, ‘in all good thing,’ admits of being connected either with the word ‘teacheth,’ or with the word ‘communicate.’ In the former case the meaning is, ‘Let him who is taught, impart of his substance to him who gives him instruction about ‘all good things.’ The objection to this interpretation seems to be insurmountable. The interpreters who connect ‘all good things’ with ‘communicate,’ are not of one mind as to the meaning of the phrase. Some consider ‘all good things’ as referring to the Christian teacher’s knowledge of the doctrine and the law of Christ, and his living under the influence of the former and the practice of the latter, and view the verse as enjoining on the taught to have fellowship with him in all these good things, in other words calling on the disciples to be like their teacher.’ So in addition to praying and encouraging our teachers and preachers, we must know that the greatest payment a student can make to their teacher is to learn what they have been taught and to do what they have been instructed to do.

I think it so befitting that this in the text of the last lesson I am teaching in this series because it provides me the opportunity to say that one way we obey this verse is to provide encouragement and express thanks for the labor of teaching. Those in this room who have taught or preached are certainly aware that it takes a considerably lot longer than 1 hour of preparation to teach or preach a 50 minute lesson. Proper teaching and preaching require some degree of sacrifice. But we should do it out of a love for our Lord, a love for the Word of God, and love for our fellow brothers and sisters. And I can tell you firsthand that when someone comes to me and tells me something that they benefited from in my lesson I am also benefited and I thank the Lord for his working through me. I believe this a way that we can share or communicate in all good things. I believe this is how we can obey this portion of Scripture.

But after this instruction about our teachers, we come to verses 9 and 10 *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* Luther says it best when he wrote “Let us be liberal and bountiful, not only towards the ministers of the word, but also towards all men, and that without weariness or cessation.” And if the advice of Luther and the command of Scripture are not enough, Wiersbe reminds us when he wrote “It is not a question of asking ‘Does this person deserve my good works?’ Did we deserve what God did for us in Christ?” Therefore, if we are to heed Galatians 6, our lives are to be lives of ministry. Ministering to our brothers and sisters who have stumbled, ministering to our teachers and preachers, and ministering to all men, whenever the opportunity exists.

Since we have already looked at verse 11, let me switch gears and begin looking at the some of the thoughts in the final verses of this book. To the end of this book Paul indicates that the Galatians were being pulled to choose between justification by works of the flesh and justification by the sufficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But throughout this book, Paul has made it clear that justification only comes by the faith of Jesus Christ. And perhaps few verses in Scripture make that as clear as these final verses, particularly verses 14 and 15. *14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* As Wiersbe points out, today, so many see the cross as simply a piece of beautiful jewelry but that is not the truth. The cross was a device of torture for many thousands of people throughout at least a millennium.

But in verse 14 we have 3 crucifixions displayed. The most important cross was an altar on which the perfect sacrifice was laid by God the Father, and which we have recently been blessed to hear Pastor Brown preaching about. Spurgeon actually preached three sermons on verse 14 and one of them was entitled "Three Crosses" in which he points out Christ Crucified, the World Crucified, and the Believer Crucified to the World.

But Wiersbe asks why would Paul glory in the cross? And to condense his answer, Paul glories in the cross because he knew the Person of the cross (as evidenced by the fact Christ is mentioned in at least 1/3 of the verses in Galatians); Paul knew the power of the cross in its liberation from the law and sin; and Paul knew the purpose of the cross in brining forth a "people of God" (which I hope to discuss further in a few moments).

John Brown similarly answers this question. John Brown wrote "But why did the apostle thus glory in the Cross of Christ? He saw, in the fact of the expiation of the sins of men by the death of the Son of God on the Cross, such a glorious display of the wisdom and power, the holiness and benignity, of the Divine character, as destroyed the native enmity of his own heart, quelled the jealousies of guilt, sweetly constrained him to love God, filled his mind with holy peace and joyful hope, delivered him from 'the bondage of corruption,' and brought him into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God;,' and he was persuaded that what the Cross of Christ was to him it was calculated to be to everyone of the children of Adam, who, like him, understood and believed the truth respecting it. Therefore he gloried in the Cross – in Christ – in Christ crucified."

And Luther also provides an answer, although I take it from his commentary on Galatians 2:20. I have saved this quote for the right point in our study, and I think here at the end is that point. Just as Paul was trying to focus the Galatians on the cross, so to Martin Luther wanted believers to focus on the cross when he said this: "If thou couldst rightly consider this incomparable price, thou shouldst hold as accursed all those ceremonies, vows, works, and merits before grace and after, and throw them all down to hell. For it is a horrible blasphemy to imagine that there is any work whereby thou shouldst presume to pacify God, since thou seest that there is nothing which is able to pacify Him but this inestimable price, even the death and the blood of the Son of God, one drop whereof is more precious than the whole world."

May God forbid that I or any of us in this room should glory except in the terrible and precious cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And while I say, this John Brown indicts the ways of sinful men in another great quote. John Brown wrote: "In this glorying in the Cross of Christ, the apostle sets an example which should be followed by every Christian, and especially by every Christian minister. Indeed, we are not Christians at all, in the true sense of that word, if we are not glorying in the Cross – in the Cross alone – as the ground of our hope. It is to be feared that multitudes are deceiving themselves on this all-important point. They say they are depending on Christ; but in many cases, if they would but 'examine themselves,' they would find that they are depending on themselves. They expect pardon and salvation, not solely because Christ, the just One, died in the room of the unjust, but entirety, or in part, on the ground of their not being so bad as others, or of their repentance, their reformation, their good intentions, their alms deeds. If they think of the Cross as a ground of reliance at all, it is only as something to have recourse to in order to supply the deficiencies of other grounds of hope. This is not to glory in the Cross; it is to do it foul dishonor. 'Other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid.' From the beginning to the end of Christ's religion, the weight of our eternal hopes must rest solely on the Cross."

This leads me to my sixteenth and final way of finishing Wiersbe's statement:
If I want to be a really good Christian I must glory in the cross and only in the cross.

It is this cross of Christ that makes all the difference in the lives of men. As I mentioned a few moments ago, a purpose of the cross was to bring forth a people of God. And that people are described in verses 15 and 16. It is not a people defined by circumcision or uncircumcision. The people of God are new creatures (as also seen in 2 Corinthians 5:17), they walk in the Spirit and in accord with the Word of God, and they are evident by the peace and mercy of God upon their lives. These characteristics in addition to the persecution and tribulation endured by all believers are the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is Paul's final poke in the eye at the legalists who refused to suffer for the cause of Christ, who refused to give up the necessity of circumcision, and who refused to see the glory of the cross.

While I am almost finished this morning, I still have a couple of items of business. Based upon the idea of sowing and reaping, I originally had planned for us to sing Hymn #420, bringing in the sheaves, but instead I decided to go back to the beginning. When we started our study in April, the first hymn we sang was the same hymn we sang this morning, **Hymn #477 At Calvary**. And at the end of our study I again believe that so many of the themes of this book are well rehearsed in this hymn. From trembling at the law we spurned, to the gulf spanned by Christ's perfect sacrifice. The liberty we have is only found in the great mercy and the free grace that results from the sacrifice of our crucified Lord. But in addition to the reminder that I hope this hymn serves of our study, I also have another something to distribute. Early in this study I told you that we would be continually trying to answer Warren Wiersbe's question that is on the back of my copy of his Galatians commentary. And as some previously requested, I have prepared a master list of all of the answers I provided to Wiersbe's question of how would you finish the sentence, "If I want to be a good Christian I must...".

I pray that our study together has helped you to not only be able to provide a good answer but also that you can avoid many of the incorrect answers, which are so prevalent in our day. And may these words on paper become more than just words on paper. May they become the reality of our Christian walk.

Paul comes to the end of his letter and ends it just the way he began it: Grace! Not the law of Moses, but the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I conclude this series on Galatians by praying for you as Paul prayed for the Galatians.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.