

## Galatians 6:1-10

### "Bearing Burdens; Sharing Blessings"

Today, no delay; let's jump right in.

#### Vs 1

Wouldn't it be great if the moment you gave your life to Christ you never sinned or struggled w/wrong doing again? Unfortunately such is not the case because we still have this sin nature to contend with. *As we've made mention of the last couple of weeks it's when we see Him that we will be like Him. It's then that we'll be free from the struggles of sin & temptation but until then we will all (from time to time) to some greater or lesser degree stray from the way in which we should go.*

John said that like this, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*<sup>1</sup> We all fall short of the glory of God, the question is; "How is it handled when we do?" Paul has been speaking of what it means to "walk in the Spirit", to see the evidence of the Spirit in a person's life. & When the Holy Spirit indwells a person the fruit or manifestation of the Spirit in his life will be love.

*In Christ we're not competing w/one another, we're co-laboring w/one another, we're not to look to condemn one another, but to encourage one another... I've discovered that as the body of Christ often times we're way better at shooting our wounded rather than saving our wounded. We rip them apart rather than restore them, we gossip rather than go to them...*

Paul says, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness..."

*Now context is critical here & we want to catch it, because the key (in this passage) isn't really the word "trespass" it's the word "overtaken". It speaks of being surprised by the fault itself. It's not speaking of a premeditated sin situation whereby I knew what I was about to do was wrong; I just chose to pursue it anyway. This isn't speaking of willful sin, (one who intentionally goes against the clear cut instruction of God's word) but someone who slipped. One who was seeking to do the right thing, but went about it the wrong way, he was "overtaken", they got caught up in something they never saw coming. The context here lends itself to legalism, they're wanting to please God, but going about it the wrong way... Rather than trust in God's grace & yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in their life they set up a list of do's & don'ts & are trying to please God through law.*

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Jn 1:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

They're seeking to get right & stay right w/God on the basis of what *they do* rather than resting by faith in what Jesus *has done*. But in so doing, in reality, they accomplish the exact opposite of what they want, they discard the sufficiency of the cross & the righteousness of Christ & rest in their own ability to perform which is sin before God. It falls radically short of the righteous standard of perfection that God requires.

They've been *overtaken*, & that was a real scenario in Galatia, people trying to please God, but not in the way that God had ordained & established... That's the entire reason Paul wrote this letter wasn't it? But now they're beginning to realize, "Oh my goodness, far from being right *with* God, I'm actually in sin *before* God!" Now, how is that scenario to be handled?

Paul says, "You who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted." In other words don't become their critic, acting in ways that will bring isolation/separation, the goal is restoration. They *want* to be right with God, minister to them accordingly.

What does Paul mean when he says, "You who are spiritual"? Well, he *doesn't* mean that you can't be apart of restoring someone unless you've walked w/God for 20 yrs, or you're a pastor or a legally ordained minister. Sometimes it seems that we've adopted the mindset that people aren't qualified to minister to someone unless they're somehow licensed or have their "Masters in theology" or something. Not true, those who are spiritual are simply those who (as mentioned in the previous Ch) walk *in* the Spirit, are led *by* the Spirit and have manifest the fruit *of* the Spirit in their lives.

Listen, if the love of God is at work *in* you & flowing through you, you qualify to minister to someone who's in need of restoration. *If someone has been overtaken, we shouldn't ignore them, we should seek to restore them. The word "restore" here speaks of mending a torn net, or setting a fractured bone, when someone's life has been torn/fractured, our heart should always be to reach out & seek to restore them.*

Now again, the context here is speaking to one who was "overtaken", didn't see it coming & they find themselves caught up in what's wrong even though they were seeking to do what's right. Paul says, "Bring them back into line."

Now honestly, restoration isn't always something that can happen. Sometimes people refuse restoration, rather than meeting in a context of humility, confession & repentance leading to restoration, the room gets filled w/accusations leading to frustration & the whole thing is ugly mess.

Then you enter into church discipline, you move into Matt 18, 1 Cor 5 perhaps Titus 3:10-11 (Rom 16:17), but that's not what you're looking to initially. You're not aiming for separation, but restoration.

You want to see them walking in the Spirit once again; their relationship w/the Lord & w/the fellowship repaired. You want to be able to identify things like, "What led to this?" "What have I learned from this?" & "How can I prevent this from ever happening again?"

"Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness". That is, w/a full understanding of our own weakness, that the shoe could very easily be on the other foot & we want to handle the situation like we'd like to be handled if the situation was reversed. That's not to say things should be handled firmly, but we don't walk up w/guns a'blazin, blastin w/both barrels. We speak the truth, but we do so in love.

A great example would be in how David was restored when he sinned w/Bathsheba. You might check out 2 Samuel 12:1-15. It was confronted directly, dealt with firmly, yet it was tempered in love & David confessed his sin & was restored. Oh there were still consequences, but his relationship w/God was set back in order.

So we're to deal w/the situation honestly, firmly, yet w/a sensitivity to our own propensity to sin/stray. Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. There's to be a spirit of gentleness, considering ourselves lest we also be tempted.

### Vs 2-5

Interesting isn't it? This whole letter he's been dismantling the position of seeking to fulfill the law & now he says, "Hey, here's a law you can set your sites on fulfilling, the law of Christ!" Forget about the law of Moses, focus on the law of Christ! What's the law of Christ? It's found in the 13<sup>th</sup> Ch of the gospel of Jn; there's Jesus & He's preparing His disciples for His departure. & He says, *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*<sup>2</sup> It's the same law that Paul has been speaking of throughout the lion-share of the previous Ch, the law of Love!

Remember? The love of God doesn't look to benefit self, it looks to serve & sacrifice for others... Here's a practical application of love in action, "Bear one another's burdens." Now listen, this is important. The focus isn't on "expect others to bear your burdens." That's self-focused & it will always lead to pride, frustration, discouragement & depression. You'll always be disillusioned w/the fact that people aren't running to you & serving you & helping you like you think they should.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 13:34]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The focus of the love of God in our lives isn't inward, it's outward...others. You might note the fact that the presumed position of this Vs is that we will all have burdens in life that God never intended for us to carry alone. This is what we call body life. No one can do it all, none of us can bear it all, & we're to aid one another in bearing the heavy burdens of this life. To the Eph Paul said, *"...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."*<sup>3</sup> We need one another; no man is an island unto himself. I read somewhere, "The myth of self-sufficiency is not a mark of bravery but rather a sign of pride."

You see someone going through something, under an apparent heavy load, get in the trenches w/them, come alongside them & so fulfill the law of Christ.

### Vs 3

Translation? None of us are above anyone else, none of us are too good to help a brother out & help shoulder the burden. It's pride that prevents me/you from ministering to others, as we should.

Now when he says, "if you think you're something, when you're nothing, you deceive yourself" he's not saying that some Christians are really something, others are really nothing & the problem comes in when the nothings think they're somethings☺. No, he's saying that none of us are to consider ourselves above another. It's the same idea that's found in Phil 2:3 where Paul writes, *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."*<sup>4</sup>

Can you see what's happening here? If I esteem you above me, & you esteem me above you, than a beautiful thing happens. A community is created where everyone is looked up to & no one is looked down on. I'm seeking to serve you, you're seeking to serve me & we're all being a blessing to one another.

But if your heart is in a place where you think you're above a certain act of service, or you won't reach out to someone because you're afraid their sin might rub off on you... Paul says, "Your pride has deceived you." You think more highly of yourself than you ought & you can't even see how self focused, how self centered you've become...

Think of how angry you get when you realize someone has deceived you. That salesman was really stringing you along! He duped you! Yet how serious do we really take the danger of deceiving ourselves?

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Eph 4:16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Php 2:3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

You've been listening to the lies you've been telling yourself of how great you are, & how lucky that church is to have you & how that group wouldn't be able to function if it weren't for you! The bible says, "You've deceived yourself..."

You see, the problem is so often that we compare ourselves amongst ourselves but the bible says that we err when we do that.

Here in Vs 4 Paul is saying we need to examine our own work, not someone else's. That guy, that gal isn't your measuring stick. J.C. is your measuring stick, it's not how you measure up to me or how I measure up to you, it's how we measure up to Jesus! It's how have we performed through the filter of God's word? You might think because you seem to perform in some manner better than another that you're accepted before God. But the bible teaches, that guy has nothing to do w/you... You see we're to place our thoughts, our attitudes & our actions in the balance of the word of God; that's how we really balance out... If you're doing ok in the light of God's word, than praise God, have rejoicing in yourself alone, but not in comparing yourself to another (namely that fallen brother).

"For each one shall bear his own load." Wait, do we bear one another's burdens or bear our own load? Yes. 2 different words being used here. One speaks of a heavy burden, something too much for one man to bear alone for any real amount of time. The other speaks of something like a backpack. Think of a military rucksack. Each soldier has his own to carry, yet when someone takes a blow to the chest others bear him up.

In other words we all have personal responsibilities (again Eph 4, each part of the body doing it's share) yet there are times when a bro or sis is going through something & they just need help, we're to be there for them.

Here's something else you should realize. The word "bear" in Vs 2 is in the present tense, the word "bear" in Vs 5 is in the future tense. In other words this Vs is in reality pointing to the time that we stand before the Lord & no one is going to stand there w/you then. So that Paul is saying, "Bear one another's burdens & be sober in examining how you're doing w/all that because when you stand before Christ you'll bear the weight of how you lived your life on your own." He's not saying you won't be saved, but somehow the way we submit to God's love in serving one another *here*, makes a difference when we get *there*. Jesus spoke of desiring the rewards of heaven, it makes a difference & Paul is simply saying take the time now to lay up for yourself treasures in heaven (1 Cor 3:11-15).

Vs 6-10

In short, the law of Christ at work in our lives looks like bearing & sharing. Doing good to those around us, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Vs 6 is one of those Vs that pastors are made to feel awkward about when it comes up because the basic gist is that to the one who is tending to you spiritually, there's a biblical obligation there to tend to him materially.

It goes all the way back to ancient Israel, God established even in the law that the priesthood was to be taken care of through the tithes/offerings of the people. In Luke Ch 10 Jesus was speaking to this issue & He told His disciples as He sent them out that they weren't to take any kind of provision for themselves. He said, *"...for the laborer is worthy of his wages."* Luke 10:7 Leave the book of Gal & look quickly to 1 Cor 9 (Vs 3-11). Paul speaks to this principle in Rom 15:27 & again in 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

Now I realize that there are a few "preachers" out there who have abused this principle & fleeced the flock of God. *Most, however are not that way & the body of Christ does well to tend to the needs of these men & their families. They're looking after your eternal state; therefore we're to tend to their temporal, material state. I read somewhere that what we do w/material things is an evidence of how we value spiritual things.* Jesus said, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*<sup>5</sup>

Next Paul lays out a spiritual principle that we've all heard, but most have not connected to the context of how well they tend to the one who teaches them the word of God. He says...

### Vs 7-8

Notice that the benefit of sharing in all good things w/him who teaches, sowing liberally into their lives isn't for the benefit of the teacher (though it's a blessing), it's for the eternal gain of the one who is sowing. The idea is that we can invest our time & money on things that won't last (sowing to the flesh) or we can invest our resources into things that will last forever (sowing to the Spirit). It's common that Christians use their time & money on fleshly things, & then they wonder why they're not growing in grace or reaping a harvest of the Spirit.

Listen, don't be deceived, God is not mocked. You can't skimp on sowing to the things of the Spirit & then expect an enormous spiritual harvest. If you think that to support the ministry, to stand behind the one who teaches you & helps you to grow spiritually is a waste, than you're mocking God who has exhorted you to stand with him.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Mt 6:21]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It's a selfish disposition that says, "I'll take/receive what I can *from him spiritually*, but not support the ministry practically."

But in God's economy He says, "If *you do* support the ministry, it'll serve *you* & bless *you* eternally." You can't out give God, you'll give in a way that's temporary & God will cause it to bless you throughout all of eternity.

It's the simple law of sowing & reaping, the way we sow is the way we reap. & We reap in like manner to what we sow. If we sow a few seeds, we'll get a light harvest, if we sow much seed, we'll reap a much larger harvest. If we sow wheat, we don't get barley, we get wheat. So we reap in proportion & in like manner.

Listen, we can use our material goods to promote the flesh, or promote the things of the Spirit. But once we've sown, we can't change the harvest. Everyone loves sowing to the flesh, but none of us like the harvest. Sowing to the Spirit demands discipline, but harvest time is out of this world! ☺

If you support this ministry, every time someone is saved that goes to your account. We have a radio ministry in Lagos Nigeria that ministers to hundreds of thousands of people (conservatively). When people are changed, when they grow in God's grace, that goes to your account. Anything that we do here or is the result of something done here (thousands blessed at our annual harvest, family day, discipleship, evangelism, missions trips, people being blessed/saved) that all is credited in some way to your account because you've sown into this ministry. So though we don't give as some sort of crude investment scheme, equally true is that God will be a debtor to no man. It's exponential, someone gets saved, they go out & share the gospel w/others who get saved, it all comes back in some form to you who support that ministry.

Now certainly this principle of sowing & reaping goes beyond money & is applicable to our every life decision. But it's rooted in this context.

But it can be discouraging can't it? We sow, we give, we pray, we do good; but not everything in our lives immediately turns around so we want to quit. In Vs 9-10 Paul reminds us that as w/any seed, it takes time, there is a season in which we sow & a season in which we reap & they're rarely close together. I think that for believers our season for sowing is while we're here on this earth. & Though we certainly do *some* reaping on this earth, the primary place in which we'll reap will be in heaven. Quite frankly I'd rather have my reward eternally... So don't lose heart.

God sees what you do, He knows why you do it & your reward is sure. In part in this life, in full in the life to come. God's timing is perfect & in due season, at the right time. You'll reap a harvest that blows away the seed you've sown.

It's like the mother who keeps pushing because she's anticipating the arrival of that baby, she's tired, she wants to quit, but she refuses knowing the reward is soon to follow & it'll be more than she ever could've expected.

We're to be careful to maintain good works, as often as you have opportunity do good to all men. Let your light so shine that people see your good works & glorify your Father who is in heaven. Sometimes the biggest impact you can make on an unbeliever is your simple kindness. **So do good to all, but especially to those of the household of faith. We're all in God's household, we're family. We're to do good to everyone, but family 1<sup>st</sup>. Bearing burdens, sharing blessings... Let's pray & ask the Lord to work these things into our hearts.**

#### Prayer Points:

Lord; we need You to do a deep work in our hearts today. Cause us to be vessels of restoration to the fallen. Give us eyes to see those straining under burdens to large for them to handle on their own & help us to snap to the need & be there for that brother/sister. Father we want to fulfill the law of Christ. May we consider soberly what's been placed before us regarding how we handle our resources practically & may we surrender to you fully in every area of our lives. We thank You God for Your faithfulness.

I know it goes w/out say but I'm gonna say it, you can't fulfill the law *of* Christ until you 1<sup>st</sup> belong *to* Christ. Today I want to give you the opportunity to enter into the family. Not the family of CCJ, the family of J.C. being born again through faith in Him. God loves you, Jesus died for you, it's His desire to forgive you & make you new. Turn from your sin, trust in Him...