

Planting with Purpose

Galatians 6:6-10

As the Apostle Paul began to close his letter to the Galatians, he knew they might try to twist his words. Paul had preached the true Jesus and contended with the false Judaizers. To the glory of God, he had taught:

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Galatians 1:3-5)

But there was trouble in the Galatian churches. There were those who had begun to drift along with the Judaizers. In the strongest possible terms, Paul had proclaimed:

There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:7-9)

Now for us, 2000 years later, it is not hard to see what was happening in these Galatian churches. Those who perverted the Gospel were pulling people away. The people, who had accepted wrong values, were devaluing good doctrine. The result was that they were no longer honoring God with their giving to God's work.

From his writings, we can see that Paul seemed reluctant to talk about giving money to God's ministry. He didn't want to come across as a "money-grubbing preacher." Nevertheless, he knew that Christians could not honor God without giving. We would be wise to heed his counsel.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. (Galatians 6:6)

The word translated "communicate" here means to "share" or "give." The idea is to be a partner with those who are teaching the Word of God and doctrine. (The same word is used in Hebrews 2:14 to show how Jesus *took part* in flesh and blood to destroy the devil's work.) Paul's teaching about giving is an application of what he wrote in Galatians 6:2, "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" So, in essence, Paul said, "be a partner with your pastors." Give of your wealth to the ministry as they minister the Word to you.

This leads us to understand the first practical reminder in today's message:

To honor the Lord, keep giving to His work, v.6

This world, this flesh, the devil and false teachers try to get you to serve yourself. They deceive you into thinking, "if I don't use it, I will lose it." Or "I have to hoard it in order to have it for my benefit." But Christ's teaching is the opposite. He taught:

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.” (Luke 9:23-24) The Gospel changes everything about us. Jesus gave Himself for our sins – laid down His life – to show us what the essence of giving is. In His resurrection, He showed us the power of a planted life and eternal victory.

Regular giving helps you to remember God’s Word and His ways. Regular giving to God’s work helps you to escape from the world’s deception. This deception still abounds, but Paul’s warning is clear: *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”* (Galatians 6:7) The implication is clear: if you aren’t giving, you are not honoring God. But you are fooling yourself if you think you can mock God without consequence.

Tiny choices make a big difference. Right now, during this service, you are making small decisions that have eternal consequences. *Immaturity* says, “I want what I want now, and I don’t care about consequences. *Maturity* says, “Think about the consequences; for every action, there is a reaction.” *Spiritual maturity* says, “Every act of obedience to the revealed will of God has eternal consequences.” If you have the patient faith of a farmer, you see this: what you sow [plant], you will reap [harvest] (Galatians 6:8). Pity the man who doesn’t know that he is putting seed into the ground all the time! You are doing it right now, by your response to God’s Word. Tiny seeds produce a huge crop. Your tiny choices today will make a huge difference in the landscape of your life tomorrow. Your biggest influence on your future is the tiny choices you will make in the next few moments. If you plant self-centered choices, you will harvest only corruption. But if you plant to honor the Spirit, you will harvest eternal blessings. Using the illustration of “sowing and reaping,” Paul seems to have Galatians 5:22-23 in mind. So picture your future living landscape full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. And look beyond to the full harvest of “forever.” Then, stop to ask, “Is it worth it to plant what is being preached right now?” Should I sow what I learn in Sunday School and hold on to my hope for the harvest? Start farming your life by faith!

The world thinks this is unwise; your flesh sees it as foolish. Perhaps you are familiar with the way Earnest Hemingway mocked the Lord’s prayer, using the Spanish word for “nothing” [*nada*]: “Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada.” Hemingway went on to prove that God could not be mocked. As an alcoholic, living a debauched life, he finally put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger.

Now we can see the second practical reminder in today’s text:

To honor the Lord, keep planting good seed, vs. 7-10

Don’t be deceived

Don’t be fooled by the flesh, false teachers, and the world. Plant God’s Word; put it into practice, moment by moment.

Don’t quit

Repent of planting self-centered seed. Plant the seed of the Spirit now, for “sowing and reaping” is still in session!

Think of it this way: Sow a thought, reap an impulse; plant the impulse, reap an action. (This can be taken in a good sense or a bad sense.) Plant those actions and harvest a trend; plant that trend and it becomes a habit. Plant those habits and they become a lifestyle. By some fairly small choices, there could be a dramatic transformation.

Applications:

- Make the choice to give regularly to this ministry of the Word, 6
- Find out what is deceiving you, and stop letting that make inroads into your thinking, 7
- Turn away from deception by hearing and remembering God's Word and obeying it, 7
- Moment by moment, keep your eyes on the harvest. Ask this question: If you had to harvest what you are presently planting, what would you grow, corruption or Christlikeness? 8
- Trust God's promise of the harvest; keep planting seed that honors the Holy Spirit, 9
- Trust God's promise! Keep doing good things for people, especially for other Christians (who have great potential to follow your example), 10

Pastor Gordon Dickson, Calvary Baptist Church, Findlay, Ohio, September 13, 2015