

**Galatians 6: 7 and 8; “Sowing and Reaping”, Message # 59 in the series –  
“Christ has Set us Free”, a Bible Study conducted on September 21st,  
2016, by Pastor Paul Rendall at his home.**

Sometimes when we are studying the word of God we can get into the habit of isolating verses out, away from their context, and thus not really understand what is being said. Here in the first 6 verses of Chapter 6, we have seen that the context has been restoring a brother who has been overtaken in a trespass. In doing so, those who are spiritual need to consider themselves and how they are living the Christian life. Are you helping to bear the burdens of other Christians in the local church, of which hopefully you are a member? How can you effectively fulfill the law of Christ if you are not engaged in this holy duty of helping to bear another Christian’s burdens? In verse 7, then, we find a related matter; another exhortation and a principle for all Christians to take notice of. It is that we should not be deceived, that God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. So, this evening we want to look 1<sup>st</sup> of all, at the possible deception that can come to a Christian; a deception which mocks God. Then, 2<sup>nd</sup>, we want to look at the principle of sowing to the flesh; a principle which reaps corruption. And then 3<sup>rd</sup>, we want to look at the principle of sowing to the Spirit; a principle which will, of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

**1<sup>st</sup> – The possible deception that can come to a Christian; a deception which mocks God.**

The immediate context of verses 7 and 8, we should understand, is financial giving to support the pastoral ministry in the local church. In verse 6, just before the verses that we are studying, it says: “Let him who is taught share in all good things with him who teaches.” Truly, each Christian needs to see, that there is a danger of deception if they think that they can live their Christian life independent of any local church. And, sometimes, even when a person is a member of a local church, they may think that they are exempt from having to financially support the ongoing ministry of the pastoral ministry of teaching and preaching in the church. Paul is saying that all Christians need to be careful because there is deception in this kind of thinking. “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked.” What is the deception which may be taking place here? It is that, when there is a neglect in financial giving, false teachers can possibly come in and take advantage of the church’s weakness in knowing doctrinal truth, and they can in many ways hinder the practical applications of the truth to the lives of true believers.

This deception may take place when there is not someone who is full-time in the ministry; preaching and teaching the truth on an on-going regular basis, so that each member can understand the important doctrinal truths of the Scriptures, and see their need to fulfill their Biblical responsibilities to God. This is more likely to take place when there is not a full-time man in the ministry to guard the flock by a full-orbed ministry of preaching the word. That kind of ministry must have financial support. This was probably what had been happening in the churches of Galatia. False teachers had come in in to the churches of Galatia, and they were deceiving the people; teaching them that they even though they were Christians, that they needed to be circumcised, and observe the law of Moses in its ceremonial regulations. And perhaps it was because no one had been set aside to do this full-time labor of studying the word among them, that these deceptions were the more readily received.

And so, this was the reason that Paul gave a direct exhortation to the churches in Galatia in verse 6, to those who were being taught the word, to share in all good things with him who teaches. The deception lies in the ordinary Christian not seeing the real need that there is, of financial support to the pastor who is spending large amounts of time in the preparation and delivery of sermons; those messages which will lead the people into the truth, and which will feed and spiritually satisfy their souls. So when there is not a godly full-time man raised up to

the ministry, the people might more easily be misled into believing a false gospel, or receiving erroneous doctrine at many points. This neglect of giving to the Lord's work mocks God in that some Christians are deceived into thinking that there is no connection which God has established between the material support of preaching of His word, and the church's reaping lasting spiritual blessings from that ministry.

Let's look at an Old Testament example of this. Turn with me over to Malachi chapter 3, and verses 6-12. "For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob." "Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them." "Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts." "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?'" "Will a man rob God?" Yet you have robbed Me!" "But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?'" "In tithes and offerings." "You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation." "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.'" "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of the ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field, says the Lord of hosts; and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, says the Lord of hosts."

You can see here that God was not going to be mocked by the Jews of that day. He is a God who does not change, and that was the reason that they were not consumed. It was because of His faithfulness in giving blessings to the nation of Israel which made them great. But they had gone away from his ordinances and had not kept them. He tells them to return to Him and they ask – In what way should we return? And God tells them that they had been robbing him in tithes and offerings, and because of that they were being cursed with a curse. If they would bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, there would be food in his house to feed the priests who would then deliver to them, the word of God. It was because they neglected to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that God was bringing these curses upon them, and not blessing them. On the other hand, if they did bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, then God promised that He would open the windows of heaven and pour out for them such blessings that there would not be room enough to receive it. He would rebuke the devourer for your sakes, He says, and all the nations would call them blessed.

I think that it is sometimes the case that Christians who are under the New Covenant can be deceived in this same regard when they do not bring their whole tithe into the storehouse of the church. That tithe, or offering which exceeds it, is used not only for the maintenance of the pastor's salary, but also for the support and maintenance of every aspect of the church's outreach in missions and the promotion of the true worship of God in the community or area that they are in. It is a very vital part of that ministry. If the whole tithe is not brought in to the storehouse of the church, then the work of ministry to the Lord falls down on every side. The Lord has given to every Christian their job, their livelihood, and expects them to proportionately give to His work; the work of the Christian ministry through the local church, and particularly the ministry of preaching and teaching. He is mocked when the Christian does not give proportionately or regularly to His work, but rather is sowing to his own fleshly interests, and God's work and house is neglected.

**2<sup>nd</sup>, we want to look at the principle of sowing to the flesh; a principle which reaps corruption.**

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." "For he who sows to the his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption." This is the fixed principle which lies behind all failures in living a life which is glorifying to God. It is when any person lives by this sinful principle of sowing to the flesh, that they will from the flesh reap corruption;

from the working of sin in their mind, heart, and in their body. If there is no cultivation of the spiritual truths of the word, being lived out in sincerity, then there will only be further corruption of the heart, and neglect of doing the will of God, which will take place, resulting in the loss of the soul if a person will not repent and believe the gospel. Sowing to the flesh not only results in the open neglect of keeping the commandments of God, it also reaps a real corruption in the heart of the person who chooses to live in this God-denying, Spirit-resisting way. And unbelievers and false teachers will promote this ungodly way of living with others. Turn with me over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2, verses 18 and 19. “For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.” “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.” This is the sad outcome of those who do not believe and act upon the promises of God’s word to be delivered from their bondage to sin.

William Hendricksen, the commentator, says on this verse: “Sowing to the flesh means to allow the old nature to have its way.” “So also sowing the Spirit means to allow the Holy Spirit to have its way.” (end of quote) Let’s look at a few verses from Proverbs which may help us in this regard. Proverbs 6: 12 – “A worthless person, a wicked man, walks with a perverse mouth; he winks with his eyes, he shuffles his feet, he points with his finger; perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord.” “Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; suddenly he shall be broken without remedy.” Similarly, verse 19 of chapter 6 – “A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren,” is something that the Lord hates, and it is an abomination to Him.

Proverbs 22: 8 – He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow, and the rod of his anger will fail.” The King James says – “He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.” You can see here that there are real consequences for sowing iniquity, both in this life and in the next. In this life a person will reap sorrow and see the vanity of what he has sown. He will find that his use of anger to try to get other people around him to do what he wants them to do will eventually fail him and as John Gill says: “The rod of his anger shall fail with which he has ruled and smitten others in an angry and cruel manner; this shall be taken from him; his authority shall fail, and he shall become subject to others, and be used in like manner.” So the corruption which is reaped from living according to the flesh, or being in the flesh, is weakness, disease, death, and eternal punishment in hell. It is the vanity of seeing all that that person tried to live for; their work and their sinful and fleshly pursuits, come to a bad end.

**3<sup>rd</sup>, we want to look at the principle of sowing to the Spirit; a principle which will, of the Spirit reap everlasting life.**

Verse 8 says: “For he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” In the Christian there is a far different outcome for their life, because the grace of Christ is at work in their heart. They still have the flesh (the remnants of the old nature) still with them, but what do they do in relation to this evil law of sin dwelling in their members? They are repenting of their sins, and they are mortifying the sinful deeds of the body because they have escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1: 2-4 – “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

This being made partakers of the divine nature means that we have been given a new nature, a new principle whereby we now live our lives to God. In accordance with the Holy Spirit’s regeneration of our heart, and His constant attendance to the needs of our heart, we have

escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. This does not mean that the flesh is no longer with us. But it means that the power and dominion of sin have been broken and we now have the power to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present evil age. In the heart of a true Christian, one who does have the Spirit, we must understand that there is a constant battle going on, of competing desires, as is mentioned in Galatians 5: 17. “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” All that is sown to the flesh begins as desires in the heart for something which God has forbidden by His righteous commandments. And furthermore, in the Christian, these motions of the flesh lust against the motions of the Holy Spirit in the heart. In Romans chapter 7, verses 22-25 to chapter 8, verse 2, we find Paul saying this: “For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.” “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” “O wretched man that I am!” “Who will deliver me from this body of death.” “I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!” “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” This is a very upsetting thing to a Christian to have the flesh continually with him until he physically dies. But, Paul thanks God that he can still serve God acceptably through Jesus Christ our Lord. And he is thankful that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death.

What then, is the Christian’s responsibility in relation to lusts of his flesh? Thankfully, the Holy Spirit is often putting forth motions in the believer’s mind and heart so that they will think about, and be led to do, what is right. Look at Romans 8: 12-14 – “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.” “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” We need to understand, as believers, that we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh, but we do have the responsibility to put to death the deeds of the body so that we will live, and really prove that we have the life of Christ within our heart, helping us on to holiness and righteousness in the way that we live. This is how to reap everlasting life. To put to death the deeds of the body does not mean that we put to death our physical members. It means that we put to death the sinful motions of the heart which have or are trying to convince us to act out in doing something sinful with our body. It is the body of this flesh that we are trying to mortify and weaken and subdue in its motions. It is the old habits of sin which need to be mortified. You no longer want to sow to the flesh; that is pander to what it is trying to convince you to do which is sinful. You want to sow to the Spirit; that is to incline your heart to His blessed motions which will lead you to do right and good things, according to the truth of the Bible, and to the glory of God. May the Lord Himself give us the grace to overcome, the world, our flesh, and the devil.