Reaping the Harvest

Passage: Galatians 6 | Speaker: Steve Grothoff | Date: 261108

SUMMARY

Galatians 6 closes the letter with three practical charges: bear the burden, reap the harvest, and stay the path. Restoring someone caught in sin calls for gentleness and a goal of repentance, leaving the convicting to the Holy Spirit, while each person still carries his own load. We reap what we sow: sowing to the flesh, even in the name of ministry, yields corruption, and sowing to the Spirit yields eternal life, so we do not grow weary of doing good. Paul boasts only in the cross and bears the marks of Jesus, standing firm without compromise. Steve ends with three questions for the church to consider this week.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- When someone is caught in sin, restore them with gentleness. Our aim is repentance, not condemnation, and the Holy Spirit does the convicting.
- Bear one another's burdens without taking them over. Each of us has our own load, and we are called to pick it up alongside one another.
- What you sow is what you reap. Sowing to the flesh, whether through watering down the gospel or building a following, reaps corruption, and sowing to the Spirit reaps eternal life.
- Do good out of love for Christ and for others rather than obligation, and do not grow weary, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.
- Stay the path: boast only in the cross, know the gospel well enough to discern what contradicts it, and be willing to stand for the truth as Paul did.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 6

Chapter 6 of Galatians, we'll get there one of these days where we all just stay standing. If not, hey, it's good for the legs and the glutes, right?

So, alright, we are going to do all of chapter 6 and finish out with Galatians today.

Chapter 6 says, Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourselves, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.

For each will have to bear his own load. Let the one who has taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, he will also reap. For the one who sows in his flesh will also reap corruption. But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap. If we do not give up, so then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh, who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law. But they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh. But far be it for me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor circumcision, but a new creation. And as for all who walk in this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. But now, from now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Christ. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Father, we thank you for your word. Father, we thank you for this time that we get to come together and just talk about you and what it is that you would have for us in our lives. Father, help us as we go through this to just get a little bit more of a practical application to everything that we've covered thus far in Galatians. And Father, just help us to bear with that and bear one another's burdens. And

Father, to just do as you would have us to do, to follow your will for us. And Father, at the end of the day, when we get to heaven, we can look to you and hear you say, well done, my good and faithful servant.

Father, we thank you for your word. Father, we love you.

We ask all these things in your son's name. Amen. All right. Thank you, guys. All right.

Introduction: Three Topics

So we're covering a full chapter, but it's a short chapter. We've got three topics that I want to cover this morning. And the three different things that he talks about here, the three sections that I really want us to focus on is number one, bearing the burden. Number two, reaping the harvest. And number three, staying the path. These are the three topics that he covers here. And so let's dive in. We see here in verse one, he says, if anyone is caught in any transgression.

Point 1: Bearing the Burden

What he's saying here, he says, is caught up in. He's not saying, you know, found out, like you've been doing something you're not supposed to do and somebody catches you and you're like, oh, well, you caught me. What he's talking about is caught up in and he's talking about being overcome by temptation or falling into sin, not living a life of unrepentant sin.

These two things are to be handled differently. We'll cover the other one later on in another book. But for today, we're going to talk about how we are supposed to deal with someone who has been overtaken by temptation or has fallen into a sin. And it says there in verse two, you who are spiritual, when he says spiritual here, he's talking about more mature in faith, the more mature, the more, the wiser in the faith, the stronger in the faith, those that are a little bit more experienced in their walk with Christ.

Restoring with Gentleness

These people are supposed to restore with a spirit of gentleness. Now, the word restore here, he's talking about men, heal, repair, fix, something of that nature. The original word that they use here is talking about, it's actually a medical term that's talking about how to reset a joint. Like if you dislocate something, how to relocate and reset a joint. That is the word that he's using here for restore with a spirit of gentleness. Joel, I'm going to pick on you. I'm sorry, I didn't know. But so imagine if you will, there's a illustration for you guys. There's a car accident and two different parties show up. The police

show up and the paramedics show up. There's two different groups of people there that show up. The police show up. They are there to discover the cause, assign the blame, and assess the collateral damage that happened. That is their purpose.

When a paramedic shows up, he doesn't care who caused it. They don't care how it happened. They don't care about any of that. They are there to assess the damage of the victims. They are also there to stabilize, treat, heal, mend, or refer to more equipped facilities. That is the job of a paramedic.

Aim for Repentance, Not Condemnation

Too often, when we have a fellow brother or sister caught up in sin, we want to show up and be like the police. We want to be, what happened? Why would you do that?

This wouldn't have happened if you had done X, Y, Z. We need to, what Paul is telling them here is that we need to gently and lovingly guide people back to Christ. We need to be more of that paramedic. Is everything okay? How can I help?

What can we do to prevent this from happening again in the future? The way that we handle things is going to tell a lot, not only of our spiritual maturity, but also, it's going to speak a lot into that person, whether or not they even want to continue being in fellowship with you. Who wants to be in fellowship with somebody that is constantly condemning them, that is constantly telling them that what they're doing is wrong?

Our goal as fellow Christians is to help bring about repentance, not condemn. We don't need to do the Holy Spirit's job. It's the Holy Spirit's job to convict. It's the Holy Spirit's job to guide them back to Christ. It is our job to love them, be there for them, point them in that direction, but let the Holy Spirit do the work.

I have a book in my office. It's a very short book. It's more of a pamphlet. It's called The Theology of Sleep by John MacArthur. And really, it's not about sleep so much at all as it is about just resting in knowing that it's not our job all the time to be the person that says the right thing, does the right thing, and all of these things. God is working all the time. And if we consistently think, I have to do this, I have to do this in order for God to move, then you're missing the point. That's the whole purpose of this 15-page pamphlet is, it's our job to point people to Christ, but God will handle the rest. And we'll get into some of that with this reaping and sowing a little bit later on.

Bear One Another's Burdens

Verses 2 through 5, there it tells us that we are to bear one another's burdens. Be the paramedic arriving to the scene. Aid them. Come alongside them. Help them walk through this trial. Bear their burden.

He says this is the fulfillment of the law of Christ. This is what you are called to do. This is the fulfillment of the law of Christ. The law of Christ is to love your neighbor. Love God. Love your neighbor. Loving one another and discipling one another, even through tough times, through things that maybe seem a little bit more difficult to love somebody because something is happening in their life and something that is difficult.

But the reason that he says this also here in verse 3, he says, don't think too highly of yourself because you, he says, keep watch lest you be tempted. Keep watch. Don't look at yourself and regard yourself too highly or take too much credit for what's going on. Well, I've helped this person through this time. I did this. No, God did it. He used you to do it.

Verse 4, he says, but let each one test his own work and then let his reason to boast be himself, not his neighbor. What he's telling us there and what he also tells us there in verse 5 is worry about your own life. Worry about the things that are going on in your own life. Don't be too concerned with what everybody else has going on. If somebody, if you notice that somebody's struggling, yes, absolutely. But we don't need to constantly be in each other's business. Well, I saw that you were doing this. Well, I saw that you were doing this. Listen, it's not the way that we need to be. Verses 5, he sells them to that we each have our own burden to bear or our own load to bear. He uses two different words here. He uses the word burden first. And then this time he uses the word load. That's for good reason. Word burden is talking about a heaviness or a weight. It gives the connotation of something extra or unnecessary. When he talks about load here, he's talking about the cargo on a ship or a wagon. It's the word that they used for that when he's talking about load there. And he says that with a connotation of responsibility.

Each Carries His Own Load

This was also a word that the military used to talk about their own pack of their own supplies and their own personal belongings. It's something that they carried with them everywhere. It was their own stuff. It was their responsibility. It was the things that they dealt with. Every one of us has something in our life that is our own responsibility, that is ours to deal with.

But there are times that somebody else is struggling to carry theirs. And it's easier to walk behind them and grab the back of that pack and help pick them up. Pick it up and help them carry it. Be the person that's there beside them. Don't take it from them. That's not what he's saying. He says, bear the load together. Grab a hold of it. Pick it up. Take some of the weight off of them. Help them move forward. That is what he's trying to discuss here. That's what he's telling them. Then he's talking here, verses 6 through 10. We'll get into our second point, reaping the harvest.

Point 2: Reaping the Harvest

I read this section as a warning to the leadership to the churches in Galatia. That's not explicitly stated, but as we go through it, you'll see he's covering a pretty heavy warning to leadership.

Supporting Those Who Teach

Verse 6, let the one who has taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

Amen. I'm just kidding, guys.

I read this verse, and it tells me that there is a duty from those who are taught the word to support the one who teaches it. But that's not a one-sided thing. The duty that the one that teaches has, Paul covers this in Timothy, both of his letters to Timothy. Paul tells Timothy, who's a newly appointed pastor and aspiring church planter, to give attention to reading, exhortation, and doctrine. And not to become entangled in the affairs of this life. He tells Timothy to simply preach the word.

Be watchful in all things. Endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist. And fulfill his ministry.

Those that teach and those that are taught are two different people. There's a differentiation there saying that not all are teachers, and not all are to be taught.

Everybody's to be taught. Not all are able to teach. Not all are of a place. There's a differentiation there that's stating there are two different types of people. There are two different types of lives that need to be lived for this. He's giving a warning to those that had been leading them astray. He's giving a warning to the groups of people in this book that had been guiding them off the path of the gospel. That had been leading them in different directions.

God Is Not Mocked

He follows this statement with a very stern warning. He says, Do not be deceived, for God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that he will also reap.

Do not be deceived. God will not be mocked.

That's pretty stern language.

In the midst of his exhortation to Timothy, Paul also warns him that there will become a time when people will not endure sound doctrine. That they will be turned away from the truth for their own desires.

Nothing new under the sun. We live in a world that that's the way of the world nowadays. We don't want to know sound doctrine. We don't want to know this. We want to follow our own desires. We want to know our own things. We want to live our own truth. We don't follow the truth of what the gospel says. It's easy to get swayed by the world.

Compromising the Gospel

Anymore, there are the same that there has been since the beginning of the church. There are so-called Christians compromising the gospel for the sake of inclusivity and not wanting to be offending others. People water down truth to make it palatable for others, for unbelievers. They ignore the repentance part of salvation and only talk about the grace. Well, you don't have to change who you are. God's going to love you anyways.

That's not at all what Paul is getting at here. That's not at all what Paul was getting at in Romans when he says, Do I continue sinning so that grace may abound? He says, absolutely not.

Change the way that you are because you love God. Don't think that you can just keep doing what you're doing and God's going to keep loving you.

We talked last week that there are things that God hates. Proverbs was very clear. There are things that God hates.

He says, six of them God hates, seven are an abomination.

It's not light talk for something. If God hates something, then we shouldn't be doing it.

Sowing to the Flesh or the Spirit

Verse eight.

If we are too concerned with the worldly aspect of our Christian journey, we won't be focused on the eternal wards of heaven. He says, for what? When you reap of your own flesh, you will only reap corruption. But if you reap, one who sows of the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life. Again, we have a problem in Christianity. We have a problem in churches. And I use the word Christian and church very loosely and very lightly. Because these are people that don't know or truly share the truth of the gospel. People get too focused on knowing what the Bible says, but they are too busy in their life to learn how to live it or apply it to their life. They just know it. Well, I know what the Bible says, but they don't apply it. They can tell you stuff about the Bible, but they can't share the gospel with others because they don't know how to share the gospel because the gospel has not transformed their life. They know words that the Bible uses. They know words that the Bible doesn't use. They know all these big, long words, ists and isms, and things that the Bible, like, are you a continuationist or a cessationist? The Bible doesn't use any of those terms. And the Bible also tells us not to be divisive. It tells us not to divide ourselves among one another. We're supposed to keep the main thing the main thing. And we too often want to learn and know more in an attempt to separate us from one another. when under the umbrella of salvation, we are all saved.

And we need to stay that way, and we need to not divide ourselves.

But we also have this other thing. We have churches that concern themselves more with rebranding themselves, becoming more relevant to the world. We have churches that are trying to be more inviting to young people. We have churches that are trying to do all of these things, trying to change all of these things. But in the process of doing that, they are ignoring the sharing of the truth of the gospel. They're watering down what it is so that they don't scare anyone off. They focus on the people in the seats, and not the person who they are supposed to be gathered together worshiping. They're more focused on who is there, instead of who it is that they're there for.

We have pastors in the world that spend more time amassing a following, but they don't ever spend time discipling those that are under their care. They have hundreds or thousands of people in their congregation, but they don't know any one of them. They don't know what's going on. You don't even know most of those people have never actually one-on-one met their pastor.

They use smooth talk and inclusive, tolerant gospel language to draw people in to hear them make themselves feel successful. But they ignore the authority and the truth of Scripture and preach sermons pointing to self, not Christ.

They are reaping of the flesh. They are sowing in the flesh and reaping of the flesh. They will get their reward. Their reward is here on earth when people walk up and say, man, you've got such a big following of people, or man, you know all of these things about the Bible, or as a church, man, you guys have so many people that come to church, but the people that come to church aren't worth their salt when it comes to knowing the gospel or being Christians. They're just butts in seats. These are the kinds of people that on judgment day,

Jesus will say, or they'll say to Jesus, well, I did all of these things for the kingdom. No, you did all these things for yourself. And Jesus will say, depart from me, for I never knew you. Why we do what we do, the position of our heart and the motivation behind why we do what we do is what matters.

Do Not Grow Weary

Verses 9 and 10. Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good for everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

When we do things out of the love, out of our love for Christ and for one another, it's easier to continue doing good.

When we do those things out of obligation, knowing that it's because it's what we're supposed to do, it becomes a chore or a burden.

My wife's not in here. She's in with the kids today, but I've joked with her before. I've got projects, tons of projects around my house, tons of things around the house. And she's like, well, I keep telling you, you need to do that. I'm like, well, I'll do it when I want to do it.

It's more beneficial, it's more motivational to me to think, oh yeah, I've got to do this, I'm going to go do it, as opposed to, well, she wants me to go do this, so I better go do it. But what is our motivation for doing things? What is our motivation? How much easier is it for us to go and continue doing good and not growing weary of doing good when we know that at the end of the day, it's not for us? The things that we're doing are not for ourselves. We do good for others for others. We don't do it for ourselves. We do it because we enjoy the benefit that comes to them, not to us.

And then he tells us there in verse 10 that this should be an even more common thing among our believers, among us as believers. We as believers should be the people that are most selfless, especially with one another. It's easy to be selfless among the world too sometimes, but man, how much easier is it to just know that what you're doing is not only appreciated, but is understood as

you're not doing it for yourself. It's easy sometimes to do something and somebody's like, well, you just did that because blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. No, we do things for ourselves, yes. But when we do things for others and we do it for the sake of others, it means that much more.

Point 3: Staying the Path

And then the last part, verses 11 through 18, Paul is talking about staying the path.

Verse 11 there, he says, see with what large letters I am writing to you in my own hand. This, the most likely reason for this verse, it's kind of a weird spot. But what probably, what this most likely means is either A, Paul wrote the entirety of this letter on his own. And that's unusual because usually he had what they call an aminousis. Somebody who wrote the letter for him, somebody who he dictated the letter and they wrote it down. So either he wrote the whole letter himself or he specifically wrote this section to them.

And he does this to show his affection for the Galatian churches. Guys, I wrote this. This is my heart that is on these pages.

Here in my hand is my commendations to you. Here is my exhortation to you. It's more personal. He adds his own personality to it a little bit. And he says, see with what large letters I'm writing. We talked before, we think there's a distinct possibility Paul had some sort of eye condition or something that was one of the reasons why he was possibly visiting Galatia at the time.

And he tells them there in 12 and 13 that the whole point, the whole purpose of all of these people that came and led them astray, the whole purpose was for their own personal gain. He's hinting at they were sowing in the flesh. They were doing these things for themselves. They did it so they could boast in how many people they had converted. They did it so they could boast in how many people did what they asked them to do and not what God was asking them to do.

He says they themselves don't even keep the law. They don't even do it. They want you to do it, but they don't even do it. Not only that, but the only reason they're telling you to be circumcised to do this is so that they can boast in themselves. They're not doing it for God. They're not doing it for your sake. They're doing it for their own sake.

This is the whole purpose of Paul's letter here is you have people that are telling you things that you don't need to be doing. You are doing things that are contrary to what the gospel says. You are doing more than what the gospel even requires of you and not for good reason because you think that it's what's going to save you and not the salvation and repentance and faith that's going to save you. You think that, well, I have to do this in order to be saved.

The whole purpose of this letter is to remind the Galatian church that we are no longer bound by the law, but we are free in Christ to walk according to the Spirit. That's the flow of this whole letter.

Boasting Only in the Cross

Verse 14 and 15, he says,

but far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

Paul says, I don't boast in anything but Christ. I know that everything that I've done, I wouldn't have done if it hadn't been for Jesus. I wouldn't have done had it not been for Christ.

I know that I, by my own power, my own volition, would not have done all of the things, nor would I have had the knowledge and wisdom to do all of the things that I've done for you guys. But he also tells them there, the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. He says, I am no longer attracted to or influenced by the world. I live contrary to what the world tells me I should be living.

The law no longer matters to me for I am a new creation. I'm a new creation, he says there at the end of 15. Neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision. Anything, anything that I do for myself, anything that I do of my own desire for a reason to get, possibly get closer to Christ, any of those things amount to nothing.

I do what I do because the Holy Spirit guides me. I do what I do because I have been justified. That's what he says there in his final, his final benediction to them 16 through 18.

He says, for all who have been justified by faith, freed from the law and are walking in the spirit and all of the rest of the children of promise, peace and mercy be to you.

For all of you who have, who have stayed the path, for all of you who have continued on the course that I laid out for you, that God laid out for me to lay out to you, for those of you who have stayed with the course, you have all of these things. You are now justified. You are freed and you are walking in the spirit.

The Marks of Jesus

Verse 17, from now on let no one cause me trouble. He says, don't let this be a problem again. It's essentially what he's saying. He's like, don't let this come up again. Don't make me write Galatians 2 Galatians telling you about this again.

He says, for now let no one cause me trouble.

He says, I know what I believe and I won't waver on that. I never have. I came and I told you guys something. I'm writing you a letter. I'm telling you the exact same thing that I told you when I was there in person.

And there he says, for I bear the marks of Jesus on my body. What he's saying there is, I have been persecuted and tortured for the gospel and I didn't give up. I didn't turn away from it.

Paul had been, at this point, Paul had been stoned at least once and beaten with rods at least twice by this point.

Paul was pretty broken. Paul was pretty beat up. But you know what he did? He stood firm and he continued to stand firm in what he believed. He didn't give up. He didn't compromise.

How easy is it sometimes for us to compromise and we haven't gone through the persecution that he does. Somebody looks at us weird because we say something that's kind of, Christian or biblical and they just kind of look at us like, and you're like, oh well, I'm going to not do that to that person again. No, Paul was like, I have been beaten within an inch of my life more, more times than I care to count and I'm still doing what I'm doing and I'm still continuing to do it and I will continue to do it.

He says, I haven't given up on you. He calls them brothers. There in verse 18. It's the last word that he says before he says amen. He calls them brothers. I have not given up on you. I'm still calling you. You are still my brothers in Christ. You are still my family.

You've been through a lot. You have done things that are not okay, but guess what? At the end of the day, I still call you my brother in Christ. Christ.

Three Questions to Leave With

So how do we live by this? How do we apply this in our life? How do we deal with this?

I have three questions for you guys with a lot of follow-up questions to some of them.

Number one, are we the paramedics or the police when we arrive at the scene of someone caught up in sin? Do we condemn or do we comfort? Do we help them up, dust them off, put our arm around them and say, hey, I'm here for you? Or do we look down at them while they're on the ground with our hands on our hips shaking our head saying, well, saw that coming. I knew that was going to happen. You've been living this way for so long, I'm surprised this hasn't happened earlier. Are we the people

that comfort or are we the people that condemn when somebody stumbles, when somebody deals with something that is contrary to what we know is okay? How do we deal with those people? How do we love those people?

Second question, big question, are we focused on reaping the harvest of heaven or the harvests of earth?

Do we do things for our own benefit or do we do things for the glory of God? Do we trust that God will help us plant, water, tend, and harvest or do we try to do it all of our own volition? what are we sowing? What do we want to reap? For all the farmers in here, if you go out and plant soybeans, you expect soybeans to grow. You don't plant soybeans and up pops corn.

What you sow is what you will reap.

Why should we expect any different? If we are doing the things that God asks us to do, if we are sowing in a way that God called us to sow, then we will reap in the way that God promised that we will reap.

Which leads us to the third question.

Are we staying the path?

Are we sticking to our convictions? Are we standing firm in our beliefs?

Do we know the word well enough to be able to discern when somebody is preaching something that is contrary to the gospel? Do we know the gospel well enough for that? Then follow up to that, do we know it well enough to be able to discuss and dispute someone on that? Do we know it well enough when somebody says something and you say, I don't think that's quite right? Do you have enough biblical knowledge to be able to refute that with them?

And the main question behind all of that is, are you truly willing to stand up for the truth? Or are we ashamed to stand up in a end of the gospel? How often do we shy away from somebody because we just don't want to get into that conversation with someone? Or how often do we think, well, now is really not the time. I've got somewhere else I need to be. I can't, somebody's saying something a little sideways over here. I'm not going to, but I'm not, I don't have time to deal with that right now. I've got other things to do.

Or do we truly want to stand up for the truth? Are we willing to stand face to face with somebody ten toes down for the gospel? Are we really willing to do that?

Those are the questions I want to leave you guys with this week. Those are the things I want us to think about as we read, as we think through what we've talked about throughout Galatians, is, are we doing our part to ensure that if Paul looked at our church, we wouldn't get a letter like he wrote to the Galatians? If Paul looked around our church and saw the way that we were living, would it be a letter like that, or would it be a letter more like he wrote to Timothy that was more exhortation and more, hey, keep doing what you're doing?

What kind of letter would Paul write to a church like ours?

And I want us to all, that's something I'd like for us to kind of all think about and really ponder this week.

Father, we thank you for your word. Father, we love you.

Closing Prayer

Father, we thank you for the difficult sometimes conversations that we have to have with ourselves as we read your word. Father, we love the conviction that comes from it because, Father, we all just want to be better.

Father, we just want to do your will.

So, Lord, be with us as we go through our week. Help us to stay prepared in season and out of season to contend for the word. Contend is a word that carries a heavy connotation that, Father, we are willing to fight for it. We are willing to give everything that we have for the gospel.

Father, we love you. Father, we thank you for your word. Father, we thank you for the privilege that it is and the freedom that we have to come together to discuss your word and to equip one another to go out and do what we are to do, preach the gospel.

Father, we love you. We ask all of these things in your son's name. Amen.

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