

20260531 Don't Grow Weary – Ps Bijoy

Galatians 6:1-10

In Galatians 6:1-10, the apostle Paul gives us a series of practical examples of how Spirit-led believers are to live. But before we can appreciate these instructions, we need to understand the heart condition Paul is addressing here.

The problem Paul has been pressing throughout this letter is what the Greek calls *kenodoxia* - vainglory. Literally, it means to be empty of glory. It describes a person who is desperate for recognition and affirmation, someone who senses a deep inner emptiness and tries to fill it through the approval of others. Romans 1 tells us that every human being was made to honour and serve God, and to find our true satisfaction in Christ. That is what we were made for. But because we have turned away from God, that cavity remains unfilled, and we go out into every relationship trying to extract from people what only God can give. We use people rather than serve them. We compare, compete, and manoeuvre all to bolster a fragile sense of self-worth.

This is the soil in which Paul plants his instructions. Everything in chapter 6 is his answer to this condition addressed first at the behavioural level, and ultimately at the level of identity.

Sinners Restored (v. 1)

"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."

Paul begins with a hypothetical but entirely realistic situation, a believer who has been overtaken by sin. The word overtaken is significant. It carries the sense of someone who has been caught or trapped before they were fully aware of what was happening. It is the picture, not of a deliberate rebel, but of a person carelessly living in the flesh who has been ambushed like an animal stepping into a trap with steel teeth that snaps shut before they can react.

This is what makes the situation so pastorally delicate. The person before you is not defiant, they are caught, they are in pain and they need help.

Paul says that those who are walking in the Spirit are the ones who should move toward such a person. He is not describing an elite category of super-saints. He is describing any believer whose heart is set to follow the Lord and who genuinely wants to be led by the Holy Spirit. And the manner of restoration is everything. The word restore was used in the first century in two ways - for the setting of a broken or

dislocated bone, and for the mending of torn fishing nets. Both require great care and precision. A careless physician can cause far more damage than the original injury. The emphasis in Paul's instruction is not on the brother's sin, but on his restoration.

And then the sobering caution: "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The word considering means to look on the matter with continual diligence. Restorers must guard against the self-righteousness that looks down on those they are seeking to help. They must remember that they are subject to the same temptations. Peter is the great illustration of this, the man who declared he would never deny the Lord, and within hours had done so three times, brought down not by a powerful adversary but by the questions of a servant girl. If it could happen to Peter, it can happen to any of us. Those who think they stand must stay humble lest they fall.

Burdens Shared (v 2-5)

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load."

Verse 2 flows naturally from verse 1. Those who are seeking to restore a fallen brother have the responsibility of bearing his burden. The word burden here refers to any weight too heavy for a person to carry alone - a crushing load.

The imagery is straightforward. If someone is struggling under a hundred-pound weight and you come to help, you cannot truly help them without some of that weight falling on you. Jonathan Edwards says, "when people offered him the excuse that they could not afford to help the poor. He replied: if we are never obliged to relieve another's burden except when we can do so without burdening ourselves, how exactly do we bear our neighbour's burden when we bear no burden at all?" That is the whole point. Real help costs something. Real love involves sacrifice.

Christians talk freely about love and bearing one another's burdens, but far too often few actually become involved. The excuses are plentiful: not enough time, too many problems of their own, not experienced enough. Paul calls for a kind of community that operates on the principle Christ himself demonstrated – I serve you, and not for anything in return (Jesus came to serve and not to be served). All real love, at its deepest level, involves substitutionary sacrifice. This is not only the message of the gospel; it is the shape of the life the gospel produces.

Those who take on this commitment fulfil the law of Christ, the commandment to love one another, which Christ himself gave (John 13:34), and which comprehends all other commands. When we are asking how to respond to a struggling friend, the question is simply: what would Jesus want me to do? Would He want me to be judgmental? Or would He want me to care enough to get involved?

The distinction in verse 5 is important. The word for burden in verse 2 is *baros* - a crushing, oppressive weight. The word for load in verse 5 is *phortion*, more like a backpack, a personal cargo that each person carries on the journey. These are not contradictory instructions. There are burdens too heavy to bear alone, and when we see someone crushed by one, we are to step in. But each of us also carries a personal load of responsibilities and accountabilities for which we will answer to God alone. We cannot carry that for one another and comparing backpacks only breeds the pride and spiritual superiority Paul has just warned against.

Resources Shared (v. 6)

"Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor."

Paul turns from burden-bearing to a practical expression of fellowship. The word *communicate* means to participate in a common sharing - *koinonia*. Those who have been taught the word of God are to share generously with those who teach them and with their fellow brethren. It is difficult to know exactly what the apostle meant by "share ... in all good things" (v 6). Some believe he was referring to financial support, others believe he meant to provide mutual encouragement within the fellowship. Whether this refers primarily to financial support or to the broader mutual encouragement of the fellowship has been debated, nevertheless we are called to share our resources to bless each other.

It is the reflection of the same principle at work throughout the Galatians - a community that gives, serves, supports, and bears one another up, rather than one that just takes, competes, and uses.

Sowing and Reaping (vv. 7-9)

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Paul issued a strong warning to those Galatian believers who did not think it mattered which group of teachers they followed (teachers of grace or Judaizers). He commanded, "Be not deceived (stop being deceived)" (v 7). In other words, if they did not think it mattered which teachers they followed, they were already self-deceived. This type of attitude mocks God (v 7). Mocking is turning up the nose at, ignoring, or holding in contempt. But God cannot be "mocked" by mankind (v 7). He is unaffected by anything we think or do. Therefore, those holding this attitude are hurting only themselves. The law of sowing and reaping is immutable. What is true in the physical realm is equally true in the spiritual: "Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

The word flesh here refers to the old nature, the bent toward sin that produces the works Paul mentions in chapter 5. The result of sowing to the flesh is corruption, like spoiled crops rotting in the field, producing nothing but decay and eventual death. Those who follow a system of works-righteousness, or who live carelessly according to the desires of the old nature, are sowing to the flesh. The harvest will reflect the seed.

But those who sow to the Spirit, who walk in step with the Spirit, bear one another's burdens, restore the fallen, trusting God for their righteousness reap life everlasting. And not only that: they reap a harvest of blessing in this life as well.

Consider the weight of this. Every day, in every choice, we are planting seeds. Every act of service or selfishness, every habit of thought, every pattern of living - we are sowing either to the flesh or to the Spirit. And we will reap accordingly.

The promise in verse 9 is given precisely because this is hard. There will be seasons when doing good feels thankless, when you have served and given and prayed and nothing seems to change. Paul's counsel is simple and firm: do not give up. The harvest does not always come when we expect it. Some of it will be seen in this life. Much of it will only be fully revealed at the judgment seat of Christ. But it is coming. Those who persevere in well-doing will reap in due season.

Doing Good to All (v 10)

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

With these words Paul draws together the entire practical section of the letter. The word opportunity carries the sense of a seasonable or fitting moment - a kairos moment, an open door. The exhortation

is not merely to respond when some special opportunity arises, but to actively look for occasions in this season of life to do good, while we still have the chance.

The scope is wide: all men. Not only fellow believers, not only those who are like us or who can repay us. The Spirit-filled believer extends goodness without discrimination to neighbour and stranger, to the grateful and the ungrateful alike. But there is a particular responsibility to the household of faith. Brothers and sisters in Christ have a special claim on our attention and care. We are called to love and care for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Conclusion: The Gospel that Heals

But we cannot end without asking the deepest question: how does any of this become possible? How does a vainglorious heart - perpetually turned inward, desperate for recognition, using people rather than serving them, how does that heart become one that genuinely lives for Christ and serve others?

Paul answers in verse 14: " May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Boasting in the cross is not merely a doctrinal position. It is an identity. Everyone boasts in something, that is, everyone has something they look to for their confidence, their validation, their sense of worth. The vainglorious person boasts in their reputation, their achievements, their relationships. But all of these are fragile, and the devil will always outflank them.

The cross offers something entirely different. Because of what Christ has done, God looks at the believer in Christ and does not see their sin and failure, but the righteousness of His Son. C. S Lewis captures it in *The Weight of Glory*: "The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last." Acceptance, acknowledgment and the applause of God himself.

When that becomes real, when a person genuinely finds their identity not in what others think of them, but in what God has declared about them in Christ -the world loses its power to control them. Criticism does not destroy them. Failure does not define them. They no longer need to use people to fill an emptiness that has already been filled. They are free to go into every relationship and serve others, in the spirit of Christ.

In 1955, Billy Graham came to Cambridge intimidated by his audience. For the first four nights he sought to impress them with philosophical references and intellectual currency. He did not do well. On the final night he set all of that aside and simply preached the cross, the blood, the atonement, the

substitutionary death of Christ. At the end of that sermon, four hundred young men and women committed their lives to Christ. Years later, one of them reflected: "All I remember is walking out thinking-Christ really died for me."

That is what boasting in the cross looks like. Not intellectual performance, not polished presentation, but a heart so convinced of the gospel that it cannot help but proclaim it and a life so shaped by the gospel that it cannot help but live it.

Bear one another's burdens. Restore the fallen gently. Sow to the Spirit without growing weary. Do good to all, as you have opportunity.

The harvest is coming!