

⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9 The previous verse (8) reminded the Galatians about the metaphor of sowing and reaping. It began with a warning that living for the fallen nature in which we were born ends in destruction. To live in those works of the flesh listed in chapter 5:19-21 means you won't see the kingdom of God. And if you don't see the kingdom, you face the consequences of your actions which is corruption. We see examples of this in the news and daily life. Those who live for the physical realm and selfish interests may have some enjoyment here and there, but they are spiritually empty without Christ. There is a gnawing emptiness within, and it often leads to depression or drug abuse. Sometimes it even leads to suicide. When I meet those who are at that point, I tell them that if they are going to throw their life away, why not throw it into the hands of Jesus and see what He can do with you. Perhaps saddest of all are those who have no hope and think that death is the end and that they will not face judgment for rejecting the mercy and grace of God, only to find out it is the beginning of eternity.

If you want good things to come into your life from God and others, sow goodness into others' lives. When the time is right you will reap, probably when you need it most. It can become wearisome to give and give and give, but look to the Lord and let Him renew your strength. **Be sure it is not your strength but that of the Lord in you. The fuel for the fire in your soul comes from meeting Jesus in the Word and prayer.**

Think of it as investing. Jesus told us to lay up our treasure in heaven and not on the earth (Matthew 6:19-21ⁱ). Numerous times in Scripture we are told that God will repay us for the sacrifices we make for Him (Luke 6:35ⁱⁱ; 2 John 1:8ⁱⁱⁱ). A reward is unnecessary as He has done so much for us that we should gladly give ourselves in service to Him, but the promise of repayment is still there. See the current blessing in the recipient's appreciation and the smile on Jesus' face (Romans 2:7^{iv}). Know that the greater reaping is yet to come. We will go to our heavenly reward as our sister Joan Rawlins did last week and brother Tony Isola a few weeks before her, if we do not give up.

Anyone can become weary continually expressing the fruits of the Spirit and need rest, especially when we labor in our own strength. We need to take time to refuel, to get in the Word and prayer. We need to be looking to Jesus, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of God (Hebrews 12:2^v)! Remember the joy set before us: being face to face with Him!

Remember what it took for Israel to take the Promised Land, and the cost of giving up before it was completed (Hebrews 10:36^{vi}). Perseverance is the lesson we should take from their story. This instruction is the opposite of the prosperity gospel that promises get rich now by giving. It is telling us to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3^{vii}). We seek a heavenly city that has foundations (Hebrews 11:10^{viii}). We are seeking more than the flatlanders can imagine as they try to satisfy themselves with the works of the flesh.

¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10 Since this law of sowing and reaping is true, use every opportunity God sets before us to do good to all people, but especially those in the body of Christ (5:13^{ix}; Ephesians 2:19^x). Practice your generosity with God's people and then reach out from there to those you meet. The church is our

spiritual family, so we should naturally be first concerned for their needs, physical and spiritual. *It is where we find identity and security, receive nurture and nourishment, get encouragement and support, benefit from teaching and training, modeling and mentoring, discipline and discipleship. The local church is our spiritual home, and those who gather week by week are, Biblically speaking, our true brothers and sisters.*^{xi} (See Mark 3:33-35^{xii}) And of course we are to meet the needs of our own flesh and blood family as well (1 Timothy 5:8^{xiii}).

Paul prioritizes our giving to the family of faith because it is the bride of Christ.

Jesus is the head of this body. It is the residence of the Holy Spirit. It is His temple in the world today. Just as the Jews were to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, which was the temple (Malachi 3:10^{xiv}), so today we bring our offerings at the leading of the Spirit into the household of faith, the temple, today. This household will become the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2^{xv}). Jesus purchased us with His own blood (Acts 20:28^{xvi}).

I remember a pastor who often flew to his destinations of ministry. He noticed that if people asked his occupation and found he was a pastor, they wouldn't talk further with him. So, he decided to describe his occupation in a different way. He would answer that he worked for a worldwide organization with branches in every country. It's an organization that helps people find their purpose and destiny. He is the CEO of one particular branch but often goes to speak at other branches around the world. He would explain that he loves his work because it helps needy people find peace and joy. Well, of course that piques interest and they ask more questions. He tells them the organization has the best benefits. That is one reason he likes working for it (the grace of Jesus, love of the Father and joy in the Holy Spirit). Eventually he is sharing the gospel with them.

It's true! We are part of the largest organization in the world. It is one that has the brightest future. It is the only one worth investing your time and money because it will outlast all the others. And the retirement plan is out of this world!

But sadly, many people see the church as just an hourly addendum to their weekly routine. They have no interaction with the church (their fellow believers) all week long. They make no effort to build relationships or learn about their brothers and sisters in Christ. Maybe that is because they have been hurt before in a fellowship, or maybe they just don't want to get close to other people. But they are missing out on experiences with Jesus because the church is His body. Sure, it is messy at times, just like any family, but it is often so gloriously fulfilling.

¹¹ *See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.* Galatians 6:11 Paul may have picked up an eye disease in Pamphylia. Historical information testifies to a contagious eye disease in that region. He did not preach there, perhaps because of the onset of the condition, and so he went on to Galatia. There he says they were so receptive they would have given him their eyes (4:15). Perhaps his vision was so damaged he had to write large letters to see them. Others suggest that this was for emphasis, much the way we would write in all capital letters. A secretary probably wrote the body of the letter, and now Paul concludes it on his own, perhaps to authenticate that it was from him (2 Thessalonians 3:17).

¹² *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.* Galatians 6:12 The Judaizers had pride in ecclesiastical statistics. To them, religion had devolved into outward rituals rather an inner relationship of the heart (Romans 2:29;

Isaiah 29:13) which is the meaning of circumcision. They had forgotten what circumcision represented (Deuteronomy 10:16^{xvii}).

At that time in Israel there was a growing sentiment promoted by the Zealots that Jews should not associate with Gentiles unless it was to convert them. The Judaizers may have been trying to get the church to blend in with Jews to avoid confrontation with the Zealots. Jews would not persecute Christians if they appeared to be Jewish proselytes. In addition, Rome accepted Judaism and so this compromise would help them also avoid persecution from Rome. This minor surgery could avoid a lot of conflict, but it involved compromising the message of grace.

How easy it is for the church today to do the same, emphasizing works instead of a heart transformation. Good works are accepted by the community, so some churches devolve into do good societies. Works can be managed. The Holy Spirit is wild and ever present! Works don't require taking up your cross (Matthew 16:24^{xviii}). Everyone will applaud you. The Spirit, however, convicts the world of sin, which is very unpopular.

Paul taught that the Gentiles were sons of Abraham by faith in the work of Jesus on the cross, and that angered the Jews. If you tell a secular person you are going to heaven because you do good deeds, they won't persecute you. But if you tell them Jesus died for us sinners, and we all have to repent and believe in what He did for us, and that He rose from the grave to conquer death so that we won't go to hell, look out! That wounds our pride. It tells us how incapable we are. If we are without Jesus, it labels us as hopeless sinners under the curse of God. There is nothing in all the world that reveals our true wretched condition like the cross, for it shows what we deserved.

¹³ 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. Galatians 6:13 Those false teachers don't keep all the laws. Paul knew that because he was a Pharisee and he knew he couldn't keep them all (Romans 7:14,15^{xix}). They just wanted to be able to tell other Jews, "Look at all the Gentiles we got to obey Moses! Aren't we special!" But if keeping the law could save us, there was no need for the cross (2:21^{xx}).

¹⁴ 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. Galatians 6:14 Our righteousness is all the work of Jesus for us. How can we boast? We can declare the wonderful truth that God loved me so much that He gave His only Son to pay my sin debt (John 3:16^{xxi}). Because of that wonderful mercy, the world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world (which is the fallen ungodly ways of the world's system, seeking to please the flesh and boast in accomplishments, unloving and selfish). We once desperately wanted the world to respect us. Now we see it as corrupt, deceptive, and the evil it truly is. See 2:20^{xxii}. We nail our old selves to the cross with Jesus. We die with Him. And then we are raised with Him to newness of life. In that new life we still battle the old nature, but the Spirit helps us walk in victory (Romans 8:9,10^{xxiii}).

Boasting in the cross in that day would be like boasting in the most horrible, lingering torture we can imagine. Wearing a cross would be like wearing a hangman's noose. But Paul was not boasting in the tool of execution, but in what Jesus did for him on that cross. For it is there we see the love of God for the world displayed. We see that God was willing to humbly enter His creation, live a perfect life, and then take on Himself all our sins and the penalty for them. We can look at the cross and say God loves me that much! We can boast in God's great love!

If we separate God's love for us from the cross, we forget how unworthy we are and the depths to which His love was willing to go to save us. That is why it should be the object in which we boast. We focus on that on Easter, and when we have communion, but it should be our continual boast. We boast in all kinds of skills or achievements or successes, but how much more worthy of our boasting is the cross of Christ!

In Galatians we see that *The cross rescues us from "the present evil age" (1:4). The cross unleashes the powerful presence of the Spirit (cf. 3:1-5). The cross clears the way for Abraham's blessing (cf. 3:10-14). The cross ushers in the era of adoption and sonship (4:1-7). The cross gives birth to new freedom (4:21-5:1). The cross of Christ enables the presence of God.*^{xxiv}

Oh that we might learn the vanity of boasting in anything other than the cross that humbles and saves us. How completely it rules out any other means of being righteous before God. How could we think that we could add to what He did for us? Let us be loyal and loving bondservants of Jesus because of His loving sacrifice for us. We seek only to please Him and could care less about what the world thinks of us. This is the opposite of the Judaizer's attitude, so concerned about being accepted by other Jews.

Is the world crucified to you? Does its allure entice you, or are you done with its attractions and false promises? Have you found fulfillment in Jesus whose love is really all we need and all that is worth living for?

¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Galatians 6:15 It isn't about whether we did a ritual or didn't do it. Just trying to obey the law does not count as anything with God. What matters is if we have been born-again (Philippians 3:3^{xxv}; Galatians 3:29^{xxvi}). If we are not a new creation, we are still a part of this fallen world's system and will seek our own glory. The world will be our best friend, while trying to use us. But those who are new creations will be seen as enemies by the world. They can't understand why we act and think as we do. They can't see spiritual truth and consider our convictions a hindrance to them fulfilling their lusts that they call self-actualizing (John 15:18-21^{xxvii}; Romans 6:4^{xxviii}).

There are people in the political realm who are so fearful that Christians will make legal restrictions on their behavior that they will go to any extent to keep those with moral fabric from attaining to positions of influence. We need to have Paul's attitude that the world is crucified to us. Our battle is to stay faithful to our Commander, Jesus. Only then will we rescue the souls of those caught up in the trap of this world's system.

Paul is telling the Galatians that they are caught up in this idea of circumcision which is meaningless when compared to being a new creation in Christ. We get caught up in so many little petty things when what counts is letting the life of Christ be expressed in our mortal bodies. Or as Paul wrote in 5:6, *"all that counts is faith expressing itself through love."*

This verse is Paul's summation statement of the entire letter. While we have difficulty relating to the pressure to be circumcised to avoid persecution, we certainly feel the pressure to conform. Ever hear of the word Christophobic? The world says we are "everything sinful-phobic" as a slander. The problem with this fallen world is that man is Christophobic. Their phobia sometimes makes us wary of expressing our faith. We want to be accepted like these Galatians wanted to be accepted by the Jews. Paul's solution is to be crucified to the world. We must realize that all that counts in God's eyes and in the light of eternity is being a new creation that expresses faith through love.

16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. Galatians 6:16 The word “rule” here is literally a measuring rod. We measure the life of the church in every age by whether or not it is operating only externally or is internally alive by the Spirit, dead works or a new creation, dead or alive. There is the Israel of the flesh and there is the Israel of God. He elaborated on that in chapter 4. Paul gives a benediction of peace and mercy to those who count on the grace that makes us a new creation rather than on the law.

Jesus is the new Israel. Israel means "one who prevails with God." Israel as a nation failed to demonstrate the goodness of God to the world because it could not keep the laws of God. And consider this: I believe God chose them because they were the most capable of doing what God asked. What does that say for the rest of the world? God is teaching the world that we all need a Savior. No one is good enough to stand before God's holiness. Had they sincerely tried to keep the law they would have been so blessed the world would see their God was special and sought after Him. Now we see that even the most capable of people could not do so without Jesus. It is a lesson of history that no one can come close to living up to God's standard of holiness.

The new Israel had to come to be a witness of God's goodness and cause others to desire Him. Jesus is God incarnate and the God who lives in born-again believers. The lesson is that without His aid we cannot be witnesses (Acts 1:8^{xxix}). Because of His life in us through the Holy Spirit, we are the Israel of God. In demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit we are to carry on the call that Israel of old failed to do. How are we doing? Is our love, joy, peace, patience, attracting people to inquire about our God? Or are we living for the same old priorities so that the world sees no difference in us? Walk in the Spirit! Rise with Jesus as a new creation. LIVE!

17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. Galatians 6:17 Paul's declaration that his word to them is the final word is verified by the physical suffering he has endured for Jesus. There was a lot more to come. Some claim this is the stigmata, the wounds of the crucifixion from meditating on the cross, but I think he was more likely to be referring to the scars from persecution. They declare how willing he was to give of himself for the truth of the gospel of grace alone (2 Corinthians 11:23-25^{xxx}). Stigmata was a word in secular Greek for the branding of a slave to identify the owner. Paul was saying, “Look, you can tell who my owner is by the marks from persecution.” Circumcision was the only scar on the false teachers. Paul’s scars showed he believed the truth of grace and had left personal pleasure and comfort to boast on the cross. They are the scars of Jesus because it was His life in Paul that drove him onward to boldly declare the truth of Jesus regardless of the physical cost to his body (2 Timothy 3:12^{xxxi}).

Some of us have scars on our hearts because we have followed Jesus and refused to compromise His Word. They too can be a testimony of the faithfulness of Jesus to see His work in us completed and our unwillingness to compromise (Philippians 1:6^{xxxii}; 1 Thessalonians 5:23^{xxxiii}).

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen. Galatians 6:18 The whole letter is about grace. It started with a greeting of grace (1:3^{xxxiv}), explained how they were falling from grace, and ends with a benediction of grace. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirits, to show the love of God, the life of peace, the hope of eternity, to a world that is searching for answers. It

must be in us first before we can offer it to the world. We must realize the grace of God has done all that is necessary for us to be declared free of sin and righteous in God's eyes. That is why we never accept condemnation (Romans 8:1^{xxxv}). Jesus paid it all. We can't add anything to what He did. Now we are free to serve our Lord and Savior.

This benediction is to the brothers and sisters - the family of God through the grace of God. Our lives must be a declaration of that grace. When others wound us, are unfair, slander us, or revile us, we must demonstrate that same grace we have received. It is Jesus' own grace in us that we extend to others. It is that grace that would help the Galatians and us persevere to the end. *Soli Deo Gloria -Glory to God alone!* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen!

Questions:

- 1 How can we keep from burning out?
- 2 Where is your treasure?
- 3 Why is the household of faith our priority?
- 4 Are you part of that global company? Benefits?
- 5 What motivated the Judaizers?
- 6 What is our new attitude toward the world?
- 7 Why do we boast in the cross?
- 8 What has the cross done for us?
- 9 How does verse 15 sum up the letter?
- 10 What is the rule in verse 16?

ⁱ **Matthew 6:19-21** ¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ⁱ

ⁱⁱ **Luke 6:35** ³⁵But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

ⁱⁱⁱ **2 John 1:8 (ESV)**

⁸ Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.

^{iv} **Romans 2:7** ⁷to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;

^v **Hebrews 12:2** ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

^{vi} **Hebrews 10:36** ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

^{vii} **2 Timothy 2:3** ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

^{viii} **Hebrews 11:10** ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

^{ix} **Galatians 5:13** ¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

^x **Ephesians 2:19** ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

^{xi} Todd Wilson, Preaching the Word - Galatians: Gospel-Rooted Living.

^{xii} **Mark 3:33-35** ³³And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

^{xiii} **1 Timothy 5:8** ⁸But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

^{xiv} **Malachi 3:10a** ^{10a}Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.

^{xv} **Revelation 21:2** ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

^{xvi} **Acts 20:28** ²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

^{xvii} **Deuteronomy 10:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.

^{xviii} **Matthew 16:24** ²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

^{xix} **Romans 7:14,15** ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

^{xx} **Galatians 2:21** ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

^{xxi} **John 3:16** ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ^{xxi}

^{xxii} **Galatians 2:20** ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ^{xxii}

^{xxiii} **Romans 8:9** ⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

^{xxiv} Todd Wilson -Preaching the Word - Galatians: Gospel-Rooted Living.

^{xxv} **Philippians 3:3** ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—

^{xxvi} **Galatians 3:29** ²⁹ And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.

^{xxvii} **John 15:18** ¹⁸ If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

^{xxviii} **Romans 6:4** ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life ^{xxviii}

^{xxix} **Acts 1:8** ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

^{xxx} **2 Corinthians 11:23** ²³ Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ^{xxx}

^{xxxi} **2 Timothy 3:12** ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

^{xxxii} **Philippians 1:6** ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

^{xxxiii} **1 Thessalonians 5:23** ²³ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

^{xxxiv} **Galatians 1:3** ³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

^{xxxv} **Romans 8:1** ¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.