

One Another

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Galatians 6.1-10 | October 22, 2017

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our series engaging the “one anothers” found throughout the Christian Scriptures. So far we’ve seen how we are to greet, love, and live in harmony with one another. This week, we’ll engage “Carrying One Another.”

II. Connecting with One Another

Have you ever injured yourself such that you had to be carried?

III. Study the Text

- a. The Galatian church was deeply divided: Some believed that Christians had to continue obeying the Old Testament law, while the Apostle Paul argues forcefully, “You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.” (5.4) What do you make of that statement? Why can’t someone justify themselves AND live in God’s grace?

- b. Read Galatians 5.13-26.

There are four different “one anothers” in these verses (13, 15, 17, and 26). How, according to Paul, is the entire law fulfilled?

- c. In verse 18, we read, “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Does that mean we should be able to do whatever we want? If not, why not? What does it mean to be *led* by the Spirit?
- d. Which of the nine qualities of the fruit of the Spirit is most difficult for you to embody? Why do you think that is? How could you better “keep in step with the Spirit” in this way?

- e. Read Galatians 6.1.

It has been written, “Paul’s conditional clause, *if someone is caught in a sin*, is framed in such a way as to point to the high probability that members of the church will sin. Sin in the church is not a hypothetical possibility, it is a reality.” While he does not specifically engage a particular sin, Paul probably has in mind those listed above in Galatians 5.19-21.

How do you think most Christians would respond upon learning that a member of their church was engaging in such behaviors? How does that fit with Paul’s instruction on what to do?

(Be sure to note that the phrase “you who are spiritual” or “you who live by the Spirit” is not a reference to an elite group of leaders, but instead, any believer, since all Christians have received the Holy Spirit – see, for instance, Galatians 3.2-5, 14; 4.6, 29; 5.5, 16-18, 22-23, 25).

- f. Instead of chastising or reprimanding, Paul instructs them to “gently restore” the person who’s sinning. The verb he uses is the same used to describe resetting a broken bone or mending a torn net (it’s also used in Matthew 4.21 and Mark 1.19 where fishermen “prepare” their nets). At its best, what would it look like to gently restore someone?

Time permitting, see Jesus’ instructions for doing so in Matthew 18.15-20 (other allusions to this process are found in 2nd Corinthians 13.11, 1st Thessalonians 3.10, and Hebrews 13.21).

- g. Why do you think Paul instructs the church to “watch themselves”?
- h. Read Galatians 6.2.

It’s been written that this command “covers every conceivable kind of burden and calls for us to be sensitive enough to perceive even the unseen burdens that our brothers and sisters try to hide. But in the context the command seems to be directed primarily to the burdens of sin.”

When have you seen the consequences of sin have a kind of domino effect in your own or someone else’s life? What would it have looked like for someone to help carry those fallen dominos?

- i. How is carrying the burden of someone else’s sin “fulfilling the law of Christ”?
- j. Read Galatians 6.3-5.

It seems the pride of those who kept the law blinded them from carrying the burdens of others. Thus Paul’s instruction in verse 4, to “test our own actions,” like a jeweler who examines a precious stone under a magnifying glass.

How do you “express your faith through love” (Galatians 5.6)?

When are you tempted to instead let someone “carry their own burden”?

- k. Reread verse 2, then verse 5.

Is this a contradiction? Why or why not? (Discuss this before continuing!)

One commentator writes, “Verse 2 refers to the need to come to the aid of others who cannot carry the crushing burden of the consequences of their sin. Verse 5 refers to the work given to us by our Master, before whom we will have to give an account of how we used the opportunities and talents he gave us.”

What do you make of this explanation?

- l. Read Galatians 6.6.

We learn at least three things from this verse. First, early on in the life of the church there were formal teachers of God's Word. Second, this was considered a full-time occupation (see also 1st Corinthians 9.14, 1st Timothy 5.17). Third, Christian teaching should bring about unity in the church, rather than division.

How is giving to the ministry of the church another way of carrying one another's burdens?

m. Read Galatians 6.7-8.

Paul's agricultural metaphor is seen time and time again in our lives. It recalls an old proverb: "Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."

Does Paul's metaphor or that old proverb prompt you to think differently about anything? (remember that's what the word "repent" means!)

n. Read Galatians 6.9-10.

Paul continues his metaphor, instructing the church to "not become weary in doing good." Has that ever happened to you? What prompted it?

Did you overcome it? If so, how?

o. Sometimes we can *think about* doing good and *talk about* doing good so much that we think we've *done good*.

How could we, as the Body of Christ, be pushed to not only thinking or talking, but to take action for the mission of God in the world?

IV. Pray

- a. Lift up those you know who are suffering under the weight of a heavy burden, that they would learn of Jesus' easy yoke,
- b. Ask God to reveal the ways you pride yourself on living right instead of helping carry the burdens of others,
- c. Pray that God would help keep you in step with the Spirit always.