

Led By the Spirit to One Another!

Galatians 6:1

Series: No Other Gospel #24

Congregational Prayer:

Introduction: Take your copy of the Scriptures and join me in Galatians 6 – Galatians chapter 6.

In March of 2015 one of the big warehouse buildings on Chicago's Southwest Side went up in flames in a major way. It quickly escalated to a three-alarm fire and it required 156 firefighters and 26 pieces of equipment to finally get the flame under control. But here is the kicker of the story – the building which burned to the ground was a fire extinguisher manufacturing business! A building full of fire extinguishers, and a building designed to make fire extinguishers – had no provision for putting out its own fire!

Sometimes the church can feel like that. We can have answers for everyone else's fires, but no way to deal with our own. The Spirit-led church will be a family of brothers and sisters who not only have answers to the sins of others, but they will also be helping one another fight against the fires of sin in their own lives. In Galatians 5 we have seen what the Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered life of the believer looks like. We have also seen what it does not look like. It does not look like conceit – where we think that we are better than others which always produces the provoking and the envying that we looked at last week. The sinful flesh which still resides in the believer always works hard to create tension and division and discord in the Church. But the Spirit of God does the exact opposite because the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. When the Spirit of God is at work in us to empower us and to direct us, the result will be a greater investment in one another in which we are mutually concerned for our brothers and sisters in the family of God – the Church. The Spirit of God will never direct us to isolation from one another or to self-focused “spiritual” journeys which will take us more into ourselves and further away from one another. The Spirit always directs us to greater investment in one another, not less.

As we start this morning I am going to read the first 5 verses of Galatians 6, but just know that we are only going to get to verse 1 in the minutes ahead. As we read this text you must view its truth the lens of walking by the Spirit of God. This is what He directs us to and empowers us for – this kind of mutual love for one another. *Read vs. 1-5.*

These 5 verses call us to personal responsibility and to mutual care for one another. In the Church they go together. We are to carry the burden the Lord has given to us, and we are to help others with their burdens which are too heavy for them. The Spirit-led Church will be directed to one another. At the end of chapter 5 we saw that our fleshly tendency was to compete with one another – to look for ways in which we are better than our brothers and sisters in the body. And when we are confronted with their sin we have a prime opportunity to think that we are

better than they are. This leads to self-righteous judgment and self-exalting condemnation of others. But the Spirit leads us in a different way. He doesn't lead us to compete with one another, but rather He is at work in us to lead us toward one another. Rather than looking for every way in which we are better, the Spirit of God leads us to support one another. God is at work in us in this way because we are family, because we will fall, and because we will then need restored. We see all three of these things right there in verse 1. The Spirit of God leads us to support one another and invest in one another because we are family.

I. Because We Are Family

- a. The verse starts with the familial address of “Brothers” or better “brethren” or “brothers and sisters.” This relationship is settled in Christ. The context of the commands which follow is God's family. We have been set free in Christ by grace through faith, and we are adopted into the family of God through the regenerating work of the Spirit. We are born again into this new family into which we have been adopted. The adoption price was the blood of the Son of God on the Cross of Calvary, and the down payment on our inheritance as God's spiritual children is the Holy Spirit who comes upon us at the moment of our salvation. The assumption of Galatians 6 is that since you are brought into this family through high adoption price of the blood of Jesus Christ – then you will have a deep loyalty to and concern for your brothers and sisters who are also part of this same family of God. This means that we are responsible for one another and we care deeply for one another and when sin happens, we know how to handle it and we are desiring to help.
- b. I feel like I beat this drum constantly so maybe you just write this off as one of my hobby horses – but church membership matters. It is not just about getting your name on a list and about being able to vote at the annual meeting. It is about knowing who you are accountable to and responsible for. In verse 1 you are called to restore a fallen brother or sister in the family of God when they sin. In verse 2 you are called to bear one another's burdens and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. In verse 10 you are called to do good to everyone and especially to those who are of the household of faith. I wonder – do you know who is in your biological family? Do you know who you have to provide meals for? Do you know who you have to buy clothes for? Do you know who you have to check in on and spend time with? It's clearly defined right? You might have others who are close to your family, but you know who your family is.
- c. God's family should be no different. If Christ has redeemed you and adopted you through the shedding of his blood – if he has reconciled you to God and given you peace with Him – then you also have a renewed relationship to God's people. This does not just mean that you are on a membership list with them – but this means that you are invested in them as though they are your brother or sister – because they are. So, when they fall and stumble – it is a family issue because you are both part of the same family.
- d. I'm honestly not sure how some of you view the Church. You cannot say that you love the church universal and not be intimately connected with the church local.

If you are being led by the Spirit of God, then you will be more and more invested in the local body of believers – if not this one, then another one where the Bible is faithfully taught and Christ is exalted. This is not a Matt Kruse issue – this is a Gospel issue. If God has adopted you into His family through Christ, then your brothers and sisters in the Church need you – and this is the Spirit’s desire for you. He will empower you and he will lead you into further investment in one another. We are family – and because we are the Spirit of God leads us to support one another and care for one another.

II. Because We Will Fall

- a. The Spirit of God also leads us toward one another because we will fall. The next phrase in the verse says – if anyone is caught in any transgression. This assumes that this is going to happen. And when it does happen it is an issue of concern for the family. This line between walking by the flesh and walking by the Spirit is a fine line that is easily crossed. We know the way of the flesh so well and we are still learning the way of the Spirit of God. Our spiritual 4-wheeler knows the ruts of the way of the flesh and easily slides back into them. Therefore, even as redeemed followers of Jesus Christ, we can easily be caught by a sin of the flesh.
- b. This word for being caught has the idea of being surprised or being taken off guard. It is speaking of the one who is sinning and it is describing the sudden and unexpected fall into sin. The word “trespass” helps us some more here. Of the words for sin used in the NT, this one describes a misstep or a slip-up. A walking out of line. It is not a mistake in that we don’t have any responsibility in it – but it lacks premeditation. It is a sin of opportunity in which our flesh seizes upon a certain circumstance and before we know it – we are watching the works of the flesh flow out of us.
- c. Sadly, I have some examples of this in my own life this past week. One in particular happened on Friday morning. I don’t tell you this to glamorize or gloss over sin, but to give you a real life example to help you know what this text is describing – and it is easier to see this in me than it is to see it in someone else. I woke up Friday morning with a less than great attitude. Julie and Zach were away for a few days at a Fine Arts competition and so I was playing Mr. Mom. The morning was going pretty well. Things were getting done and we were on task to be at school well before we needed to be. But in my mind I was processing all things I wasn’t getting done at the office because I was home. And then the kids were less than speedy in getting ready, and before I knew it I was in an angry tirade scolding one of my precious daughters about obedience. It was not a pretty scene – and moments later the conviction of the Spirit rested heavy upon me. I had been caught in a transgression and the works of the flesh were coming out of me.
- d. Sound familiar? Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. Do you ever see things like these in your life? Do you ever see these types of things in the Church? Listen, we are a family, but we are not a perfect one. We will fall,

and because of this, the Spirit of God is at work in us to empower us and to lead us toward one another – to help each other, to support each other, and when we sin, to restore one another.

III. Because We Will Then Need to be Restored

- a. This is the third reason from verse 1 why the Spirit of God is leading us toward one another – because when we fall we will need to be restored. This is the main verb of the verse – restore him. So, we are family – the family of God – the Church. And we are not a perfect family – we will sin against one another and against others. And when sin happens in this family, we are given very clear instruction here on what to do and how to do it. We are to restore one another. This restoration speaks of the re-setting of a bone after it is broken or of the mending of a net if it is torn. In other words, it is the process whereby the thing that is out of line or out of use is brought back into line. It is the word which is used in 2 Timothy 3:17 to describe the man of God who is fully equipped by the Word of God. He is competent and ready because of the God-breathed Word and its purifying and edifying effect upon him. So, too, the one who is caught in a transgression can be brought back to competency – to readiness – to full usefulness in God’s kingdom. One of God’s primary ordained methods to do this restoration is you. He has built within His plan for the Church a system which is dependent upon brothers and sisters helping and caring for one another. Sin is going to happen, and the fleshly response is self-righteous judgmentalism, but our response in the Spirit of God is to be humble and gently pursue restoration.
- b. Notice that this is a command to those who are spiritual in the body. We do not have a choice here. A healthy church – one that is being led by the Spirit of God – will be a church where spiritual people are caring for the souls of others by regularly supporting one another and restoring one another. So many times we are like the medical student who is in their first trauma situation in the ER. Our book knowledge is now being put to the test and we freeze when we actually see the horror of blood and mangled bodies. We know we should help, but we are paralyzed by it all. Beloved, we cannot live there in the church. People around you need your help and your care. You need the help and the care of others.
 - i. When I was 6 years old my cousins and I were playing at my house. We had a contractor who was putting a deck on our back of our house, but he didn’t have the stairs on yet, and the deck was about 6 feet off the ground. My older sister was supposed to be watching us but she was on the phone with her boyfriend, and so the four of us were out playing on the deck. Well, a wind picked up and took one of our papers across the deck right to where the stairs were going to be. My older cousin and I rushed to grab the paper before it went AWOL and I beat her to the spot, but she couldn’t stop in time and so over I went. I wish my cat-like reflexes took over and I landed on my feet, but they didn’t and instead I landed on my arm and it broke. And it broke in such a way that there was no doubt it was broke! It was a ghastly sight. Now imagine that my sister and my mom and the doctors and nurses at the hospital all reacted by gawking at

my broken arm, but refusing to do anything to help me. I would just have to figure out life with this very painful broken arm because no one would enter into my situation and give me the aid I needed. This is the temptation in the Church when it comes to sin. We see the broken arm, but we refuse to get involved. This text doesn't allow for that. We who are spiritual are commanded to invest in each other by helping to restore when one is caught in a transgression.

- c. This text does not give us all of the ins and outs of the process of confrontation and restoration, like say a Matthew 18 does. But rather, this verse focuses on the heart attitude of the one who sees his brother or sister caught in a transgression. Rather than looking down his nose in self-righteous condemnation or conceited self-exaltation, the right heart attitude is to seek for their restoration. This is to be done by the spiritual, by the gentle, and by the humble. This spiritual, gentle, humble person is the perfect one to help a brother or sister deal with sin in their life.
- d. *By the Spiritual*
 - i. So, the spiritual are those who are commanded in this verse to seek the restoration of their sinning spiritual sibling. Those who are spiritual are simply those who are walking by the Spirit of God. They are empowered by His grace and they are showing His fruit in their lives. They are also keeping in step with the Spirit by following His lead, and this will take them into more committed and more invested relationships within the church family. In 1 Corinthians 2:16 the spiritual are described as those who have the mind of Christ. So, being led by the Spirit of Christ who dwells within us, we now will think like Christ did. And how did Christ think about sin? Well, He humbled himself and took upon himself the form of a servant and came in the likeness of man so that he could give his life as a ransom for many so as to purchase their freedom and be their peace agreement between them and God. In other words, He thought of Himself as the answer to our sin problem. We who are in Christ should think like this too. We should view Christ as the ultimate answer in that without His Cross work and His resurrection work, we would have no victory over sin in this life or the next. And then we should view ourselves as peacemakers, in the same vein as Jesus, the Ultimate Peacemaker. Being in Christ, we now become ministers of reconciliation between God and man. The sins of others become our concern, especially in the Church.
 - 1. This is so un-American! This goes against our culture in almost every way. The last thing we want as self-sufficient, independent Americans is someone poking their nose in our business and confronting us about our sin. Our first reaction is – who do they think they are to tell me that what I am doing is wrong! But this attitude is driven by the flesh, not by the Spirit. Those who are seeking to walk by the Spirit of God will be like the psalmist here. They will say like he does in Psalm 141:5 - Let a righteous man

strike me-- it is a kindness; let him rebuke me-- it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it. Is this how you think about other people within the church caring for you? Do you want them to have the freedom to lovingly and gently intervene as they are led by the Spirit of God? Do you welcome the rebuke of a righteous man? Do you want God's work in your life in this way? This doesn't mean – will you enjoy it, or do you look forward to it? This means – do you hate sin and are you at war with the flesh in such a way that you want to know if someone else in the body of Christ sees a transgression in you? Do you long for Christ-likeness and holiness to such a degree that even the difficult process of confrontation and restoration would be like a healing balm to your soul? If we are mature in Christ, operating with the mind of Christ and directed by the Spirit of Christ, then we will both do and welcome this process of restoration.

e. By the Gentle

- i. This process is to be done by the spiritual, and it is also to be done by the gentle. These go together. The Spirit of God at work in us produces His fruit in our lives, of which one aspect of that fruit is gentleness. Gentleness is not weakness, but strength which is harnessed by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit to do good to others in a pleasing and helpful and gentle way. MacArthur says the word speaks to submissiveness to the will of God, teachableness, and consideration of others.¹ This is lived out perfectly by our Lord who even described himself as gentle and humble in heart. He says in Matthew 11:29 – “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”
- ii. The opposite of this would be the one we probably know better. We are pretty proficient at confronting someone else's wrongdoing with a judgmental and self-righteous attitude. We are experts at being harsh and brash. Our flesh likes smells blood in the water when someone else falls into sin and we quickly seize the moment to make ourselves look better than someone else. Listen – it doesn't take gentleness to confront or condemn sin – you can do that in your fleshly self-righteousness. But it does take gentleness to restore one another. If our goal is restoration then our heart attitude and our method will be dripping with gentleness.
- iii. This gentleness does not keep us from confronting and correcting and seeking restoration – but rather it informs how we do this. So in 2 Timothy 2 Paul tells Timothy that the Lord's servant must be kind to all and he must correct those who are out of line, but this correction must be done with gentleness.

¹ John MacArthur, *Galatians*, pg. 169

- iv. This gentleness in the spiritual person is coupled then with humility at the end of verse 1. So, if we are to be a church family who is led by the Spirit of God, then we will see His work in us in that we will restore one another when sin happens. This restoration must be done by the spiritual, by the gentle, and by the humble. This humility comes out in the last phrase. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Does this mean that the person seeking the restoration of the sinning brother or sister is to be careful so that they don't fall into the same sin? So, if my brother Joe is caught in the transgression of a fit of anger, am I to be keeping watch on myself to be careful to not fall into that same sin? Well . . . certainly that is true. Like pulling someone out of hole, you want to be careful that you don't fall into it as well. But I think there is more here based on the context. Our fleshly tendency as we saw in 5:26 is to be conceited – looking for ways to prove that we are better than others. Then in verses 3-4 the text says “if anyone things 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.” In other words, your spiritual appraisal is not done by looking to others and comparing yourself with them. Each one is to test his own work, not compare his work with others. This is the easiest to do when we are thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to – especially when we are confronted with the sin of our brother or sister.
- v. We quickly find ourselves amazed that they could have possibly fallen into that sin. Or we find ourselves relieved that we are more righteous than they are and now we finally have proof of that fact. Rather than flesh-driven response to sin in the family of God, we are to be spiritual and this means keeping a watch on ourselves so that we are not pursuing restoration of our brother with a heart full of pride. As 1 Corinthians 10:12 reminds us – He who thinks he stands must take heed lest he fall.
- f. Turn with me to John 8, John chapter 8. Let's drive this whole concept home by seeing it played out in Jesus the Christ. When a woman is caught in the act of adultery, notice the vast difference between the religious leaders and Jesus here.
Read John 8:1-11.
 - i. The religious leaders were technically right – the woman, under the Mosaic Law, deserved severe consequences for her sin. But what Jesus makes abundantly clear to these men is that the sin they are harboring in their hearts also deserves this severe punishment. Self-righteous condemnation always gives self a pass on sin while harshly condemning others. So often, we are these religious leaders. We have stones in hand, ready to bring the severest judgment upon the heads of our brothers and sisters.
 - ii. But Jesus is led by the Spirit, dripping with gentleness, and modeling humility. We don't know what he wrote on the ground, but maybe it was the sins of these men or maybe it was Psalm 103:8 – The Lord is merciful

and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. What we do know is that Jesus is the antithesis to these religious leaders. They are operating in the flesh, He is operating in the Spirit. Do you see the difference? When you are confronted with the sins of others in the family of God, are you more like the Pharisees, or more like Christ? May God in His grace, help us to be more and more like Christ.

Conclusion: Sinner – Jesus is in the restoration business. This is why he came – to reconcile us to God, to eternally mend us and make us whole again through forgiveness and cleansing. If you have never been reconciled to God by Jesus, may today be the day of your salvation. Look to Jesus and live. If you are in the family – adopted by the blood of the Lamb – then invest yourself in following Jesus here. Having been restored, and having the hope of one day being fully restored to God, be about the business of helping others be restored in the context of daily life. Let's pray.