

## **Galatians 6 pt. 2 v.6-18**

Having gone through the work of the flesh, the fruit of the Spirit, and receiving instruction on how we are to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ even while each one is to bear his own load we move into even more practical application of bearing with one another caring for one another and what it means to be in fellowship with one another.

V.6-10 We find ourselves at a verse about supporting the Bible teacher, the one who serves the Body through teaching.

If we allow them to be, these instances can prove to be uncomfortable and awkward because we find it quite unseemly to talk about money.

In our culture we are surrounded by example after example of churches who have abused God's word to ONLY focus on money.

Every week there is a sermon on giving! And the pastors (who have never smelled a Bible -Luther) live lives of luxury and indulgence while their congregations foot the bill.

This isn't that! God's Word is holy and good and we would do well to remember that, keeping all things in context.

About such verses Martin Luther had this to say and I quite agree with him: "These passages are all meant to benefit us ministers. I must say I do not find much pleasure in explaining these verses. I am made to appear as if I am speaking for my own benefit."

(Luther) Guzik, D. (2013). Galatians (Ga 6:6–10). Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.

But, what we find in the New Testament in regards to supporting those in ministry is a paradox of sorts demonstrated in Paul's ministry.

First and foremost the Bible teaches that it is right and good to provide for the one who commits their time to rightly dividing the word of God for the benefit of the church.

If we are looking for a more vague or non-committal reading of such a verse in order to relieve ourselves of supporting our ministers, those who labor in God's word, we won't find it easily.

“From the mention of bearing one another’s burdens, he naturally passes to one way, and one case, in which those burdens may be borne—viz. by relieving the necessities of their ministers (thus [read] almost all Commentators)...” Alford, H. (1976). *Alford’s Greek Testament: an exegetical and critical commentary* (Vol. 3, p. 63). Grand Rapids, MI: Guardian Press.

We find also that the Greek text relays the idea of, “entering into fellowship, joining one’s self as an associate, making one’s self a sharer or partner,” and “to share one’s possessions, with the implication of some kind of joint participation and mutual interest.”

Background Greek text information derived from:

Thayer, J. H. (1889). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (pp. 351–352). New York: Harper & Brothers.

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 568). New York: United Bible Societies.

So we understand that it's not just about putting a few bucks in the offering plate, or box, and cutting the man a paycheck so he can feed his family but a joint fellowship and caring for one another - recognizing that the people who put their hand to the plow in this way have joyfully taken in hand their fair share of sleepless nights, pouring over texts, much prayer and study on top of the ordinary routine cares of life in order to feed God's people by His holy word.

My question for us to consider this morning - since we live in an era where the professional clergy is expected, where we take for granted that our Bible teachers are provided with enough from the Body to feed their families, is - why did Paul have to write this in the first place?

I think we find that the reason for that is wrapped up in some common enduring misconceptions. Such as - the Pastor doesn't have a real job, or what are they going to do for 40 hours a week, or whatever.

What we know is that the work of the Pastor is never over, pastors are on call 24 hours a day, they MUST spend diligent time

in prayer and study or the Body will suffer for it when the pastor spews out some nonsense that they came up with on the fly.

Not to mention the after hours counseling, phone calls, hospital visits, administration of the church, paying the bills, board meetings, leading their own homes faithfully, and in many cases working a second full-time job just to pay the bills.

BUT - why did Paul have to write about the necessity to care for Bible teachers - on more than one occasion!?

[1Ti 5:17-18 NKJV] 17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer [is] worthy of his wages."

Brief explanation: the oxen relates to threshing - Deut 25:4 is where this law is found.

Paul had a difficult time communicating this basic imperative to the Corinthians. They had a rough relationship.

[1Co 9:6-18 NKJV] 6 Or [is it] only Barnabas and I [who] have no right to refrain from working? 7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? 8 Do I say these things as a [mere] man? Or does not the law say the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? 10 Or does He say [it] altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, [this] is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, [is it] a great thing if we reap your material things? 12 If others are partakers of [this] right over you, [are] we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat [of the things] of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of [the offerings of] the altar? 14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. 15 But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it [would be] better for me to die than that

anyone should make my boasting void. 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

[2Co 12:14-15 NKJV] 14 Now [for] the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

So - Paul taught that the churches should provide for their elders - but we also see that he refused to be paid for his labor, at least by the Corinthians. It appears that they perhaps loved their money more than they loved Paul. Other churches had to step in to take care of him even while he was at Corinth - so weird and unseemly!

[2Co 11:7-9 NKJV] 7 Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages [from them] to minister to you. 9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep [myself].

It may very well be that the reason why the churches needed to hear this is because it doesn't come naturally.

We, by our flesh, desire to sow to the flesh. We do not highly esteem the things of God naturally.

It is difficult for us to commit to paying a salary in support of a Bible teacher when that salary can be used for other worthy things.

In this mental calculus our value system is revealed. We place a premium on the things you can see, and touch, and own. We devalue the invisible yet eternal things that feed our souls.

We would much rather sow to the flesh. Churches get caught in this trap all the time. We see so many better ways to spend our money in order to gratify our fleshly desires, do we not?

If we can buy a bigger building, better stuff, etc then people will think we are legitimate and more people will come and give more money and we can buy more stuff - and round and round the ugly cycle of sowing and reaping corruption goes.

What is required of us is to bear one another's burdens, carry our own weight, and support those that God has placed in the ministry without extravagance.

What a shame when Bible teachers abuse these verses for their own gain, or for the gain of the corporate structure they are building.

Let it not be so - let us sow to the Spirit, and so harvest everlasting life.

And, collectively as a Body of saints who are deeply committed to one another, LET US NOT GROW WEARY WHILE DOING GOOD because there is harvest coming.

But it's not the harvest that some promise - boats, houses, money, etc. - that leads to corruption. It is the spiritual harvest of saints - people reconciled to Jesus Christ.

Do not lose heart loved one - we are all in this together, we can and should support one another. Even as Paul says do good to ALL - WHO? ALL! - ESPECIALLY THOSE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

So it doesn't begin and end with supporting the Bible teacher. We are ALL to do good to one another. We are all equally responsible for caring for those in the household of faith in spiritual AND practical matters!

It is our joy to make sure that we can feed people with God's bread which is worth more than all the riches we possess. And it is our sacred duty and privilege to provide people with actual bread!

When these two are aligned - that is where our faith moves from the theoretical to the practical - caring for people, doing good unto all.

V.11-13 Paul often used a recorder or scribe to write his letters. It is believed that he would dictate to one of his travelling companions his thoughts.

We see here that Paul is writing in his own hand, and he is using LARGE LETTERS. Some believe that this was because Paul had failing eyesight, potentially because of losing his sight temporarily when He saw Jesus Christ on the Road to Damascus.

There are also other indicators in this epistle that may speak of Paul's declining eyesight (Gal 4:15).

Or perhaps Paul is emphasizing this point and it is so important to him that he decided he must write it for himself.

He encapsulates his entire letter here at the very end: there are those in the church that desire to put on a good show, to present

a false reality, by having others adopt the Jewish law and for men that meant becoming circumcised.

They could hold that up and boast in their legalism, their spiritual accomplishments by saying, “look how many we have convinced to be circumcised.”

But Paul reveals their motives - they are afraid of suffering. More directly they are afraid to suffer persecution because of Jesus, and since that is the case they are unwilling to adopt the fullness of the freedom of the gospel.

Beware loved one! Much of our daily living falls into this category. What worldly attributes have we adopted, what holiness have we shunned, so that we might avoid persecution?

V.14-16 Paul makes it clear that he will not follow anything else, focus on anything else, boast in anything else except the cross.

[1Co 2:2 NKJV] 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

May this be our heart as well!

It is not the law that saves, and it is NOT our attack on the law that saves. It is Christ alone, and Him crucified that saves. By the cross we have been made new creations - all of our old wretched attempts at morality and holiness are vile compared to the cross.

But as new creations - focused on Jesus, we have a very real newness and that is something to talk about.

Ultimately it is that conviction, that commitment, that brings peace in our lives. We can stop worrying about the law. We can stop rebelling against and defaming the law. The conversation on the law can be summed up by noting that it was Christ who fulfilled the Law for us! We have no part in its fulfillment!

And, we see too that God's mercy is displayed towards those who cling to this blessed hope. Remember, mercy is God withholding his righteous wrath from those who deserve it. We have received God's mercy because of Jesus Christ.

Those who are Christ's rest in God's peace and mercy - benefits that we carry with us to others.

V.17 - Paul has spent much of this letter refuting a crooked obsession with the work of and in the flesh.

Now it's almost as if Paul is saying, you want to talk about being marked in the flesh (as circumcision was a mark in the flesh).

Paul says, "I'll show you what it means to be marked in the flesh - I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

We understand that to mean that Paul was physically scarred because of his ministry and these scars marked him as one committed to the gospel.

**στίγμα, τος** *n*: a permanent mark or scar on the body, especially the type of 'brand' used to mark ownership of slaves—'scar, brand.'...In Ga 6:17 Paul is most likely alluding to scars resulting from wounds received in the service of Jesus, but στίγμα may also imply ownership and hence suggest that such scars served as brands (see 8.56). For other interpretations of στίγμα in Ga 6:17, see 33.481 and 90.84. Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996).

[Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 100). New York: United Bible Societies.

V.18 - Ending with grace - in v. 16 Paul remarks on the peace and mercy extended to those who live according to the gospel - now he ends with grace.

Who's grace? The grace of Jesus - unmatched, never-ending.

And where does that grace reach us? Our spirit - that deep part reserved for God that brings about the sanctification of our flesh.

About this blessed letter Martin Luther had this to say in his *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*: "But where Christ is truly seen, there full and perfect joy in the Lord is inevitably present, and also peace of heart, where the heart surely thinks: 'Although I am a sinner according to the law and according to the righteousness of the law, yet I do not despair. For I do not die, because Christ lives, and He is my righteousness and my eternal and heavenly life...Where the law accuses me, death reigns and devours me. But beyond this life I have another

righteousness, another life, which is Christ, the Son of God,  
...Because of Him, even this, my dead body, shall be raised again  
and freed from servitude to the law and sin, and shall be  
sanctified together with the spirit.” (Helfferich, Tryntje. The  
Essential Luther. 2018. p.255-256)

Know, loved one, that this is how we endeavor to end as well - by  
grace.

Let the final word of our discipleship, our lives, our care for the  
Body, for one another, be marked by the grace of our Lord Jesus  
Christ.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.