There is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still.
Corrie ten Boom

Prayer Study # 462
GALATIANS 6
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

Bear and Share the Burdens

6 *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.* **2** *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* **3** *For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* **4** *But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.* **5** *For each one shall bear his own load.*

Paul is not talking about a deliberate sin. He is talking about someone slipping up. The Greek word used here means *a slip that might come to someone who is on an icy road or dangerous path, a mishap or falling aside, a stumble.* So often people in the Body of Christ are very unsympathetic and judge people, in a harsh and condemning way, who slip and stumble. I remind you that a person does not lose his salvation when he sins. The Holy Spirit is telling us here that we are *to restore* (or *correct,* in some translations) such a one. The word used for *to restore* or *correct* literally means *to make a repair* or *to surgically remove some growth* or *to set a broken limb.* J. Vernon McGee poses the question, "If a person falls down and breaks a bone, are you going to walk off and leave him in pain?" The whole

attitude of the Body of Christ should be on restoration or the on cure and not the punishment, and the correction shall always be in a spirit of gentleness. Paul goes on to say that we should realize that it is so easy for any of us to fall too. We have found in years of ministry that those who judge others often end up committing the same sin or being snared by the same issue. We know the reality of the scriptural principle, *you reap what you sow.* In fact, scripture tells us that in Hosea 8:7 that those who sow to the wind will reap the whirlwind.

Verse 2 tells us that we are to bear the physical, emotional, and spiritual load threatening to crush our fellow believers. The law of Christ is "l*ove one another*" (John 13:34). We have seen over and over in Paul's writings that it is impossible to keep the entire law of Moses, but it is possible to fulfill the law of Moses and the law of Christ through loving God and loving people.

In verses 3 through 5, we see that anyone who considers himself superior to a fallen brother or sister is deceiving him or herself and risks being tempted also. We cannot compare ourselves to others because we do not carry the same burdens. What we need to do is compare our own efforts to what they could have been if we had given our best. Verse 5 seems to contradict verse 2. The problem is in the translation. The Greeks had eleven different words for what most translations of the Bible render *burden* (in the New King James Version which I am using, the translators have somewhat cleared up the confusion by translating the second *burden* as load.) In verse 2 when it says *bear one another's burdens,* it uses the Greek word *baros,* which means

“something heavy.” Someone once said that a load is only half a load when two are carrying it. These are burdens that come to us by chance and by the changes of life.

When Paul speaks of believers bearing their own load or burden, the Greek word is *phortion.* It is used to speak of *a ship’s cargo* or *a mother bearing a child in the womb*. There are certain burdens that we cannot share with others. Some examples of these are personal problems, physical sufferings and sickness, and death. You must bear these burdens alone.

Rick Joyner summarizes this section of Galatians 6, “Those who are spiritual will be devoted to restoring the fallen, not condemning them. When man fell, the Lord did not condemn us but came and laid down His life for us. His true followers will do the same for others. However, this does not mean that we just overlook sin. We must confront it when it arises in the church, just as we see in the example of this great apostle. Even so, we do this for the purpose of redemption in a spirit of gentleness, knowing if we become arrogant, we can fall to the same things.”

Be Generous and Do Good

6 *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.*
7 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.* ***8*** *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.* ***9*** *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.* ***10*** *Therefore, as we have opportunity,*

let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

In verse 6 Paul is being very blunt. What he is saying here is that we should pay our preachers. If you have been blessed materially, and your pastor is blessing you spiritually, then you need to minister back to him through giving material benefits.

Again we return to one of the big doctrines of the Bible, the principle of sowing and reaping, which is unchangeable in all areas of life. God is a God of mercy and grace and forgiveness, but He does not normally erase the consequences of our sin. For example, if people sin against their bodies, sooner or later they will pay in ruined health. Even though they are forgiven, the scars remain. The law of reaping and sowing is certain. If we sow to the carnal nature, we will become more and more carnal. If we sow to the Spirit, we will grow stronger and stronger in the Spirit. The word *corruption* in verse 8 may refer to eternal damnation or to loss of eternal rewards for the saved believer. The phrase *everlasting life* does not mean earning your salvation, it means, in this verse, having life from the life-giving Holy Spirit.

Paul reminds us in verse 9 that we must not get weary doing the things that God calls us to do. The Christian walk is not a sprint but a marathon. Doing good is not working for our salvation. It is a combination spoken of by James of having faith and works. We do good because we love Jesus and want to please Him.

We conclude this section with verse 10. We have already seen that one of the fruits of the Spirit is goodness. If you are walking in the Spirit, goodness

is one of the outcomes. You will do good to all men, but especially to those who are fellow believers.

Glory Only in the Cross

11 See with what large letters I have written to you
with my own hand! 12 As many as desire to make a
good showing in the flesh, these would compel you
to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer
persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even
those who are circumcised keep the law, but they
desire to have you circumcised that they may boast
in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should boast
except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom
the world has been crucified to me, and I to the
world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor
uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Paul has dictated this letter to an unnamed secretary. Now he adds a postscript to the letter in his own handwriting. Some believe that the large letters were written by Paul because his eyesight was poor. At any rate for Paul to write a conclusion, instead of only signing his signature as he did in most of his letters, shows the deep love and concern that Paul had for the Galatians.

In his concluding remarks, Paul returns to the issue of circumcision. He says that the Jewish teachers were insisting on circumcision just for appearance sake and so that they would not be persecuted by unbelieving Jews because they followed Christ. They had no basis for boasting about having new believers circumcised because just because they were circumcised did not mean they would or even could keep the whole law. In Christ the outward

appearance-i.e., being circumcised or uncircumcised-did not matter. What matter was if the person really had a genuine change of heart and was a new creature in Christ.

Blessing and a Plea

16 *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.*
17 *From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*
18 *Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

Who are the Israel of God? They could either be the Gentile Church that had been grafted into the vine and become spiritual Israel, or the Israel of God might be the remnant of believers who were chosen by grace and justified by faith, as opposed to the false church that was preaching justification by the works of the law.

What are these marks of the Lord Jesus that Paul bears in his body? Often a master branded his slaves with a mark that showed them to be his. Paul is most probably referring to the scars from the wounds he received from being Christ's bond slave. Paul writes in 2nd Corinthians 11:24-27: *"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in*

watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." All of these things happened to Paul because he was a follower of Jesus.

Paul ends his letter with the only word that really mattered to him: grace. In spite of who we are and what we do, the Lord in His love extends grace, His favor to us who have in no way merited it. This letter is the most clear and powerful presentation in the New Testament to confront legalism and salvation by the keeping of the law.