

(Galatians) Sowing to the Spirit

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of crucifying the flesh and living a life that is pleasing to God, and encourages believers to bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ.

Duration: 52:59

Scripture: Galatians 5:24 - 6:1, Galatians 6:7-9

Topics: "Crucifying The Flesh", "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Galatians chapter 6, specifically verse 24. He emphasizes the importance of crucifying the flesh and its desires for those who belong to Christ. The preacher highlights three key points regarding the use of the crucifixion metaphor. Firstly, believers should not pity or pamper their sinful flesh, as it has the potential to do horrific things. Secondly, just as we would not pity notorious evildoers, we should deal severely with our own sinful nature. Lastly, the preacher emphasizes the seriousness of this matter, as those who practice such sinful things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Transcript

All right, let's turn to Galatians chapter 6. And actually we'll pick up back in verse 24 of the 5th chapter. And there in chapter 5, you remember Paul is dealing extensively with the subject of the flesh and the spirit. And he goes into a detailed description, the manifestation of the flesh, all of those hideous things that we looked at previously.

And then he goes on to discuss briefly the fruit of the spirit. And then in verse 24 he says, And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit.

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. So, you know, as we've been going through Galatians, the situation, but just again to refresh your memory, they were just having a wonderful time in the grace of God. And then these false teachers came in and just quenched the whole thing.

And then they began to fight and to bicker and to be jealous and hateful toward one another. And there was this beautiful, beautiful thing that God was doing that was potentially going to be ruined by the fact that they were just giving themselves over now to the flesh. And it began, as we pointed out, with them embracing the law.

But as they embraced the law, they began to get prideful over their perceived ability to keep it. And a self-righteous attitude set in and they became very hostile toward the apostle Paul. And then inevitably their hostility would manifest itself toward one another.

And so that's why Paul is dealing with all these issues of the flesh and really calling them and challenging them to walk in the spirit. And then he reminds them of this, that those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and its desires. This is a very graphic way of describing repentance.

Repentance means to change, to have a change of heart, to have a change of mind, to have a change of direction. And Paul, that's exactly what he's speaking about, but he does so using the very graphic term of crucifixion. Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh.

The fact that crucifixion is to be the fate of the flesh is very significant. You see, we tend to, and especially in our day and age, we tend to sort of pamper the flesh a bit. And, you know, nowadays to go into a church and hear preaching that really deals with the issue of the flesh and with the issue of sin and with the necessity of crucifying the flesh, it's somewhat rare in churches today.

Because there's so much psychobabble that's infiltrated the church and so many people are under the impression that they're just sort of a victim of sin and they, you know, they're not really responsible for it and they can't really help themselves. And, you know, these things, I don't know, it's just part of who I am. And there's so many excuses that are put forth for people's sinful behavior today, it's really unbelievable.

But the scripture is very straightforward and very blatant when it comes to the subject of the flesh. As we read in our study last week, those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. So we really need to be understanding the seriousness of this matter.

And so Paul uses this picture of crucifixion. And there are three things that we see that I want to point out to you for just a moment in regard to his use of this picture of crucifixion. The first thing that we need to note is that we are to be pitiless in regard to our flesh.

We're not to pamper it, we're not to pity it, we're not to make excuses for it, we're to crucify it. Now, crucifixion was not a pleasant form of execution, as you already know, nor was it administered to nice or refined people. Crucifixion was reserved for the worst of criminals, actually.

Likewise, the flesh is not something respectable. The flesh is not something respectable to be treated with courtesy and deference, but something so evil that it deserves no better fate than to be crucified. That's the flesh.

The flesh is evil, wicked. And, you know, none of us really like to come clean with that, but that's the reality. Now, it's somewhat easy for me to look at certain people and say, yes, indeed, the flesh is evil.

That person is wicked. They are vile. They are corrupt.

They ought to be dealt with. But when that same sentence is passed upon me, there's a tendency for me to say, oh, well, no, now, you know, I'm not like that, really. Or to make some sort of excuse for the things that I do.

Well, you know, let me just explain why I did that. It's not because I'm wicked. It's not because I'm evil.

It's just, and then, you know, we come up with some sort of an explanation for it. But the fact of the matter is that your flesh, my flesh, everyone's flesh is sinful flesh, evil, wicked flesh. And it has the potential to do horrific, horrendous things.

And so it's not to be pitied. It's not to be pitied any more than you would take pity on Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin or, more recently, Saddam Hussein or, you know, some mass murderer or someone like that. You wouldn't take pity on a person like that.

You would say that person has wreaked havoc and destroyed lives and serve themselves and, you know, just done horrific things to people. That person needs to be dealt with severely. That's the same way we need to deal with our own sinful nature.

So we need to be pitiless in regard to it. Crucifixion, of course, was extremely painful. The word excruciating, you know that word.

You know what the word literally means? It means taken out of the cross. The word comes from crucifixion. Excruciating, we think, you know, to me, that's about the most descriptive word you can come up with when you want to talk about something agonizingly painful.

It was excruciating. Well, that's what crucifixion was. Very, very painful.

Meaning that we cannot spare ourselves just because it's painful. And sometimes that's what happens. We have pity because, oh, this is so painful.

Oh, it hurts me so deeply to have to part with this thing or this habit or whatever it might be. Sometimes people get caught up in bad relationships. Young people get involved with each other and it's a relationship that's not healthy.

It's a bad relationship. And I have talked to many people over the years who they know the relationship is going nowhere. They know it's wrong.

They know it's it's actually sinful. They know they need to break it off. They say, oh, that's so painful.

Yes, it is painful. Crucifixion is painful. But nevertheless, it must be done.

That's what God calls us to. And then crucifixion was decisive. Although death by crucifixion was a lingering death, it was a certain death.

Criminals who were nailed to a cross did not survive. So we need to be decisive. You know, we need to just look at the sin and say, it's over.

I'm done with it. You know, John Corson was telling me a while back, we were talking. And he was telling me about a particular situation some years ago that he was dealing with.

He was dealing with a person that was just, you know, constantly coming back with the same issues. Constantly falling into sin in a certain area. And, you know, always coming back and confessing, oh, I've done it again.

I've done it again. And it was a pretty serious matter as I remember it. And he told me that one day, you know, finally the guy came in.

And he, you know, was going through the whole thing again about how he'd fallen again and this. And John said, he sort of got in his face. He just looked at him.

He said, you will not sin again. And he said that cured him right there. The guy went on from that point.

And, you know, there was a decisive moment that came. And he realized the seriousness and the need to just make that break. And that's what we're talking about.

That's what Paul said those who belong to Christ have done. Those who belong to Christ have repented. They've turned away from sin.

Now, again, like I said, you know, we're sort of living in a time when you get a lot of people out in the community who are saying they're Christians, thinking they're Christians. They've never repented. They've never crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

They're still living a life that is no different than the life of the unbeliever. But yet they're saying, I'm a Christian. You know, we had the baptism today and we had a fantastic time down there.

But as prior leading into the baptism, I was talking about Philip and when he was there having shared Isaiah 53 with the Ethiopian eunuch. And they're the eunuch. He sees the water and he says, there's water.

What what hinders me from being baptized? And Philip looked at him and said, if you believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ is a son of God, then you can be baptized. And you see, I think a lot of times we're so anxious to get converts or so anxious to get, you know, names written down that these people came forward. These people got saved or so anxious to get, you know, somebody dunked in the baptismal that we're not letting people know that, look, you've got to believe with all your heart.

There's got to be this transformation. And of course, that's what takes place when a person comes to Christ, because you can't really come to Christ without repenting, because repenting means to turn from something to someone. You're turning from sin and you're turning to Jesus Christ.

And so, Paul, he says to them, those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and lust. And so if we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. Let's not go around saying we live in the spirit, but not practically experiencing the walk in the spirit.

And then he says, let us not become conceited, provoking one another in being one another. Those were the things that were developing within the fellowship. And Paul says those things need to be cut off.

And now as we come to chapter six, we come, of course, to the concluding portion of the epistle. And here Paul will give now just a series of exhortations, as he often does when he comes to the end of his epistles. And so he says, 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.

When a person is in sin, when a brother or a sister is caught up in some sin. Our goal and objective is to restore that person. That's always our goal and objective.

We always want to see first and foremost restoration. Now, tragically, sadly, unfortunately, restoration isn't always possible because there has to be a change on the part of the person. But I think the probability of restoration is much higher if we approach the matter in the way that Paul instructs us to here.

See, we we approach that brother or a sister who's overtaken in a trespass. We approach them in a spirit of gentleness. You know, if you come at somebody really hard, you just sort of get in their face about, you know, their sin and come off in a holier than thou kind of a way.

You can really hinder the restoration process. And so we've always got to keep in mind when we're dealing with other people, the need for being gentle and remembering that we could find ourselves in a similar kind of situation. And of course, it really goes back to what Jesus taught us, doing unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Put yourself in that position. If you were overtaken in some sort of a trespass, how would you want to be approached by somebody else? I think all of us would agree we'd like someone to gently come along and and lovingly rebuke us. Yes, but but in a way that we sense that they care about us and that they are really interested in our restoration.

I really try to do this in the opportunities that the Lord brings to me to minister to people who are in this kind of a of a place. I try to put myself in that position and and I really seek to approach them in a way that's not going to put them on the defensive. But it's going to soften them up and and make them more inclined to turn back to the Lord.

And that's just good advice from the apostle Paul and good wisdom for all of us as we minister to other people. And then he says, bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. So you remember the Galatians, they were into the law.

They wanted to do the the law. And remember back in the fifth chapter, Paul said the whole law is summed up in this. Love your neighbor as yourself.

You want to you want to be under the law. OK, this is the law you could be under. Love one another.

It's a lot easier to keep a bunch of silly rules, not that the law of God is silly rules. But as we've talked before, a lot of times within the church and, you know, the traditions and things that people established in the end, they just become a bunch of silly rules. And a lot of times it's easier to keep those silly rules rather than to love another person or to bear one another's burdens.

And so Paul says, OK, here's another perspective on the law. The law of Christ is to bear one another's burdens, to care about each other, to take time and to encourage one another and help lift that load that's on your brother or your sister. You know.

In the size of a church that we have, as you know, it can be difficult at times to get close to people. And it can be quite hard, really, to develop relationships, meaningful relationships where you get in a place where you're depending on others. And and, you know, you've got people you're praying with regularly, people that you're accountable to, people that you're you know, you're connected with.

But we have got to overcome the obstacle of a large congregation and we've got to pursue those things because that's what this thing is all about. It's all about relationships, it's all about helping each other, loving each other, as he said here, bearing one another's burdens. That's the law of Christ.

That we would lift the load off of others, that we would come alongside and help in a variety of ways, helping people spiritually, sometimes helping them emotionally by just being a friend, loving, caring, sometimes helping them literally physically through a number of ways. But these are the things that really

mark the church of Jesus Christ and have done so historically. Back in the early years of the church, the Roman historians who were writing about this new phenomenon that had arisen in their midst, this phenomenon of Christianity.

The main thing they would mention in their writings was the tremendous love that these people had for one another. That was the thing that stood out more than anything else to them. And they would go on and on about the love that was there within the community.

And that's what Paul is appealing to them for here once again, bearing one another's burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another, for each one shall bear his own load.

Now, in the older translation, I think in the King James Version, it says, for each one shall bear his own burden. The newer translations change the word to load because on the one hand, he says, bear one another's burdens. And then he turns around and says, bear your own burden.

It sounds like a contradiction. But what Paul is talking about here, he's not contradicting himself. He's calling the individuals in the congregation.

As he says, you know, as he says, bear one another's burdens, there are always those people that don't want to take responsibility for themselves. And they want to heap their burden on everybody else and become a burden. But Paul is balancing the scales here.

And he's saying, bear your own load as well. So there are certain people who have burdens that are, they're no fault of their own. And those are the ones that were to come alongside and help bear that burden.

But some people, quite frankly, they have problems in their life because they don't bear their own load. Because they're irresponsible. Because they are not doing what they need to do.

And then, of course, they come to the church looking for the handout. They come to the church looking for people to have pity on them, take them into their homes and, you know, feed them and clothe them and do all of that. And it's a scam.

It's a rip-off. I remember years and years and years ago, a long time ago, some friends were living across the street there. And a guy came here to the church and gave us a big story about how he was down and out and, you know, this whole thing.

And so my buddies over there, I got them to take the guy in. And he was there for a couple of weeks eating him out of house and home and, you know, wearing their clothes and everything. And, you know, they're coming to me, Brian, what did you do? Who is this person that you sent to us? You know, I'm feeling so bad.

Well, he finally left. But he stole most of their goods on his way out the door. And aren't I a good friend? So if I ever send anybody to your house, beware.

But, you know, you see these kinds of things and then you think, oh, man, I can't believe it. But you learn your lessons over the years. But this is the kind of thing that Paul's talking about here.

Just like he would say in writing to the Thessalonians, you remember, he said, if any man doesn't work, neither shall he eat. Because each man is to bear his own load. We're to love one another, bear one another's burdens.

But that does not alleviate the individual responsibility so that you can just become a freeloader off of the body of Christ. And then he says, let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. That's why we're having a potluck tonight.

So you guys could share all that good food with me for teaching. See, I knew this verse was coming is going to be appropriate for. But what Paul is saying here, as he would say in other places, for example, when he again writes to Timothy, he says, he says.

For those elders who labor in the word and doctrine, count them worthy of double honor. And so there is to be that exchange going on. Those who are ministering the word, they're being blessed and ministered to by those who are being fed the word.

And that happens very wonderfully here at this fellowship. God has just moved on the hearts of all of you in such an extraordinary way. And the provision that comes for all of us, it is it's wonderful.

And we're very thankful for that. So we are being shared with those good things. Now, in verse seven, Paul now in coming to the close, he shifts back over once again to his previous topic regarding the flesh and the spirit.

And look at what he says in verse seven. He says, do not be deceived. God is not mocked for whatever a man sows.

That he will also reap. Be not deceived. Paul says that quite often in writing to the Corinthians in the sixth chapter.

He said, do not be deceived. And there in that context, similar to what he was saying in the fifth chapter of Galatians, he makes the statement that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Don't be deceived about this.

And now here again, do not be deceived. God is not mocked over in Ephesians chapter five. He talks about the sins of the flesh, sexual sins primarily.

And he says, let no one deceive you with empty words for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience. So you can understand it. This is an area that you don't want to be deceived in because it will cost you eternally.

That's the whole point. There is one area that you can't afford to be deceived in, and that is in regard to the things of the spirit. But yet how many people are living in deception? How many people are willingly deceived and led astray regarding spiritual things? How many people just say, no, no, I don't want to hear that.

No, don't don't give me that. I, you know, people, you know, plug their ears. Don't don't know.

They want to go on in their deception. But the consequences are astronomical because they're eternal consequences. And so Paul here, as he does, is he's really laying out a strong, strong warning.

God will not be mocked. God is being mocked by many today as they parade up and down the street, flaunting their sin and so often literally mocking God in the process. But God will not be mocked, meaning that those who behave in that way are not getting away with anything.

It might appear that they are at the present. It might seem that nothing's happening. But the fact of the matter is they're storing up wrath for the day of wrath and righteous judgment of God.

It's like putting money in the bank. And it's storing up, but it's not money, it's judgment. God will not be mocked for whatever a man sows that he will also reap for he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption.

But he who sows to the spirit will love the spirit, reap everlasting life. So here's the two things, the flesh and the spirit. And then there is the corruption and the everlasting life.

You sow to the flesh, you reap corruption. You sow to the spirit, you reap everlasting life. Now, sowing and reaping, of course, these are agricultural terms.

They're terms that are referring to planting and harvesting, sowing and reaping. There are three things that we need to keep in mind when we talk about this whole idea of sowing and reaping. First of all, we need to remember that you do reap what you sow.

That is true in a literal sense. When you go out and plant green beans, you sow those seeds. When it comes time to reap, you're going to reap green beans because that's what you planted.

Or when you sow those tomato seeds, when it comes time, you're going to reap tomatoes, whatever the case. Whatever you sow, that is what you reap. It's true in that realm agriculturally, but it's true in the realm of life as well.

And it's true, especially in the realm of the spirit. So you reap what you sow. Secondly, we need to remember that there is a gap of time between when you sow and when you reap.

You see, a farmer doesn't go out and stick a seed in the soil and then come back the next day to reap the harvest, does he? But there's a period of time that elapses. There's a process that goes on. And we need to understand that because a lot of times people are sowing to the flesh.

And because they're not reaping any visible consequence of it, they think, hey, nothing's going to happen. I'm getting away with this. There's no problem.

But remember, there's a time period. And thirdly, we need to realize that when you sow, you sow a little, but you can reap a lot. You sow just a few apple seeds to get an apple tree and you get a lot of fruit and a lot more seeds.

And so likewise, when we're sowing in this particular realm as well, we need to realize that especially in regard to sin, sin has a tendency to multiply real quickly. So taking those three truths and then applying them to both the flesh and the spirit. Think about it.

If you sow to the flesh, you're going to reap corruption. That's the outcome. That's what comes.

Nothing else can come. Now, looking at it in these terms, what are we talking about when we're talking about sowing? We're talking about basically just catering to the flesh, feeding the flesh, living a life that is

focused on and centered around the flesh. And sometimes that's really pathetically gross.

And other times it seems rather benign and, you know, not so big of a deal. But either way, one is obviously problematic. The other is not so obvious, but it's still problematic.

Because when you sow to the flesh in any way, shape or form, it can only produce one thing. It can only produce corruption. It can't possibly produce anything else.

Remember the gap. Just because you haven't reaped a harvest yet, just because you haven't suffered the consequences, doesn't mean that they're not coming. So you need to stop sowing.

Because the more you're sowing, the greater the consequences are going to be. But then, remember too, you'll reap more than you planted. And although you might, well, this is just a little thing here.

And that wasn't that big of a deal. And, well, this. But, oh, it can just, it can multiply so rapidly.

But that's true in the realm of the spirit too. As you sow to the spirit, you're going to reap everlasting life. Not just getting to go to heaven in the end.

But you're going to reap everlasting life. You're going to reap life right now. The life of God.

The life that God wants you to be experiencing here in this day. As we pointed out before, God has a life for us. It's the life of the spirit.

And the more we sow to the spirit, the more we live that life of the spirit, which is marked by love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. All of those great things that everybody's sort of wishing they could experience, but they're not getting it. Because this is the fruit of the spirit.

So as we sow to the spirit, then we will be reaping. And there is, though, the gap. You see, sometimes what happens, you know from experience.

We're sowing to the spirit, but we don't seem to be reaping the harvest. I think, Lord, I'm seeking you. I'm praying.

I'm meditating on your word. I'm doing the things that are, you know, lend themselves to spiritual growth and all of that. But you don't feel like you're getting anywhere.

Does anybody ever feel that way? I know I do sometimes. And because you don't feel like you're making any progress, there's a big temptation to just sort of drop the whole thing. Oh, why bother? You know, why bother praying? Why bother, you know, this Bible meditation? You know, nothing seems to be happening.

You know what? If you're sowing, you will reap. Remember that. But God has a timing.

And just keep sowing, keep sowing, keep sowing, because harvest will come. The time for reaping will come. And then all of that that's been sown in there, it'll just begin to come out.

And God gives us those little glimpses where that happens, doesn't he? You're sowing to the spirit, and it doesn't seem like anything's happening. It doesn't seem like you're moving along at all. And then some ministry opportunity comes along.

Some person comes along or some situation that you get to address. And suddenly you find yourself talking to somebody. You find the word of God is flowing from your life.

You find that you've got wisdom for the situation for them. You find that they're being greatly encouraged by what you say. And you walk away, and you think, wow, I didn't even know I knew all of that stuff.

But you see, that's what's going on as you're sowing. So keep on sowing. And remember, too, God will multiply as you just are faithfully putting in.

Maybe you think, well, you know, I just don't have the time. You pastors are always talking about these things we've got to do. Man, I've got a job.

I've got to get up at 4 in the morning and go to work, you know. We know that. God bless you as you do that.

But as you take the time that you do have. You see, because that's not the amount of time per se. It's just like the woman who put in more than all of the wealthy people.

But she just dropped in one penny. But Jesus said she put in more. Well, how is that? Because they put in out of their surplus.

But she put in out of her need. And, you know, when you take that precious 20 minutes or that precious hour or whatever. And you offer that to the Lord.

God will multiply that. Know that. Understand that.

And so Paul tells us here. Sowing to the spirit. Reaping everlasting life.

Dig into the things of the spirit. Read your Bible. Just read it.

Study it. And pick up biographies of Christian men and women. Read things that build you up in the realm of the spirit.

Invest in your spiritual life. Spend time in prayer. Get together with friends and edify one another in the Lord.

You know, these are things we have to actually. We have to work at doing. You know, farming is not an easy task.

Farming is. It's hard work. The hardworking farmer.

The scriptures speak of the hardworking farmer. And that is just the way farming is. It's hard work.

And we have to approach the things of the spirit. And we've got to really put forth effort. Because the flesh is always being dragged behind.

Kicking and screaming and not wanting to go in that direction. It's so much easier to not do it. So we've got to put forth that effort.

We've got to have an element of discipline. But when we do that. We get the payoff ultimately.

Because the hardworking farmer is the first one to partake of the crop. You see, as you're working diligently on this. God rewards you.

He blesses you. He gives you that first fruit experience with him. And so he says.

And let us not grow weary. While doing good. For in due season.

We shall reap if we do not lose heart. Oh, we're so tempted to lose heart. Aren't we? We're so tempted to give up.

We're so tempted to grow weary while doing good. Because it seems like we keep doing this. And where's the result? Where's the fulfillment? Where's the promise? Don't grow weary.

Keep going. Keep persevering. You know, I was looking in my Bible yesterday.

At promises. That God gave me. In December of 1991.

That have not yet been fulfilled. But I know as sure as I'm standing here talking to you. That God spoke those promises to me.

And at the time that he gave those to me. I can say honestly. I didn't really understand.

Even the significance of them. I didn't understand the context. I embraced them because I knew they were from him.

And then I sought to apply them to a certain extent. To things that I thought they would be speaking to. But here's the thing.

Now. Right now. At this stage in my life.

What the promises pertain to. Are all the issues that I'm presently facing and deal with. Dealing with.

Issues that did not exist at the time. And I'm looking at this. And I'm thinking.

Amazing. So this is what that meant. And yet still.

13 years later. The promises haven't been fulfilled. And I will freely confess.

There have been times that I have grown weary while doing good. There are times that I have. Been tempted to lose heart.

But you know. The Lord is faithful. Don't grow weary while doing good.

Keep trusting. Keep believing. Keep doing.

The right thing. Keep sowing to the spirit. Because.

You will reap. In due season. If you do not faint.

You see. God has the perfect timing. And perseverance is such a key element in the Christian life.

And I never understood that like I understand it today. Sometimes you just got to keep going despite everything around you. What it looks like.

You just keep going. But there's light at the end of the tunnel. There's the fulfillment of that promise.

You've heard the story about. The guy. I don't know if it's true or made up.

You know some of these stories you hear. You wonder. Did that really happen? Or is it just a good sermon illustration? But you know the guy who's.

He's digging for gold. He's in the shaft. He's got this claim that he's staked out.

And he's there. You know for years. Just chiseling away.

Just finding little bits of dust here and there. And finally he's just at his wits end. He's exasperated.

Finally just gives up on the whole thing. Goes over to the claims office. Sells his claim.

And then the guy that purchases it. It's just a couple of whacks. And he hits the mother load.

And there it is. He missed out. He grew weary.

He ended up not receiving. The benefit of all that effort that he had put in. And so.

Do not grow weary. Keep sowing to the spirit. I'm telling you.

It's going to pay off. God's faithful. And the blessing is coming.

Therefore. As we have opportunity. Let us do good to all.

Especially to those. Who are of the household of faith. So let's just.

This is again sowing to the spirit. Another aspect of it. Doing good.

Just doing good to people. Anybody that we have the opportunity. To bless or to benefit.

But especially. Those who are of the household of faith. As Christian people.

In a very practical way. We ought to be helpful people. We ought to be helping.

Others. With. Whatever they need.

But especially. Paul says our own. Especially the members of our own family.

Especially those who are of the household of faith. Again emphasizing that need to. To love practically.

And now. As he. Concludes the letter.

He says see with what large letters. I have written to you. With my own hand.

Now. Remember earlier in the epistle Paul. Spoke about being among them and being infirmed.

And he even said at one point. He was talking about the love that they had for him. He said you love me so much.

You would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. If you. Had been able to do it.

And now here he says see what. Large letters I've written with my own hand. Because of these kinds of statements.

Many people believe that. The the thorn in the flesh that Paul spoke of that. That ongoing.

You know. Affliction that he had to deal with. That it had something to do with his eyesight with his vision.

And it might indeed have. Been that. Because here he's making reference to the fact that he.

Has written these large. And it's actually large not a large letter in this. And this is a rather small letter.

But the actual letters were large. And so it could be that it was. An eye affliction that Paul suffered from.

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. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law. But they desire to have you circumcised.

That they may boast in your flesh. So again he's giving a final warning about these Judaizers. And basically Paul is saying.

These people don't care about you. You are simply. A means to promote them.

That's what they're interested in. Because that was you know a big impressive thing. The more people you get following after you.

Well. The more prestigious you were considered. And so Paul is just telling them flat out.

They don't care about you. They want to use you. To promote their own agenda.

And he says but even those who are circumcised. They don't keep the law. 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. Paul was quite a man. He said God forbid that I should boast in anything.

Now Paul had many things that he could have boasted about. You know boasting is. Is just part of our.

Fallen human nature isn't it. Just that tendency to boast. And.

It's in all of us. You see it. You see it in little tiny children.

And it's cute in little tiny children. It's really ugly in big people. I mean.

I don't know about you. But there's nothing. There's not anything worse than a braggart.

Somebody just always bragging. You know you just oh shut up. Please.

I just. But you know you find those people that do that. Having been a Christian for so long.

You know you kind of forget that that goes on. Because of course that's not a. Thank God. One of the chief features among us.

But. You get back out in the world sometimes. You connect with people.

And you know you find them bragging about. Then you think what. What is this guy talking about.

But that but it's just part of human nature. And these. False teachers.

They were prideful. And they were boasting about their spirituality. There's nothing uglier than spiritual pride.

Pride is bad spiritual pride is atrocious. But here's Paul. Now this is a guy who had things that he could have boasted about.

Paul was. He was a brilliant brilliant man. He had a very high position.

Within. Jewish. Society.

As he was one of the leading rabbis of his generation. And he was a Roman citizen. And he.

Was very cultured. Spoke a variety of languages. And you know.

Very intelligent. Intellectual. You know.

All the kinds of things that people boast about. You know. What do people boast about.

They boast about their. Ancestry. A lot of times.

Well Paul. Belonged to the chosen people. The Jewish race.

They boast about their wealth. They boast about their education. Their intelligence.

They boast about their accomplishments. And Paul could have. Boasted about those things.

But he said. God forbid. That I should boast.

Except in the cross. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is like.

Anti-boasting. It's. It's less than.

Not boasting. Paul's boasting. In the cross.

Now. You see. We understand that.

And 2,000 years later. Okay. That's cool.

I boast in the cross. Of Christ too. But you see.

In Paul's day. The cross. Of Christ.

Was just. It was. Utter foolishness.

And absurdity. Because. Across.

Remember. Was nothing. Other than.
A means of executing. A criminal. That's.
That's what it was. There was nothing. You know.
Glorious about a cross. Now today. We've taken the cross.
And. Fashioned it. We.
Wear it. Around our necks. Or.
In your ears. Or. Wherever else you.
You know. Through. That sort of thing.
You know. It's. Kind of nice.
You see a nice little cross. But. When you understand.
The context of Paul's statement. At that time. Remember.
In writing to the. Corinthians. He talked about.
The cross. Was. A stumbling block.
To the Jew. It was a scandalous thing. To the Jew.
And he said. To the Greek. It was foolishness.
It was moronic. It was stupidity. I mean.
You know. To. To.
Make some sort of. A modern parallel. It would just.
You find the most moronic. Stupid. Ridiculous thing.
You could think of. In the culture. And.
Then say. That's a thing. I'm going to boast in.
That's a thing. I'm going to glory in. People just think.
You're. Off your trolley. To use an English term.
For. Losing. Your marbles.
But. That. That's.
That's. That's what Paul's saying. I'm going to boast.
In the cross. But. You see.

This thing. That's foolishness. To the Greek.
The intellectual. It is. Scandalous.
To the religious man. The self-righteous. Paul said.
This is the thing. That God. Has ordained.
To save. The human race. Because.
The foolishness of God. Is wiser than men. And the weakness of God.
Is stronger than men. I love that. And.
God. Just. Humanity.
In all. Of the arrogance. And all.
Of the pride. And all. Of.
You know. Man. In his.
Boasting. And he says. You know what.
This. Right here. This.
Utterly. Foolish thing. To you.
This. Is. My means.
Of saving. The world. And Paul said.
That's what I'm going to boast. About. The cross.
By whom. The world. Has been crucified.
To me. And I. To the world. Paul says.
I'm dead. To this world. I don't care.
What they think. And. Of course.
Today. Too. And.
Increasingly. So. Talk.
About Jesus. Talk. About the cross.
Talk. About him. Dying.
You know. Last week. We're talking.
About the offense. Of the cross. And I. Given a few examples.

And I mentioned. The. The Mel Gibson thing.
And all that. But. Somebody reminded me.
Afterwards. The city of Los Angeles. The seal.
At the city of Los Angeles. Has a cross on it. The ACLU.
Is trying to remove. The cross. From the seal.
The cross. Is still an offense. For in Christ.
Jesus. Neither circumcision. Or uncircumcision.
Avails anything. But a new creation. And as many.
As walk. According to this rule. Peace.
Be upon them. And mercy. Be upon the Israel.
Of God. Mercy. Upon the Israel.
Of God. We're running late. But I got to say this.
The Israel. Of God. Here.
Has been. Mistakenly. Interpreted.
To be the church. By those. Who have.
Embraced. What's known as. Replacement.
Theology. Replacement. Theology.
Says God. Is done. With the Jewish people.
Israel. Had their chance. It's over.
And now. The church. Is the Israel.
Of God. But that's. A misinterpretation.
Paul is referring. To himself. And he's referring.
To the Jews. Who have believed. They are the Israel.
Of God. Because remember. The Judaizers.
Were trying to convert. These people. To Judaism.
And Paul. Talks about the Israel. Of God.
Would be those who. The Jewish. Believers.

Among. The early. Christians.
So. From now on. Paul says.
Let no one. Trouble me. For I bear.
In my body. The marks. Of the Lord.
Jesus Christ. You know. In a sense.
Paul is saying. You know what. These guys.
Are wimps. I don't even. Want to hear.
From them anymore. I bear. In my body.
The marks. Of Jesus. I've been.
Beaten. I've been. Flogged.
I've been. Stoned. What are these guys think they're talking about.
That's kind of what he's saying. I don't want to hear it anymore. They don't know what they're talking about.
And then he says. Brethren. The grace.
Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. Be with your spirit.
Amen. Lord. We thank you for.
Your word. And Lord. You've given us.
Your word. You've given us each other. You've given us.
Direct. Communication. With you.
Through prayer. prayer. You've given us so many avenues by which we can sow to the spirit.
Help us, Lord, to do that. And, Lord, help us not to grow weary while doing good, but knowing that in due season we will reap if we do not faint. Thank you, Lord, for your love.
Thank you that you're committed to seeing us through to heaven. Keep working in our lives in these days, we pray, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.

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