**A MAN REAPS WHAT HE SOWS**

Galatians 6:1-10

Key Verse 7

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

**Introduction**

 

 In this passage Paul gives practical instructions to believers about what they should do as the ones who have received the Holy Spirit. He encourages them to restore anyone who has committed sin, to carry each other’s burden, and also to carry their own load. He also encourages them to sow to please the Spirit and to continue to do good work.

1. Read verses 1-2. What should we do for someone who is caught in sin? (1a) What other warning did Paul give? (1b) Why did Paul encourage believers to carry each other’s burdens? (2)

1-1. Read verses 1-2.

 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. **2** Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

1-2, What should we do for someone who is caught in sin? (1a)

1-3, What other warning did Paul give? (1b)

 ***Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.***

· The responsibility of those who are spiritual is the restoration of one who has sinned.

· *if someone is caught in a sin, -*  the possibility that members of the church could sin. Sin in the church is not a hypothetical possibility, but a reality.

· Paul is more concerned about the manner in which sinners in the church are treated than in the sin itself. What counts is the church's response when such thing occurs.

· The occasion of sin is the opportunity for Spirit-led people to display the fruit of the Spirit in order to bring healing to the sinner and unity in the church.

· In order to bring healing to the sinner, we must have a compassionate view of the one who has sinned. We will want to help them break the bondage of sin over their lives.

· All believers received the Spirit (3:2-5, 14; 4:6, 29; 5:5, 16-18, 22-23, 25) since all who are the children of God have received the Spirit of God. All who have believed the true gospel and received the Spirit are to be actively engaged in the ministry of restoration.

· The verb *restore* could be used in physical or material contexts to signify resetting a broken bone or mending a torn net (Mt 4:21; Mk 1:19). The verb *restore* calls for spiritual therapy so that a broken member of the body can once again work properly and perform its vital functions for the benefit of the whole body.

. As long as any member of the body is broken, the whole body suffers. If the broken member of the body is amputated, the whole body suffers the loss. What is needed is restoration. The goal is the recovery of Christian brothers and sisters who have sinned so that the whole body will be healthy and productive again.

· *restore him gently.* Literally, he says, restore "in a spirit of gentleness." "Gentleness" is one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (5:23). Gentleness is not weakness; it is great strength under control. The will of the gentle person is devoted to loving the sinner all the way to total recovery. Only the Holy Spirit can empower a person to respond in such a "spirit of gentleness."

· *But watch yourself,* Close observation of the inner life is necessary because everyone is vulnerable to temptation: *you also may be tempted.* Awareness of my own vulnerability to moral failure helps me be on guard against temptation

· Those who are led by the Spirit are aware that they are "only sinners saved by grace." All their responses to other sinners are guided by the personal insight of their own weakness and their total dependence on the redemptive love of God.

1-3. Why did Paul encourage believers to carry each other’s burdens? (2)

 ***Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.***

· *Carry each other's burdens.* -To "serve one another in love" (5:13) means to bear each other's burdens.

· The term *burdens* may refer to all kinds of physical, emotional, mental, moral or spiritual burdens.

· Each other's burdens covers every conceivable kind of burden even the unseen burdens that our brothers and sisters try to hide. It includes burdens of sin too.

· When we carry each other's burdens in this way, we will *fulfill the law of Christ* .

· Serving sinners in the church, not separating sinners from the church, is the way to fulfill the law of Christ.

· The law of Christ is a commandment of love. When Jesus taught the commandment of love, he directed attention to himself: "Love each other as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). The law of Christ is the commandment of love fulfilled, confirmed, and heightened in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. He loved sinners and gave himself for them (Gal 2:20); on the cross he bore the terrible burden of the law's curse against them (3:13); he set them free from the burden of the yoke of slavery under the law (5:1).

· Hence all who are united with Christ and are led by the Spirit will also fulfill the high standard of love established by the life, death and resurrection of Christ: like him, they will love sinners and carry their burdens. Serving one another in love in this way expresses Christ's love and so fulfills Christ's law.

· Those who have received the Spirit and have been set free from the Mosaic law actually fulfill the requirements of the Mosaic law (Rom 8:4) summed up in the single command "Love your neighbor as yourself"! Christ like, Spirit-empowered love fulfills the law.

2. Read verses 3-6. How can we avoid becoming proud, comparing ourselves with others? (3-5) What does Paul say we should do for our instructors? (6)

2-1. Read verses 3-6.

 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. **4** Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, **5** for each one should carry their own load. **6** Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

2-2. How can we avoid becoming proud, comparing ourselves with others? (3-5)

 ***If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. 4 Each one should test their own actions.***

· The need for personal evaluation. Self-evaluation is necessary since there is always the danger of self-deception (v. 3).

· Personal evaluation must be made on the basis of a careful examination of one's own work, not on the basis of comparison with others (v. 4). Personal evaluation should clarify one's God-given mission in life (v. 5).

· The warning against self-deception (v. 3) The most serious spiritual danger of all is the self-delusion of pride: someone who *thinks he is something when he is nothing.*

· Only those who are freed from delusions of their own importance will be able to serve others in love.

· The only way to prevent self-deception is to examine the value of one's own work: *each one should test his own actions* (v. 4).

· The term *test* means to examine for the purpose of determining true worth. Each Christian should scrutinize his or her actions to determine their true worth before God.

. The standard used for this evaluation is the law of Christ: the love of Christ expressed in his life and death and produced by his Spirit in all who believe in him. Paul has said that "the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (5:6).

· If a Christian's careful examination of his life indicates that at least to some extent the love of Christ is being expressed through his actions, *then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else* (v. 4).

 ***Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else,***

· how can a Christian *take pride in himself.*  Christians can boast in Christ. - he boasts in the cross of Christ (v. 14). That is his boast in 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Paul boasted in the cross because the cross was the ultimate display of the love of God for sinners. When we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection, that love of God for sinners can be expressed through us by the power of the Spirit. And that is the reason for Christians to boast!

· when the self-sacrificing love of Christ is seen in the actions of Christians, there is reason for boasting. Christians should celebrate that they can love because of their experience of the cross of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

***5 for each one should carry their own load***

· *for each one should carry his own load* (v. 5). Each of us has been called by God to carry our own load.

· *The load means the mission that God gave us.* Before God, we will have to give an account of how we used the opportunities and talents he gave us to serve him. It is because we desire to fulfill our God-given mission in life that we learn how to carry the burdens of others. In other words, as Christians examine their own actions to see if they reflect the love of Christ, they are at the same time led by that self-evaluation to determine how to serve others in love.

· We can carry our own load by carrying the burdens of others.

2-3. What does Paul say we should do for our instructors? (6)

***Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.***

· The love empowered by the Spirit is expressed in "goodness." In practice, that means sharing *good things* with our teachers.

· Paul places great value on the work of teaching the Word. It is the basis for strong churches and healthy Christians.

· When teachers faithfully give the Word to the churches and the churches give back good things, there is unity in the church.

· The command *must share* is a translation of a Greek word: *koinonia,* "fellowship" or "partnership."

· For the instructors, or Bible teachers - in order for them to do good in their work of teaching, they needed to receive enthusiastic and generous support.

3. Read verses 7-10. Why should we live before God? (7) What are the different consequences between sowing to please the flesh and sowing to please the Spirit? (8) Why should we not become weary in doing good? (9) To whom should we do good to when we have opportunity? (10)

3-1. Read verses 7-10.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. **8** Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. **9** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. **10** Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

3-2. Why should we live before God? (7)

 ***Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.***

· Two opposite ways of life: the way of the Spirit and the way of the sinful nature.

· We should consider very carefully the consequences of choosing one way or the other. They cannot drift; they cannot remain neutral; they must decide whether they are going to walk by the Spirit or gratify the desires of their sinful nature.

· Paul introduces a solemn warning based on an agricultural principle: *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows* (v. 7). When people think and act as if they will not reap what they have sown, or as if they will reap something different from what they have sown, they are deceiving themselves and mocking God. But since the inexorable law of reaping what is sown has always been proved true, the proverbial statement of warning *God cannot be mocked* is also true: no one can mock God and get away with it.

· There is a common tendency to think that there is one exception to this universal principle: "Though it proves true for everyone else, it is not true for me. I will not have to reap a harvest from the seeds I sow. I can sow whatever seed I want and still expect a good harvest." This kind of thought only proves the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jer 17:9).

3-3. What are the different consequences between sowing to please the flesh and sowing to please the Spirit? (8)

***8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.***

· Paul then applies the agricultural principle of reaping what is sown: *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life*.

· Here we are faced with a decision, a decision that determines our destiny. We are not victims of fate, bad luck, or even predestination. Our destiny is determined by our decision: shall we sow to the sinful nature or to the Spirit?

· Those who are sowing to please the sinful nature are destroying relationships with others: they are biting, devouring, provoking and envying others (5:15, 26).

· Sowing to please the sinful nature will always result in a harvest of destruction, a destruction of relationships with others and with God.

· Sowing to please the Spirit means "serving one another in love" (5:13), restoring one who has been caught in sin (6:1), carrying the burdens of others (6:2), giving generously to those who teach in the church (6:6) and doing good to all (6:9).

· Sowing to the Spirit is also private, personal holiness, as if it were something done in a closet by oneself.

· Sowing to the Spirit involves building love relationships with others. Sowing to the Spirit cannot be done in isolation or separation from others. Carrying the burdens of others requires in-depth participation in their pain and sorrow.

· Sowing to the Spirit means *doing good* to others. If sowing to the sinful nature means selfish indulgence, then sowing to the Spirit means selfless service.

· The harvest of sowing to the Spirit is *eternal life.*

3-4. Why should we not become weary in doing good? (9)

***9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.***

· *Let us not become weary in doing good* (v. 9).

· *Paul* clearly taught that true faith expresses itself through love (5:6) and in the hard work of serving one another (5:13) and carrying each other's burdens (6:2).

· One of the greatest obstacles to do good work is simply fatigue. We can easily lose heart and run out of strength when we come up against the same problems over and over again as we do good work.

· Even Paul sounds discouraged when he talks about his efforts to rebuild his relationship with the Galatian believers: "I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you" (4:11).

· Paul recognized that fatigue and discouragement might cause Christians to throw in the servant's towel and quit. So he presents two incentives to keep us from giving up when we grow weary of serving others in love.

· He assures us of a reward for doing good: *at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up* (v. 9).

· Sometimes the harvest is experienced in this life. When we sow acts of love, we reap a harvest of love in return. When we give generously and sacrificially to the needs of others, we reap a harvest of gratitude as those needs are met. When we sow the seed of God's Word in needy lives, we experience the joy of seeing the fruit of our labor.

· But we must remember that reaping a harvest almost never happens immediately after sowing the seed. Sometimes we may not even see the harvest if what we have sown during this life. Nevertheless, we must never give up, because we know that *at the proper time* our Master will return and reward those who have been faithful servants.

3-5. To whom should we do good to when we have opportunity? (10)

***10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.***

· Paul motivates perseverance in service to one another by reminding us that we are part of a great family: *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers* (v. 10).

· Although there are no limits placed on the scope of our service to *all people,* our priority is certainly to serve *the family of believers.*

· We belong to one another in one family, since we belong to Christ.

**Conclusion**

 A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. We cannot mock God. God rewards according to what we do. May God help us to sow to please the Spirit by relying on Him. May God help us to carry each other’s burden with Jesus’ sacrificial love and continue to carry out the mission God gave us by faith.

**One word, “Sow to please the Spirit”**