

## GALATIANS - SERMON 41

### GALATIANS 6:4 — REJOICE IN GOOD WORKS

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INTRODUCTION: Read Galatians 6:1 -5

Pride is the great destroyer of the church. Pride exalts self (vs 3). Pride makes people unwilling to forgive and restore others (vs 1). Pride makes people unwilling to serve others (vs 2). Pride makes people bite and devour one another (5:15). In chapter 6 Paul vigorously attacks the sin of pride by lowering the self-esteem of his readers. In verse 3 Paul tells his readers that their problem is related to the high view of themselves which they possess. Because these people think themselves to be something they are filled with self-importance, self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, and self-esteem. They are simply filled with self. Paul states the reality in verse 3 - *they are nothing*.

Isaiah 40:17

*All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.*

For man to think other than lowly of himself is to *deceive* himself according to Galatians 6:3.

The view that I have worth because of what I am or because of how others treat me is a twisted gospel. Our sense of value and accomplishment comes not from either our creation or from our redemption.

[Contrary to the self-esteem preachers, Christ did not have to die for us because of our great value and worth. Christ died because we were horrible sinners not even worthy enough to repay the debt we had incurred. Romans 4:24-25 *It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*].

Our sense of value comes from our works of service to others and to God by means of our personal self-denial. The Scriptures speak much about self but nothing about self-esteem. The antidote to the self-esteem gospel is NOT self-hatred. It is self-denial. If we are to have a sense of purpose, value, and worth in this life with reference to one's self, then it must be obtained by what one does in service to others and to God by means of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

Galatians 6:3-4

*For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But (in contrast to verse 3) let each one examine (prove) his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

My sense of rejoicing will come not from what I am but from what I do. No one has the right to feel good unless he does good.

[Conversely contemplate Genesis 4:4-7

*Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And*

*Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."*]

OUTLINE:

- I THE DUTY REQUIRED
- II THE RESULT PRODUCED

I THE DUTY REQUIRED: Galatians 6:4

*But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

The duty is *let each one examine his own work.*

There are two implications which arise from this statement.

- A The Christian is to perform works. Strictly in accord with the context of the passage, the works which the Christian is to perform are those of restoring (v 1) and burden-bearing (v 2). These are surely not the only works that a Christian is to perform. There are numerous other passages in the Bible which testify to the necessity, duty, nature, and privilege of good works.

Matthew 5:16

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

1 Corinthians 15:58

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

Ephesians 2:10

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Titus 2:14

*. . .who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

Titus 3:8

*This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works . . .*

Hebrews 10:24

*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. . .*

1 Peter 2:12

. . . *having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

The great antidote to those who would slander us and speak evil against us is the quality, consistency, and quantity of the works which we do - *good works*.

Clearly from these and other passages we learn that the Christian is not to be idle in this world. He is to be busy working for the Lord and working at serving others.

- B The second implication of this passage is that the works that we are to be doing are to be put to the test of the Scriptures. It is not enough just to be busy. The works that we do must be biblical works, that is, they are to conform to the principles and requirements of Scripture.

*But let each one examine his own work. . .*

This word *examine* (prove) - δοκιμαζέτω - means to test, approve, discern, prove, or try. It means to examine with a standard in mind. In other words our works are to be examined by the rule of God's Word to see whether or not they are in conformity with it. If they do not meet the test of Scripture they are NOT good works regardless of our opinion or the opinion of others.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

*Test all things; hold fast what is good.*

The duty of assessment includes our works. We must examine our motives - why am I doing this? We must examine our conduct - what did I do? We must examine our words - were they good and edifying? God's Word is the standard and rule by which these things are measured. Self-examination is the rule here.

The opposite of vain-glory (Galatians 5:26) is genuine testing of our works by the Word of God. The vain-glorious person tests his works and himself by the works of others. He measures himself by the behavior, belief, and consistency of other people. [His standard is set way too low]

2 Corinthians 10:12

*For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*

The self-righteous Pharisee was guilty of this very error.

Luke 18:11

*"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.'"*

II THE RESULT PRODUCED: Galatians 6:4

*But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

What is it that makes us happy about ourselves? It is not the fact that we are created or that we are redeemed, but that we have done works that meet the test of Scripture. When someone engages in good works he will have rejoicing in himself. He will have ground for self-confidence and self-satisfaction in the good sense of those terms. He will have a personal sense of accomplishment. He will know that he has been well-pleasing to God and it is that fact that gives him a sense of personal value and significance.

2 Corinthians 1:12

*For our boasting (rejoicing) is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.*

The basis of Paul's rejoicing was not in what he was or in how he was treated by others, but rather in what he had done.

Within the self-esteem movement it is taught that our self-esteem is dependent upon how others treat us. If others treat us well and congratulate us and compliment and accept us, then we will have a good self-esteem. Only after this can we love others for we will have learned to love ourselves first.

This is far from biblical. Paul was treated like dirt everywhere he went. Our Lord Jesus Christ was rejected and despised of men. All who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

If my self-esteem rests upon the view others have of me, then I am doomed. But if my self-esteem is based upon my obedience unto God and my conscience is clear, then I can rejoice in myself properly.

When good works are produced, not only does one rejoice in reference to himself, but also that person will shoulder responsibility for them.

Galatians 6:5

*For each one shall bear his own load.*

Some see this to be a contradiction to verse 2. The words used for burden in verse 2 and in verse 5 are two different words.

Verse 2 - τὰ βάρη (barei) means a heavy load. With reference to those heavy loads which we have we are to share them with our brethren and to help one another.

Verse 5 - φορτίον (phortion) conveys the idea of personal responsibility.

In verse 5 Paul is stating that every man shall bear his own personal responsibility for his own actions. This flows directly from verse 4.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have*

*kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

Paul, in reviewing his life, practiced obedience and compliance towards God's Word. Hence, his confidence and satisfaction as he approached his death.

Revelation 14:13

*Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

Hymn # 492