

“⁶ Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. ⁷ Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸ For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. ⁹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. ¹⁰ As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. ¹¹ Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. ¹² As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. ¹⁴ But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. ¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. ¹⁶ And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷ From henceforth let no man 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.” (Ga 6:6-18)

One of the very important principles of the Christian faith is that God has revealed Himself in His great acts of Creation and providence and in the words of the Scriptures. As men, created in the image of God, we are called to understand and give glory to God for His marvelous works, and for the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is vital that we do this, because we have been called out of darkness into the glorious light of the Gospel. Idols worshippers do not know what they worship, but we have knowledge and understanding of the God who is eternally existent in three Persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We do not live in a silent world, but in one created by God, in which the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork. We have a speaking God who exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. Man was created in the image of God with a capacity to know and understand these things. Although corrupted and blinded by sin, in Jesus Christ we have been restored to true fellowship and knowledge.

Words, however, do not convey truth in and of themselves. One of the most common errors that we make in language is to misunderstand the meaning of a passage because we assign the wrong meaning to a word and do not understand the way it should be understood in a particular sentence. This is the reason that careful reading and definition must be observed. A word cannot mean anything that we want it to mean, but we must be careful to understand its meaning in a particular sentence or paragraph.

For instance, when we use a word, we have immediately narrowed the number of meanings possible. If we use the word “cat,” we certainly do not mean anything like what we mean if we use the word biscuit. I cannot think of a scenario, where the word “cat” could mean biscuit, at least in ordinary usage of words and not cryptographic writing.

But even if we use the word “cat” it is not possible to understand the word by itself. The word has no precise meaning by itself, and is commonly used fourteen or so different ways in modern, common usage, from a domestic animal, to a class of wild animals, to a kind of boat, a jazz musician, or a computer assisted test of some kind. In order to understand the meaning of “cat” we must place the word in a context, so that the people we speak to will understand what we mean by the word. The context will decide the meaning of the word, and no word is used to mean the same thing all the time. The context decides the meaning, and in Scripture the context is in phrases, sentences, books, doctrine, and the historical context of the writing of the book, as well as the experience of the person reading the words. The way people perceive the context is the way that the words of the book will be perceived. This is one of the reasons for the differences of interpretation of Scripture.

Because of this, we must be humble in the interpretation of Scripture, for if we do not understand the context of the words that are written, it is very easy to go astray; if we do not understand how our own experiences and ideas can affect the way we read Scripture, it is easy to go astray. Also, if we come to the Scripture with our own agenda, rather than seeking to understand God’s agenda, we will go astray. We are warned about all of these things in the Scriptures. But let us come to the Scripture before us. I planned to finish Galatians today, but I will not be able to do so, because there is one important matter that requires a sermon of its own.

Today, I want to focus on verses 6-9 today, and leave verse 10-18 until next week. As I said, I planned to finish today, but there is just too many things that need to be said that are needful for God’s people in this day and age.

I. The exhortation is to partner with those who preach the Gospel. That is precisely what the word “communicate” means. The world provides well for those who communicate evil things. Rebellion and evil communications can pay very well. The world rewards its own. There is no doubt that faithful ministers in Galatia had suffered because of the false doctrine that was being taught. Loyalty was being shifted away to the people who taught dependence upon the law and faithful ministers were

suffering from it. This communication was to be in “all good things.” The people of God were not to be misers and stingy in their support of the ministry. If God’s expect to hear the true message of the Gospel, then they must be prepared to provide for the support and care of those ministers. In another place, Paul said that they must not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain. This is an important message. Minister who flatter the people and glory in earthly things are often very well rewarded with earthly things, but faithful ministers are often reduced to hardship and poverty. Great religious empires have been built by those who discredit and attack faithful doctrine and money is diverted away from those who preach the gospel into the “ministries” of those who flatter the people and glory in their flesh.

- II. The first application of Paul’s doctrine is to making peace in the church; for the flesh sows discord and strife. The Galatians were characterized by biting and devouring, for this is what the flesh does. The law does not teach its own use, and only those who are taught by the Holy Spirit can truly begin to love one another. Neither does the law of itself teach men to love those who preach the word faithfully. Men love to be flattered and praised; they love to receive smooth and fuzzy things, and turn to those who teach such things. There are earthly rewards for walking in the flesh and teaching the things of the flesh. How wonderful fuzzy and emotionally rewarding are pageantries and ceremonies and processions and images and glorious art. True worship is in the heart and the spirit, and those who turn to ceremonies and visible worship turn aside from Christ. What effect can circumcision have on the heart? None whatsoever, and it avails nothing apart from the promise by which it was given originally. A man is not made better by the fleshly beauty of the ceremonies he observes, nor by the loudness by which he calls upon God.

When men depart from the Gospel, they turn against those who have preached the word faithfully, for they value earthly things and not the things that are of God. “To preach the Gospel is to bait the world,” is the way Thomas Manton put it. The world cries out against the Gospel; what, know ye not that friendship of the world is enmity with God? Things which are highly esteemed among men are abomination to God. Paul would write sadly of one of his companions, “Demas has forsaken me, having loved the present world.”

Illustration: My wife Penny overheard a conversation in which a young woman told another, “I want a church that will tell me what to do. I don’t want doctrine.” This person is a slave, and not free in Christ. Such a person will always strongly reject the Ten Commandments, for obedience to them is not possible for any man. They want something to do that will make them feel righteous.

- III. Then follows one of the classic warnings of the Scriptures: Beware of the principle by which you live your life. Flesh here means natural; Spirit means of the Spirit. Careful definition is required. Do you seek to live by commandment-keeping and your own works, or do you live in grace and in faith? Gal. 3:12: “The law is not of faith, but that man that doeth them shall live in them.” The purpose for the law is the mortifying of the flesh, but then it is only instrumental in Jesus Christ, for outside of faith and renewal in Christ, the law works death and misery, energizing sin so that it become exceeding sinful.

- A. We must not turn this passage upside down, to think that it means that if you do good things you will reap good thing, and if you do bad things you will reap bad things. This is the opposite of the apostles meaning. He is saying that if you try to reap good things by sowing good things, you will reap bad things. If you think you can keep the rules and be blessed of God, you do not understand the meaning of the passage. You must trust in Christ and His mercy and not the works of the law. You must trust in Christ and allow the Spirit to work in you according to HC Q103:

Q. What does God require in the fourth Commandment?

A103: In the first place, God wills that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained,[1] and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church [2] to learn the Word of God,[3] to use the holy sacraments,[4] to call publicly upon the Lord,[5] and to give Christian alms.[6] In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting sabbath.[7]

To live in the Spirit is to rest in Jesus Christ, trusting Him for forgiveness of sins—abandoning the hard yoke of sin and misery, and resting in His perfect work for salvation and peace, and beginning in this life service for God by acknowledging His name and salvation before men.

- B. How do you live your life? Do you walk in the proud arrogancy of the flesh, proud of your own works, boasting that you are not like other men; glorying in your differences from other men, instead of seeing yourself as a sinful son of Adam, in which Christ is the difference and not anything in yourself? The fleshly life is me and about me—my deeds, my life, my happiness, my ministry, my righteousness, how I can get others to do what I want them to do; the life of the spirit is about Christ—His life and righteousness, His glory, and His testimony in the world, and how I can serve the church and the needs of others. The first is a life of lordship; the second is a life of service. The life of the flesh is that of a slave pretending to be free and trying to lord it over others; the life of the Spirit is that of a man free in Christ, trying to be a servant to the people of God.

IV. Let us be certain of this:

- A. The flesh works death and misery. It knows only the life received from Adam and is of the earth, earthy. It seeks an earthly reward. When it prays it prays to be seen of men; when it teaches it teaches for earthly goals; when it glories, it glories in earthly things; when it makes decisions, it is always in terms of earthly things, for it seeks the things which are of the earth and not the things that are of God. The natural man cannot rise to God, for he is of the earth, deriving body and soul from Adam, who is under the curse of sin and death.
- B. The Spirit is the new man in Christ. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Because his Head, Jesus Christ is in Heaven, the work of the Spirit is to call us to heaven and to our head: “Set your affections above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God,” is the way the Apostle put it in Colossians.3. Let us turn to that passage.
 - 1. Let us not be weary in well doing: The ungodly weary themselves in evil-doing and use all their energy in such things; the godly renew their strength and labor in well-doing.
 - 2. See Col. 3: the new life in Christ. We put off the old and put on the new.
 - a. Quit lying: if we say we are in the light and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. No lying about God; no lying about ourselves; no lying about the world we live in.
 - b. Put on mercies and grace and kindness: vs. 12-14. love: the bond of perfection. The ligament that holds the bones together. It is not the law, but love that holds us together.
 - c. I Cor. 13: charity: love suffers long and is kind---etc.
- C. We shall reap, if we faint not: Here is the paradox; those who walk in the flesh will become weary and turn aside from Christ and His promises. Because they hope in themselves and in their obedience, they will get discouraged about people, about the church, about themselves: those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

May God bless you.