

Title: Fulfilling the Law of Christ

Text: Gal 6: 1-5

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**Galatians 6: 1: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3: For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4: But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5: For every man shall bear his own burden.**

When I preached from this passage in 2016, I made this statement in the introduction—"when we hear a text like this—know that it will only be a matter of time and God will send us a trial to make us experience what he is teaching us, here."

Whether we are the one in need of being restored or the one used of Christ to restore, Christ always teaches us these two things. One, in our flesh dwells no good thing—all flesh is grass. Two, the Lord grows his child in the grace and knowledge of Christ—thy God reigneth! This is the continual teaching of the doctrine of Christ throughout the life of faith.

This is written to brethren. "Brethren" are those made inseparably one by the grace of God in Christ.

Ephesians 4: 3: [Endeavour] to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [because] 4: *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;* 5: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6: One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

We have this unity for one reason—the grace of God. We have this unity by our great High Priest. It cost Christ his precious blood to give brethren this oneness in Christ. By his righteousness, by his Spirit, through his gospel we are one. There is one body. One Spirit—in each of our brethren is the same Holy Spirit that is in you. One hope of one calling. One Lord. One faith. One baptism. One God and Father of all. He is above us all—that is a blessed, comforting, humbling thing to remember—God is above all. God is through all—everything coming to pass is by our God and Father. Most blessed of all is to remember he is in you all—God our Father is in each of my brethren and in each of your brethren. Listen to how one Christ says we are in him.

John 17: 22...the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Christ said we are one, even as God the Father and God the Son are one. Christ is in each of us and God the Father is in Christ so we are made perfectly one in HIM. Be sure to get this: in Christ, God the Father loves his elect—each of our brethren—even as he loves Christ. If a brother or sister has faith as small as a grain of mustard seed—if you have faith ever so small—this is true. So this is written to brethren.

## **YE WHICH ARE SPIRITUAL**

**Galatians 6: 1: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.**

The word is "though" a man. Though a brother or sister be overtaken in a fault—in sin—although they have fallen into grievous sin. Every warning, exhortation, admonition and word of forgiveness and grace is due to the fact that believers are still sinners. The new heart Christ creates in his child—has a new desire, a true motive—to walk in newness of life as Christ commands. Christ's disciples have a true heart to obey Christ. We endeavor to obey Christ. None of God's saints want to sin. We long for the day we will be free from the presence of sin.

But every child born again of the Spirit of God still has a sin-nature. For that reason we do sin. Sometimes our greatest sin is thinking we are not sinning because we are not committing outward acts sin. Yet, sin is mixed with all our best thoughts and deeds because of our sin-nature. Other times we do commit grievous

sin. We see it in God's saints throughout scripture. We see them committing the same sin more than once. Being born of the Spirit we hate sin. We do not sin that grace may abound. But sin we do.

Yet, here is the encouraging word, God is gracious to provide brethren to help. The Head of the body provides a brother or sister who he has prepared to meet the very need at the very time it is needed. That is who this is written too—"ye which are spiritual."

Now, all believers are spiritual in the sense that we are born-again of God. By the grace of God every believer is in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God dwells in each one born again of God. Each one has fruit of the Spirit and walks in the Spirit. But this speaks of one God has grown by painful experience. They have experienced their own falls and know something of how shameful it feels to be overtaken in sin. They have experienced God's mercy and unchanging grace and love toward themselves. God has prepared them especially for the need at hand.

"Ye that are spiritual" speaks to those God has matured in grace by heartbreaking experience. It speaks of one God has humbled by grace. This is one in whom God has created a broken and contrite spirit. One that God has made to know their own sin who sees themselves vile, sold under sin, as Paul described his own sin-nature, though he was a regenerated child of God (Rom 7). The spiritual has been grown down in his estimation of themselves. The spiritual knows their own need of grace and mercy and forgiveness from God continually. And they have received it and know it was only for Christ's sake.

All brethren are born-again of the Spirit. All are in the Spirit, not in the flesh. All walk in the Spirit. But this is a brother or sister prepared for this need by being made to know Christ is the Master. He alone is able to make his sinful child stand. The spiritual has experienced how no one else could strengthen them and restore them but Christ their Lord, the great Physician. They have experienced his power and love time and again so that they know Christ's gospel is the power to restore—the balm of Gilead. It is the words that exalt Christ that comfort the fallen. The gospel that directs the affection to Christ is the message God used to grant us repentance and faith in the beginning and it is the same power of God unto salvation throughout our lives. The spiritual is one who rejoices in mercy rather than judgment because they have experienced God's grace when they deserved only condemnation. It is one who is able to love and be gracious in the face of sin that merits anything but love and grace.

## **RESTORE SUCH A ONE IN THE SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS**

**Galatians 6: 1: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness;**

"Restore" means "mend what is broken." It means "strengthen" the weak. It is to us great carefulness like when dealing with someone who has a broken bone. When the Lord brought David to behold his sin, God broke his bones. God broke his heart. As David confessed his sin to God, he asked God, "Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice." (Ps 51: 8)

When the Lord chastens his child, he breaks our heart. When he has brought us to confess our sins to the Lord, and seek mercy, the Lord uses brethren to make us hear joy and gladness. He never fails to provide brethren who he has made to know themselves as great sinners but who also know God's great forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ. It is the gospel of God's unchanging, unchangeable grace in Christ that is the joy and gladness by which the fallen are restored. We send one another to Christ reminding one another that,

1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness...2: 1: If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2: And he is the propitiation for our sins:...

This spirit of meekness is given by the Holy Spirit reminding us of what Christ did for us, the ungodly sinner. Christ said, "I restored *that* which I took not away" (Ps 69: 4). Christ sent the gospel to us and used his vessel to speak in love declaring how Christ restored his people in perfect righteousness before God. He restored his people by making us complete. Christ restored us by making us accepted in his precious blood. He restored us by giving us a new spirit when we were dead in sins. Christ continues to

use brethren to lift up our hands when they hang down and strengthen our knees when they are feeble like they did Moses when he grew weary holding up the rod.

If your child fell and broke a bone and came to you weeping, you would not whip your child. Your own heart would be broken. You would mourn for them. You would try to comfort them. All the while carrying them to a physician as fast as you could. You would do that because you love them. That is exactly what our text says. In the spirit of meekness, restore them to Christ the Great Physician who alone can heal. Do it because you love them. Do it because you love Christ.

## **CONSIDERING THYSELF**

**Galatians 6: 1...considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted...3: For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.**

It is so easy for the sin of another to turn into a trial for ourselves. Due to our own sin-nature, it is easy for us to think, and act, like we are something when we are nothing. The first thing we must do is remember what great sinners we are ourselves. Apart from Christ, in our own sinful selves, we are nothing. Apart from Christ we can do nothing. When we see the sin of brethren if we could always consider that we are seeing ourselves in a mirror, how it would help us greatly.

We also must consider that everything we have, we have received freely by God's grace. Christ is Righteousness. He made us righteous in him. He is our Provider. All God's blessings are free to us because they cost Christ his own blood. What we are before God we are in Christ alone. We have no reason to think ourselves something when we are nothing apart from God's grace in Christ.

"Considering ourselves" involves considering if the shoe was on the other foot, or if it were my child, how would I want to be treated.

## **BEAR...AND SO FULFILL**

**Galatians 6: 2: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**

The word "so" means "after this manner." Bear ye one another's burdens, and after this manner, fulfill the law of Christ. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so [after this manner] loved us, we ought also to love one another [after this manner.]" (1Jo 4:10-11)

Love bears all things (1 Cor 13: 6, 7). Christ is Love who bore all our burden of sin. He bore all the curse on himself on the cross. We did not love him when he did so. While we were ungodly, enemies, hating Christ, Christ laid down his life for us. "Beloved, if God after this manner loved us, we ought also to love one another after this manner." If I refuse then I should consider what would have become of me if Christ did me as I am doing the one who has sinned.

Paul uses the word "law" here because the Galatians were desiring to be under the law of Moses. Christ rule of love is the law of the spiritual. Christ took off his outer garment, kneeled down and washed the disciple's feet. By that he showed us an example of his love in what he did for us in taking flesh, serving us and laying down his life on the cross for us.

Philippians 2: 5: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

When Christ arose from washing their feet, he said, "If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13: 14). Christ loved his people by taking the lowest possible place on the cruel cross. He bore all the burden of our sin. Love bore the burden of our shame that he despised. He bore the unimaginable burden of God's fury which we deserved. Christ bore the burden of that ignominious death which each of his elect deserved.

Doing so he restored us completely with the free bounty of God's grace. He restored all that we lost in Adam and more. He freely gave us eternal righteousness. Love put away our sin never to be remembered by God again. He gave us eternal life with the Father, a kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world. And Christ continues to bear us every day. He continues to have mercy on us, to wash us, to cleanse us, to forgive us daily as he ever intercedes at God's right hand as our Righteous Advocate with the Father.

It is Christ love that is the law written on our hearts. His law of love is the law we are under—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Christ said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, that ye also love one another." (Jn 13: 34) Christ said, "If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive. (Lu 17: 4) Why did he say that? How many times does Christ forgive me in a day?

Law looks upon sins as crimes to be punished. Grace and love look upon sins as weaknesses needing our help. Love looks upon sins as sickness needing the Physician to heal. Love looks upon the fault of brethren as sin we need to bear and cover and from which we are to restore our brethren to Christ.

Brethren need the love of brethren most when overtaken in sin. We weep and help one another when another is sick or loses a job. How much more when overtaken in sin!

When we sin it brings us shame before our Father and one another. That is a very small taste of the shame Christ endured when he bore the sin of his people on the cross. God's chastening brings us to see our sin and makes his child ashamed because we get a small taste of what Christ bore for us. That is sufficient. He says instead of adding more burden, bear their burdens and restore them.

"Bear them." Bear their reproach when others would speak evil of them. Christ said, "I bore the reproach of them that reproached thee; then I restored that I took not away." Stand between brethren and the accuser as Christ did us. Be merciful and forgive without limit and so fulfil the law of Christ.

## **PROVE OUR OWN WORK**

**Galatians 6: 4: But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5: For every man shall bear his own burden.**

In order to understand this, a few passages later, Paul speaks of the Pharisees constraining others rather than themselves. Why do they do that?

Galatians 6: 12: As many as desire to make a fair shew 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.

We are not to constrain others to do what we think they should do. Nor are we to do anything simply because other constrained us. That is not faith. He is saying let us examine our own selves. This is the Lord's word to me; it is the Lord's word to you. It is my responsibility to examine my own self and prove my own work. It is your responsibility to examine your own self and prove your own work. I am to do as the Lord commands me. You are to do as the Lord commands you. Then my rejoicing will be in Christ in my own heart rather than in what another constrained me to do or what I constrained another to do. "*Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another.*"

"*For every man shall bear his own burden.*" After Peter denied the Lord and left the ministry, and led others to do so, the Lord came to Peter. After he and the other apostles ate, the Lord led Peter off alone. Our Savior tenderly restored Peter. As Peter looked around he saw John walk up behind them. Peter asked the Savior, "What about him?" The Lord said, "What is that to THEE? Follow THOU me." That is what the Spirit is saying here, "Every man shall bear HIS OWN burden." Instead of telling others they ought to bear the burden of the one overtaken in sin and restore him, Christ says to me, "Bear THOU the burden of your brother. THOU restore your brother. Prove YOUR own work. Then YOU will have

rejoicing in YOUR heart in what the Lord constrained YOU to do.” For every man is responsible to Christ for himself—“*every man shall bear his own burden.*”

**Amen!**