

Do not Grow Weary

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[0:00] Please do take your seats and turn with me in your Bibles to Galatians chapter 6. Galatians chapter 6. If you don't have your own Bible, there's hopefully one of the blue church Bibles underneath the seat in front of you.

If it is one of the blue church Bibles you have, you'll find Galatians chapter 6 on page 975. Galatians chapter 6. We're going to read from verse 1 through to verse 10 together. Let us hear God's words. Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens. And so fulfill the law of Christ.

For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.

[1:17] For each will have to bear his own load. Like the one who is taught the word, share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived.

God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

And let us not grow weary of doing good. For in due season we will reap if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone.

And especially to those who are of the household of faith. This is God's word. Please keep that passage open in front of you. Let us pray for God's help with it as we turn to it together.

Father, we do thank you for this, your word. Lord, we thank you that you have spoken to us. That you who created all things, who reign over heaven and earth.

[2:25] Who are so utterly different from us in every way. Lord, we thank you for the amazing privilege of coming and hearing your word.

Lord, we pray that we would do so humbly. Ready to be challenged, corrected, encouraged by it. Lord, that we might live ever more for the glory of Jesus.

In whose name we pray. Amen. We've been in the book of Galatians. For a good while now. And for the vast majority of this book, the Apostle Paul has been drilling home one message, hasn't he?

If you've been here for the last few months, I would hope you could tell me what that message is. It is the most important message of all. We are saved, not through our works, but through faith alone, in Christ alone.

And if you remember, nothing else from this series other than that. It has still been time well spent. But as we just come into land in this kind of last part of this letter, Paul has turned his attention onto what a life of faith alone and Christ alone looks like.

[3:44] What does it look like? Because although we are not justified by our works, we are justified by faith, real faith bears fruit. Chapter 5 concluded, isn't it, with those glorious verses on the fruit of the Spirit, and then an exhortation to keep in step with the Spirit, that we in our lives of faith might bear that very fruit.

Having been set free from under the curse of the law, set free from our bondage to sin, we are now able to live a life that loves others, that goes outward.

Ben used the really helpful illustration last week. Now, of this outward living life fulfilling the law of Christ, you don't obey the laws of a country to become a citizen, do you?

It is as a citizen, having been made a citizen, you then do your best to follow the laws of that land. We are not justified.

We do not become citizens of God's kingdom by our works of the law. But having been made citizens of God's kingdom through faith in Jesus, the law shows us now how to live out our new identity in Christ.

[5:01] And it is that path, that path of law-fulfilling love for neighbor, that is the one Paul is now urging the Galatian church to walk on.

And the vast verse there of chapter 5 concluded with what walking in step with the Spirit does not look like. Just look there, verse 26 of chapter 5. It means not being conceited, not provoking one another, not envying one another.

That is what we are to turn away from. But in the first half of chapter 6, we are now seeing what we are to turn towards. We're going to just break this passage up into two parts, just to help us walk through these commands, these instructions, these exhortations together, starting there in verses 1 to 5.

And Paul's appeal for the church to bear the burdens of others and keep watch of your own soul. Bear the burdens of others and watch your own soul.

I'm trusting most of us probably live in Aberdeen, in which case you'll be very familiar with stumbling on the street.

[6:18] I mean, most of the pavements in Aberdeen are made up of uneven concrete slabs. You don't have to have lived here long to have stumbled yourself, and you've almost certainly seen someone else trip on a protruding edge.

But what do you do when you see someone fall? Maybe you're going to rewind right back to the playground. What happens when someone falls over?

There might be a mixture of reactions, won't there? Some people will watch and laugh. Others will go and help. The proud point and laugh, thankful it wasn't them.

The humble go and help, knowing that it could have been them. And that humility is kind of the drumbeat of this section. It holds these verses together with what Paul has just said before.

Don't be conceited. Don't envy one another. Instead, be selfless, right? Look to do goods to others. So what happens when someone falls over in their spiritual walk?

[7:26] What happens when someone stumbles so that they are no longer walking in step with the Spirit? Here's what Paul says ought to happen, verse 1. Brothers and sisters, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him.

Get them back on their feet in a spirit of gentleness, keeping watch on your own soul, lest you too be tempted. Humbly go and help, knowing it could have been you.

You don't have to spend long in a church family to know that there are people who struggle to walk in step with the Spirit. And the language Paul uses here is striking when he speaks of someone being caught in transgression.

That there is a sense of being ensnared by something. That they have stepped off the path. They are not guiltless. Sin is still sin.

But having stepped off the path, they now find themselves entangled in a web of transgression.

That they cannot escape from themselves by their own strength.

[8:37] What do we do when we see that brother or sister? We rightly don't. We recognize the immaturity of smugly smiling at someone who falls over on the street.

And yet there is a risk, isn't there, that we do something similar with someone who falls over spiritually. What we can become, can't we, spectators? Taking a step back and just watching on. Shaking our heads from a distance. Talking about them to others. Congratulating ourselves that we are not like them. But Paul says that when a brother or sister is caught in transgression, the response of the church should not be condemnation from a distance, but restoration up close. Seeing the person who has fallen not simply as someone who has failed, but as someone we can reach out to so that they might be restored.

And to reach out gently, tenderly, just as the Lord Jesus would. There might be a place for rebuke where sin is present, but there is a way to rebuke.

[9:51] Not with harsh words, but with gentle words. How can we go about doing that? How can we do that as a church? Getting around those who perhaps stumble.

Well, I think part of the answer lies there in verse two. By being a church that bears one another's burdens. That is what it means, Paul says, to fulfill the law of Christ.

Do you see there the contrast to the so-called law-keeping that was being preached in Galatia? The one which said, work for yourself, pursue your own righteousness, do what is good for you. The true law of Christ that we've been free to fulfill says, work for others, bear their burdens, pursue their righteousness, even when it comes at a cost to yourself.

Now, that is implied, isn't it, in the burden-bearing picture. You do not take on someone else's burdens without having to carry a heavier load yourself.

[10:57] But far better to take some of their loads than let them be crushed by what they cannot carry on their own.

I think I've mentioned this before in a sermon a while back. It sticks in my head every time I think of going camping. An old flatmate of mine, back when he was in school, went on his Duke of Edinburgh expedition with a bag full of crockery.

Right, neither he nor his family had any experience or enthusiasm for the outdoors. They knew nothing. And so off he went on his Duke of Edinburgh expedition with a full rucksack and a hold-all strapped over his shoulder full of pans and plates.

Now, he set off, but having set off on that journey, there was no way he was ever going to reach the end on his own. It was a burden he would never have been able to carry.

But those with him they shared that burden amongst themselves. They could have easily left them behind. That is your problem.

[12:02] You deal with it yourself. And they would have got to the end if they did that, having had a much easier journey. But they chose to carry his burdens so that he would not be left behind.

That is what Paul calls us to do with one another. There will be brothers and sisters in Christ who are carrying burdens they cannot carry alone.

Some are caught in sin. Some are struggling with temptation. Some will react to difficult circumstances in ungodly ways.

There will always be those who are struggling to keep walking in step with the Spirit so that if left to themselves, the weight might soon become too much.

I should say, if that is you, please ask for help. Speak to one of your ministers, to your elder, to your life group leader, to Judy to Ann. Please ask for help and you should find it.

[13:10] because Paul says to all of us not in that position, do not leave them to it. There is no place for people in the church who stand far off and say, not my problem.

And I think we really need to take this to heart, don't we? Because we live in a culture that encourages us to live increasingly individualistic, self-centered lives.

To make my satisfaction, my convenience, my comfort, the most important thing. The number one priority so that everything else gets shuffled down, everything and everyone else gets shuffled down the list.

It is very easy to come to church on a Sunday, to hear the word, to sing the songs, to speak to a few people and then disappear back into our own lives for the rest of the week. But Paul's vision, God's vision for the church, is much more deeply relational than that.

So let me encourage you to invest in the people within this church family. There are lots of ways you can do that, but as we near the beginning of a new term, let me encourage you, actually no, let me tell you, I don't need to worry about saying anything unpopular tonight.

[14:36] Let me tell you, throw yourself into life groups at the start of this term. If you have done that over the last few years, don't grow weary.

Keep investing, keep showing up, keep asking questions, keep praying for people, keep letting people into your life. But if you have stood at a distance, perhaps you've never attended a life group, or perhaps you've attended but done little else, why not take the opportunity at this time of year to start afresh?

To press into a community where you can help others when they are caught in transgression. to press into a community where you can help others, be helped by others when you are caught in transgression.

A place where you can get to know people better so that you know what burdens they have and what burdens you can bear for them. A place where you can share your own burdens so that people can help you in seasons of need.

Leaning into and leaning on your brothers and sisters in Christ, your church family, it's not like an optional extra for kind of particularly committed Christians. It is through our church family that God

helps us to keep walking in step with the Spirit.

[15 : 56] That is what Paul is saying right here. Walk in step with the Spirit. How? By how you love one another. When someone pulls away from that, they will almost certainly soon find themselves caught in transgression.

And if you see someone in that situation, or if you know someone in that situation, reach out to them. Don't wait for them to come back, but go after them. It's not going to be easy.

It's not going to make life more convenient or more comfortable. It is burden-bearing. It takes time. It takes energy. It takes patience. It takes efforts.

But if by God's grace, you help a brother or sister escape from a transgression, and once more walk in step with the Spirit, that is an amazing thing. And even when restoration does not happen, or it doesn't happen as quickly as we hope, know that sacrificially seeking their restoration, in doing that, you are fulfilling the law of Christ.

the law which you have been set free to follow. And that is an amazing thing in and of itself. That is what Paul calls the church to do. Or see there, I guess, in verse 1, isn't it?

[17 : 15] That is what Paul commands those who are spiritual to do. Now, what does Paul mean by that? Well, what he does not mean is that the church is kind of split in two halves with the spiritual Christians and the unspiritual Christians.

Christians, it is not a special category of Christian that Paul is speaking to. It was kind of graduated beyond the possibility of sin. No, Paul, I think, there is speaking to those who are currently walking in step with the Spirit.

But the person who is in step with the Spirit today might well stumble tomorrow. That is why Paul urges them to keep a watch on yourself lest you too be tempted.

Bear one another's burdens and, verse 4, let each person examine his own work. First, that might sound like a little bit of a contradiction, right?

Verse 2, we have bear one another's burdens. Verse 5, each will have to bear his own load. Which is it? If you're here this morning, you'll know the answer to those questions by now in the Bible.

[18 : 25] Yes, both. We have a responsibility to one another and we also have a responsibility before God for ourselves. I think Paul's warning here in verses 3 to 5 is particularly aimed at the person who might think being addressed as spiritual that they are therefore spiritually superior.

It is a warning to them. Verse 3, if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself because we are very good, aren't we? We are very good at measuring ourselves up against other people, particularly against people who we know will make us look good.

And there is a very obvious danger that we do that when we see someone caught in some kind of transgression. I'm doing better than them. My marriage looks better than theirs.

I know more of my Bible than he does. I spend more time serving the church than her. And suddenly, someone else's weakness becomes the measuring stick by which we convince ourselves that we are something.

But it's all a bit like sitting down for breakfast and looking in your bowl and seeing two single Rice Krispies and then looking at the person next to you and seeing they have one and thinking, look at how well I'm doing for myself.

[19 : 50] Right, Paul's point is if you think you have something by comparing yourself to others, look at your own work and recognize you are nothing. You have nothing outside of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. Verse 4 is saying that the only thing you can boast about is not what you have done compared to others. The word kind of with there is actually in regards to your neighbor.

It is not about what your stuff looks like compared to your neighbor. It is what is what you have done look like before the perfectly righteous and holy God. And then we very quickly realize, don't we actually, we stand on a par with every single sinner.

in the whole world. What will we have to offer? What will we really boast in? Well, if there is one thing that Galatians has taught us is that our boasting will be in nothing that we have done but only in what Christ has done.

I have nothing but I trust your son to give me everything. That is the gospel and that gospel, doesn't it, creates humility. Humility.

[21 : 02] If we understand that we are saved by grace, we cannot look at another struggling Christian and think, how could they? Instead, we say, apart from the grace of God, that could be

me.

And if we know that one day we will stand before God carrying our own load, there is no good using somebody else's weakness as a way of making ourselves feel righteous.

We need to watch our own soul. That is why Paul holds these two truths together. Carry others, watch yourself. That there is no Christian life in which we march ahead of everyone else, leaving weaker Christians behind.

The gospel of Christ creates a people who walk together, bearing one another's burdens while watching our own souls. That is what we see there in verses one to five.

Secondly, then in verses six to ten, it continues on a similar theme but with a distinctive tone. Our second point this evening, share what is good with others and do not grow weary.

[22:18] In verse six, you'll see there, Paul shifts the focus onto sharing, right away from burden bearing, from taking on what other people can't handle themselves to sharing, sacrificial sharing, giving out from the goods that we have ourselves.

And the attention is given first there to those who are taught the word, sharing what they have with those who teach the word. Verse six, let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

That instruction is one you'll find at various points through the New Testament. We heard a little bit of one from 1 Thessalonians 5 earlier. For those who teach the word to be supported by their local church.

But in the context of Galatians, right, the necessity of such an instruction is particularly clear, isn't it? The whole reason Paul has had to write this letter is because of the presence of false teachers.

False teachers who have found an audience in Galatia because of the absence of sound teaching on the true gospel. people. But in order to receive sound teaching, you need ministers of the word.

[23:43] Ministers of the word who will be able to faithfully teach the words by spending time in the word. But if those faithful teachers need to devote their time to other things in order to make a living, well, the time for the word is reduced, isn't it?

the quality of the teaching will be reduced, the foundation becomes less secure, and false teachers are more likely to gain a foothold just as they did in Galatia.

The church there needed sound gospel teaching, but in order to receive that, they needed to give generously of what they had.

As I said right at the start, it's been an absolute joy to minister to you, to this congregation over the last three years. In large part, I mean, there's many reasons for that, but in large part because you are an exceptionally generous and encouraging congregation.

It is an amazing thing that we try not to take for granted because that is not always the case. And as part of your, well, many encouragements, maybe you don't all feel this way, but over the past few years, I've heard many of you say, right, very kindly that you believe the teaching at this church to be very good.

[25:03] Now, I've not only had the joy of serving you in a small way, I've also had the joy of sitting under excellent sermons week by week by Joe and by Ben and by JT. You will normally, hopefully always, get sound biblical teaching from this pulpit, but I hope you know if you're a member here of Bon Accord who gives sacrificially to the work of the church, I hope you know you are a massive part of that.

If you as a congregation gave enough money to support a single minister, that would be a good thing, right, certainly much better than none, but you would have one individual overseeing a large congregation, overseeing many ministries, preparing for prayer meetings and Bible studies every week, people to meet, pastoral situations to deal with, weddings and funerals to take, multiple sermons to prepare for every Sunday.

I'm confident the teaching would still be sound, but it would be diminished and the wider church would not benefit in the way they do.

There wouldn't be the means to support a church plant in Inverurie. There wouldn't be the resources to invest in future gospel workers. If you give to this church, you are playing a crucial role, enabling yourself and churches further afield and churches in the future to be blessed with the sound gospel teaching that the church in Galatia so desperately needed.

Giving so that we can send a minister of the word to Geary. Giving so that we can train up a minister of the word to preach the gospel for years to come. Giving so that Judy and Anne could be

trained and equipped and have the time to speak the word into the lives of women and students in this church.

[26:55] Let me assure you the vast majority, a huge proportion of what is generously given to Bon Accord is poured straight into exactly what Paul envisions here.

People who spend time in the word to teach the word so that Christians might be built up in their faith, rooted in the gospel and not blown away when winds of false doctrine come blowing through. If you do give sacrificially, let me thank you and encourage you in that. Know that you really are playing a massive part in gospel ministry through that.

The flip side, of course, if you don't currently give, Paul's words here should cause you to examine, I think, what you value. We always, don't we, find money for the things that matter to us.

If something matters, we find room for it in the budget, we find money for meals out, we find money for holidays, we find money for a new phone, we find money for hobbies. I'm not saying any of those are bad things.

[28:07] But I think it does say the question is not simply can I afford to give from what I have left at the end of the month, the deeper question is what do I value? Do you value the ministry of the words, the building up of Christ's church, the spread of the gospel?

One way, it is only one way, but one way we can tangibly answer those questions is looking at where our money goes. For many of you, wonderfully, the answer is very obviously yes.

Your giving shows that you do value the ministry of the words. And that is a wonderful thing. But Paul doesn't allow us to stop there.

As if we can set up a direct debit and then think that's me done my bit. Walking by the Spirit is not a financial transaction, it is a whole life posture of generosity.

So that Paul moves through these verses from the narrow, this very specific need that really needs to happen in Galatia to the very, very broad. Share what is good with those who teach, but also verse 10, do good to your church family and then do good to everyone.

[29:22] Keep on looking outwards. Keep on looking outwards. Look to your church. I mean, isn't it, even the thought of doing good to everyone here on a Sunday morning is pretty overwhelming, isn't it?

there's a lot of people milling about. But look to those nearest you, to those that God has placed in your life. Look to your life group. Are there elderly saints you can go and visit?

Reach out to someone and ask them how you can be praying for them. Invite some of the students over for dinner on a Thursday. But there is so much good we can be doing and we want to be pursuing that good.

And perhaps we have done that. The danger, though, in the midst of it, isn't it? Well, there are many dangers, but one danger in the midst of doing good is that we grow weary.

It is relatively easy to muster up the enthusiasm for a one-off effort. It is much harder to keep on going.

[30:33] To host people week after week. As we heard from testimonies, to pray without ceasing. To bear the burden of those in sin when there seems little sign of repentance.

It is hard to keep on going. It is easy to grow weary. And so Paul says, don't let it happen.

Now that might seem a bit inane like having an exhausted runner. Remember not to get tired. But Paul's instruction here, I think it is more kind of preventative than reactive. Don't let yourself get to that point.

How do we do that? Obviously we want to apply wisdom to how much we take on to what we can actually bear. But we should also fix our eyes in the future.

Verse 9, let us not grow weary of doing good for in due season we will reap if we do not give up. Fix your eyes on the harvest.

[31:43] It is harvest season right now, isn't it? Going out into Aberdeenshire and you will see the combine harvesters out. what is it that keeps a farmer going through the year?

Why do they plow fields and then plant seeds and then fertilize crops? It's not, is it because when they do that, plants will immediately pop right out of the ground.

No, it is because they know if they keep on going there is a harvest that will come. they know the work done today will bear fruit sometime in the future.

Confident in the harvest that is to come that that is the motivation to persevere in the present. And that focus on the future, it is the undercurrent through this whole passage.

we see the warning of that, don't we? In verse 7 and 8. If we choose to reap poorly, if we sow to our own flesh, from the flesh we will reap corruption.

[32:51] But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Walk in step with the Spirit.

bear the burdens of those who stumble because there is a finish line for them to reach. Watch your own soul because you will answer for your own life.

Support the ministry of the Word because what we do with what God has given can be eternal fruit. Sow what is good and do not grow weary because in due season we will reap if we do not give up. the last three years have been amazing. It has been a genuine privilege to bring you the Word week by week and it is a joy in the providence of God to leave you with this exhortation.

Do not grow weary Do not grow weary of the goods you are doing. Do not grow weary because brothers and sisters it is bearing fruit.

[34:03] There is a harvest coming. It never feels like much in the moment. We very rarely see instant results but seeds are growing.

Keep on gathering in. Keep on building up. Keep on reaching out. Keep on sending out. Keep on serving. Keep on giving. Keep on bearing the burdens of one another.

Keep on doing good and one day one day soon you will reap the most glorious harvest. Having been saved by faith alone in Christ alone and born the good fruit of the Spirit the Lord Jesus will look at you and say well done good and faithful servants.

enter into the joy of your Master. Until that glorious day let us do all that we can to keep ourselves and others walking with the Spirit every step of the way.

Let us pray that we would do that together before we sing to God's praise. Father we thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ.

[35:28] Lord that with our faith in him alone we stand justified righteous in your sight not because of any good that we have done but because of what he has done for us.

And Lord we thank you that having been saved by him. Lord having been granted the glorious gift of his Spirit we are given new life that we might bear good fruit in the Spirit.

Lord help us to bear that fruit by bearing one another's burdens by watching our own soul by sharing the good we have with others and not growing weary of the good that we are given to do. Lord we pray that you would help us to keep our eyes fixed on the harvest that is to come so that we would persevere in the present knowing there is a glorious day coming when we will stand before you clothed in the righteousness of your Son and able to give thanks not for what we have done but for what you have done through us.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.