**LET US NOT BECOME WEARY IN DOING GOOD**

October 20, 2019

Galatians 6:1-18

Key Verse 6:9 “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Thank God for blessing us through studying the Book of Galatians. We learned that we are justified by faith, we are adopted children of God, received the Holy Spirit so that we may win the victory against the flesh desires by walking by the Spirit. In this last chapter, Paul explains the practice of “walking by the Spirit.”

Look at verse 1. “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.” We had been chasing sin before we became believers, but now sin has been chasing us and sometimes overtaking us because we still have the flesh, the unredeemed body. We want to and should live a holy life, but that is not possible all the time. There is always a chance to fall into sins: intentionally or unintentionally. Whatever it is, it ruins the person caught in a sin and can affect the whole community negatively. Therefore, church must deal with it and solve it to build up the body of Christ.

What are Paul’s guidelines? First, those who live by the Spirit should restore the person gently (1). If a fleshly person tries to help another fleshly person, both will destroy each other. Therefore, those who are filled with the Spirit should take responsibility because the purpose of the task is restoration, not condemning the person. The word “restore” means “to repair what has been broken.” So those caught in sin are like broken cars that need repair. They are weak and sick in sin. We need to restore them into the right relationship with God and with brothers and sisters in the community so that they can grow spiritually and useful to God. Here, we should keep in mind that the Bible teacher should restore the person in a spirit of gentleness. Gentleness pictures humility with power under perfect control. That is why it is one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It means that the teacher should carefully observe with understanding and humility, and most importantly by depending on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory (Mt 12:20).”

Look at verse 2. “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Here the Greek word for “burdens” means something which cannot be carried by one person, especially a moral or spiritual burden. When we share the burdens of fellow Christians, we practice the love of Christ. To do this effectively, we should develop genuine friendships in the body of Christ, as Jesus did with his disciples (Jn 15:14). When we have friendship, trust grows between us and we can share burdens together. On the other hand, if we are suspicious or judgmental, friendships will not develop and relationships will be broken. How then can we share burdens with one another? First of all, we need to know that others have a burden and understand what that burden is. This calls for sensitivity and compassion. We have a tendency to be individualistic. We easily focus on our own goals and pursuits, and ignore others around us. Frankly speaking, our lives are busy and hectic. We have no room in our hearts to embrace others. However, let's remember that Christian life is not individualistic; it is community life. We are a body. Each member is closely related to the others (1 Co 12:12). When we take care of others, we are actually taking care of our own bodies. So we need to be concerned with others. When someone rejoices, we should rejoice. When someone mourns, we should mourn together (Ro 12:15). When a weak brother or sister stumbles, we should bear with them until they overcome (Ro 15:1). Then we can share victory together for the glory of God.

We should also share our needs and prayer topics with others. When we need prayer support, we should ask for it humbly and boldly. It is very frustrating to see some people struggle with their problems on their own. Carrying each other’s burdens also has a ministry dimension. We in UBF focus on disciple-raising. Sometimes we assume that a one-to-one Bible teacher can do everything necessary to raise his sheep as a disciple of Christ. But this is not true. It is a heavy burden for anyone to raise one person as a disciple. As the saying goes, “It takes a village to raise a child,” so, “it takes a Christian community to raise a disciple of Jesus.” To raise disciples in our community, we must recognize that Jesus’ sheep belong to him, not me. We must acknowledge the spiritual gifts of others whom God wants to use to raise his disciples. We should help others’ Bible students sacrificially. When we work together, many disciples of Christ can be raised in our community.

Look at verses 4-5. “Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.” Here the Greek word for “load” means pack, like your backpack, without indication of heaviness. Paul tells us how to avoid self-deception. We should test our own actions in regards to carrying our own load, that is, our own cross (Mk 8:34). Jesus gives each of us a cross, which we alone can bear. We are uniquely responsible for bearing our own cross; no one can bear it for us. If we carry it successfully, we find full satisfaction. We do not need to compare ourselves with others, which leaves us feeling either superior or inferior. Instead, we can be proud of ourselves, in a good sense. We should evaluate our actions--not just our thoughts. We should be objective and factual. This may include writing a journal to keep track of how we use our time, and examining our bank statement to see how we spend our money. It may also include getting honest feedback from our family members and Bible students to see if they feel loved by us to the degree that we think they are. In any case, we should not neglect our own cross with the excuse that we bore other’s burdens. We must carry our own cross faithfully with a thankful heart. Otherwise, we will burden the body of Christ.

Paul has strongly emphasized the principle of salvation by God’s grace throughout the book. Human effort can add nothing to it. Some people may think, “I am a Christian. I am free under God’s grace. Whatever I do, God isn’t going to do anything to me. In any case I will have eternal life.” This is a deception. Look at verse 7. “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” Scientific law in physics, biology, chemistry, astronomy never changes. It makes the world predictable because God created the world and established the law. I reaped cucumbers from cucumber seeds, not from corn or tomato seeds. If you neglect to do your homework, you know the result. This is the general law of “cause and consequence” applied to everything and all people. God determines what we reap and when we reap it, based on how we live. Look at verse 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.” If we curse out of anger, we will reap curse. If we bless, we will reap blessing. It is like an echo. If we go up on a mountain and shout, “I hate you,” then we will soon hear, “I hate you, I hate you, I hate you.” If we shout, “I love you,” we will soon hear, “I love you, I love you, I love you.” If we hold thankfulness in our hearts, we will reap the fruit of joy. If we hold complaints in our hearts, we will reap the fruit of bitterness.

Many people blame others when their lives produce bad fruit. They blame their parents, or a traumatic event in their past, or injustice in society. They never take responsibility for the fruit they have born. However, a man reaps what he sows. We are not spectators in this process. We are sowers in our own lives. Ultimately, it is each of us who decide what kind of seed is planted in our minds, hearts and souls. We are who we are precisely because of the seed that has grown in us. We cannot blame others or the situation when we produce bad fruit. We must take full responsibility. If we are bearing bad fruit, it is because we are sowing to please the flesh. We must come to God and ask his help to start sowing to please the Spirit. Behavioral science teaches us that thoughts guide behavior, behavior forms our habits, habits develop our character, and character shapes one’s personality. The seed we sow in our own minds has tremendous power in our lives, and in the lives of others. If we indulge in lustful thoughts and petty pleasures, then our personalities will be distorted and our lives ruined. On the other hand, when we meditate on the word of God day and night, our personalities develop in the image of Christ and we will be healthy and happy. We reap a harvest of righteousness and peace. A man reaps what he sows. This is a universal truth. Anyone who sows to please the sinful nature, yet expects spiritual fruit, deceives himself. He is ignorant of God. Many people sow recklessly. They plant harmful thoughts or words with no sense of responsibility. They will reap what they sow. A mother repeatedly told her son, “Go out and die,” when she was burdened by him. One day, he took his life tragically. She didn’t mean it. But her words bore the fruit of death.

Look at verse 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.” We are not doing good for our salvation, but we have been saved to do good for others. “Doing good” means the acts of love such as helping people suffering in sin to receive life in Jesus’ grace. It is to help those who are wandering without truth to know God and find the meaning and purpose of life. It is to lead others to eternal life by helping them believe the promise of God. Planting the seed of God’s word in one person’s heart may be the best good deed one can do. But it is not easy to persevere in this. It may require going through hardships, even pains of childbirth. When we labor without seeing any visible fruit, we are tempted to give up. How about you? You have been doing good. You have daily bread, write reflections, pray regularly, study the Bible, but you feel you don’t grow big enough. You wonder when you are going to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit, not a basketful but a truckful. Or you invite students to Bible study without success. Some of you experience your Bible students coming and going; so nothing to harvest. Or you teach and serve sacrificially, but nobody appreciates you much. Then you may question yourself. “How long should I continue? I’m tired of it.” We often complain, become weary, and are tempted to give up. Do you want to give up? No. We must remember God’s promise: we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. We need faith in God’s promise. We also need patience. The harvest is in God’s hand. It may take one year, ten years or thirty years. Remember that we do not harvest in a field of tomatoes the day after we sow the seed. But the harvest will surely come. In the plan of God, we may reap what others have sowed in previous generations. In the same way, we may sow what will be harvested by future generations.

St Augustine, when he was young, lived a wild life with prostitutes, drunkenness, and addictions of all kinds. Worse, he got involved with a cult called Manichaeism, a form of Gnosticism. One could only imagine the anguish of his mother Monica. But Monica never gave up her prayers for her son. She would fast, cry and beg God for her son’s conversion. Legend says that a drain formed in the ground where her tears fell while she prayed for her son. Monica would approach the local bishop and ask them to win her son over to the faith. The Bishop would often console her saying, “God’s time will come. Go now, it is not possible that the son of so many tears should perish.” Monica was a mother who never gave up. Finally, through the influence of Bishop Ambrose, St. Augustine became a child of God and a great Bible scholar.

Likewise we should know that harvest is absolute. “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (10).” Let’s be faithful opportunists. If anyone needs help, let’s help; needs comfort, let’s comfort; needs the sandwich on our dish, let’s share it. We must be especially eager to sow God’s word and God’s love in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Not only will they receive benefit directly, but God will bless our act of sowing by producing abundant spiritual fruits. The result of these fruits is the growth of a beautiful spiritual community, which has a good influence on neighbors, and renders glory to God.

Finally, look at verse 15. “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation.” This is one of the most important statements of Christianity. The new creation is what exists when the old mindset is crucified with Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 also says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.” The new creation is not an improvement of the old life, nor is addition to the old life. It is something entirely different. It is a transformed life, from the slaves of sin into sons and daughters of God. In [Galatians 5:6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Galatians%205.6), Paul also says, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” So the “new Paul” who is created when the “old Paul” is crucified with Christ is a Paul who lives by faith which works through love.

In the Book of Galatians, we learned about the law and Christ’s grace, freedom and walking by the Spirit. May God bless you richly with peace and mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.