

FINISHING STRONG

Being that this is Father's Day, we will begin with an illustration from a movie on many "Dad's Favorite Movie" lists: Saving Private Ryan

In the movie, a mother loses three of her sons at the same time during WWII. The Army decides to rescue her fourth son and bring him home. A squad of eight men are assembled to save Private Ryan, six of whom are killed in combat. At one point they complain about the men who have died for this unknown Private Ryan. Captain Miller says:

"This Ryan better be worth it. He'd better go home, cure some disease, or invent a longer-lasting light bulb or something. Because the truth is I wouldn't trade ten Ryans for one Vecchio or Caparzo."

When Captain Miller is dying he tells Ryan to earn this.

VIDEO: SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

Ryan did not earn his being saved, he was saved before they men even knew what he looked like. But he made it his goal to live a life that was worthy of the sacrifice made for him.

We did nothing to earn salvation from Jesus, but we are implored to live a life worthy of His sacrifice. To finish strong.

1 — Bear One Another's Burdens

Galatians 6:1–5

1 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. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. **3** For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. **4** But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. **5** For each will have to bear his own load.

Notice Paul's first word: Brothers. This is family language. Community language. He's reminding them that they are in this together.

The word 'caught' here is fascinating — it can mean 'overtaken,' like someone who didn't see it coming.

VIDEO: Beach Waves

Sin has that quality, doesn't it? We can be ambushed by our own weakness.

And what does Paul prescribe? Restoration — the word is *katartizō*, the same word used for setting a broken bone or mending a fishing net. The goal is healing, not humiliation. We restore with gentleness, one of the fruit of the spirit mentioned last week.

Time for some self examination: Are you the kind of person that tends to find themselves quick to restore people? Or do you want to see people “pay for their crimes?”

Remember we are no longer under the Law of Moses, we are under the Law of Christ. The Law Of Moses encouraged obedience through punishment. The Law Of Christ is loving instruction to those who already have life. We are helped by the power of the Holy Spirit and our motivated by our love for Christ rather than a fear of punishment.

Restoration should always be the goal of a Christian in any relationship. Why? Because its is the DNA of a Christian.

Restoration is God's DNA. That's what our Dad is like. Did you have traits or traditions that were unique to your family?

My dad was always working hard, always volunteering. And while it wasn't on the Shool Family Crest, we understood the Shools are hard workers. We were not allowed to stand around when other people were working, we jumped in to help.

I don't even want to sit around when my gardener is at the house. I need to at least try to look busy. I feel like I should be out there helping him.

Yesterday, I felt awful to not help decorate for VBS. I hadn't finished preparing today's sermon. And I felt so guilty not helping. This is how I was raised. This is a trait of my family.

Restoration is a trait of followers of Christ and as such it should be the goal we aspire to in every relationship.

But notice the guard rail Paul inserts: Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

We cannot be naive. We don't want to try to rescue someone from a trap and end up falling in ourselves. We go toward the broken to help, we do it with humility, aware that we are not immune.

We help each other by helping carry the weight of the sin or the consequence with them, to try to lead them back to restoration.

This is a temporary thing. We don't carry them forever, but enough to get them through the rough time.

Helping my mom up steep hills by pushing on her back.

Now, it seems like v. 5 contradicts with v. 2 — one says “bear one another’s burdens” and the other says “each will have to bear his own load.” So are we carrying each other’s burdens or are we bearing our own weight?

The Greek is actually using two different words. The *burdens* in v. 2 are *crushing weights* — things too heavy for one person. The *load* in v. 5 is a *backpack* — the personal responsibilities each of us must own.

Community doesn't erase personal accountability. We work together to help each other, but we also take care of what we can.

2 — You Reap What You Sow **Galatians 6:6-10**

6 Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. **7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. **8** 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. **9** And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. **10** 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 one of the most practical verses in the New Testament. And it works exactly like farming. The context is very specifically about neglecting pastors and ministry. I realize the danger of sound like a skill, so I will defer to [John Calvin](#) who said this:

“It is probable that the teachers and ministers of the word were at that time neglected. This shewed the basest ingratitude. How disgraceful is it to defraud of their temporal support those by whom our souls are fed! — to refuse an earthly recompense to those from whom we receive heavenly benefits! But it is, and always has been, the disposition of the world, freely to bestow on the ministers of Satan every luxury, and hardly to supply godly pastors with necessary food. Though it does not become us to indulge too much in complaint, or to be too tenacious of our rights, yet Paul found himself called upon to exhort the Galatians to perform this part of their duty.”

The sowing and reaping here is directly connected to our financial generosity. This passage is not for believers and nonbelievers, this is **only** for God's people. The Spirit is not speaking to sinners about their sins, but to saints about their meanness.

Are you using your money only for your pleasure and comfort? Or is it a tool God has given you to further God's interests?

Verse 9 says don't get tired of doing good. Don't put a limit on your goodness. Paul is dangling the carrot of eternal rewards if we don't give up.

John Wesley

"Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

In due season. Not our season. Not the season we'd choose. God's season. In the season you are in now.

Sowing to the flesh means feeding what is temporary — your reputation, your comfort, your self-interest. Sowing to the Spirit means investing in what lasts — your character, your relationships, the kingdom of God.

The question isn't whether you're sowing. You always are. The question is: what field are you planting in?

3 — The Only Thing That Matters

Galatians 6:11-18

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. **12** It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. **13** For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. **15** For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. **16** And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Paul closes the whole letter here with a personal declaration. He uses large letters. Maybe it was for emphasis, like John Hancock's signature on the Declaration of Independence or maybe his eyesight was bad. He's not using a scribe or a secretary or AI to write this letter, his point is, he is showing them his sincerity by using his own hand.

He says of the Judaizers, they only want you to follow the rules so they can brag about how many people they converted. They are doing it to justify themselves. They are keeping score and want to have a higher score than you.

We do it in churches today, when we make it our goal to put butts in the seats, rather than create disciples.

Lecrae

"For too long the church has been clappin' at weak sermons."

Leaving the weak hurt, no one's changed by Sunday service.
We need discernment, check what you be affirming
'Cause the church can be full of members, but empty in conversion"

Paul says they are worried about whether you have been circumcised. They are concerned with a ceremonial act. Paul has actual scars on his body — marks of beatings, of imprisonment, of being stoned and left for dead — all received in the service of the gospel.

And what does he boast in? Not his endurance. Not his theology. Not his church plants. He boasts in the cross. In what Jesus did for him.

'The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.' Something died when Paul met Jesus. Not Paul himself — but Paul's need for the world's approval. Paul's need to earn anything. Paul's need to be anything other than what Grace had already made him.

That's the 'new creation' he mentions. Not a renovation — a resurrection. God has made something genuinely new.

And this is where the whole chapter lands: bearing burdens, sowing to the Spirit, doing good even when you're weary — none of this is about earning anything. It's about living as a new creation. It's about being what we already are.

CONCLUSION

There's a principle hidden in every garden: you can't see the harvest while the seed is still in the ground.

That's where most of us live most of the time. We've sown seeds of faithfulness, seeds of service, seeds of forgiveness — and we can't see them yet. We just see dirt. Paul says: don't give up. Don't grow weary. God is not mocked. The harvest is coming.

But even more than the harvest — we have already received the thing the harvest points to. We are already a new creation. The cross is already behind us. The Spirit is already in us.

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GALATIANS 6 ESV

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Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Observation — Verses 1–5 give a cluster of instructions about community life. Paul tells the church to restore the fallen gently, bear one another's burdens, and yet also says each one must carry his own load. Those two commands can seem contradictory. What distinction is Paul actually drawing? What does each instruction address?

2. Interpretation — In verse 1, Paul specifies that restoration should be done by those who are "spiritual" and with a "spirit of gentleness," while keeping watch on yourself lest you too be tempted. What does that qualifier say about the posture required for confronting sin in someone else? Why is self-awareness so essential to that task?

3. Interpretation — Verses 7–8 introduce the sowing and reaping principle: "*God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.*" Paul applies this to sowing to the flesh versus sowing to the Spirit. How does this principle sit alongside the gospel of grace he's been arguing for the entire letter? Is this works-righteousness creeping back in, or is something else going on?

4. Application — Verse 9 is one of the most practically challenging verses in the letter: *"And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."* Where in your life right now are you most tempted toward weariness — in serving, giving, praying, or persevering? What does Paul's logic here offer as fuel to keep going?

5. Interpretation/Application — In verses 11–16, Paul contrasts those who want to make a good showing "in the flesh" through circumcision with his own boasting only in the cross (v. 14). He says the cross has crucified the world to him and him to the world. What does it practically mean to be "crucified to the world"? What kinds of approval, status, or belonging does the cross free us from needing?

6. Application — Paul closes the entire letter with the benediction: *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen"* (v. 18). Looking back over the whole arc of Galatians — from slavery to sonship, from law to Spirit, from flesh to new creation — what is one truth from this letter that has most challenged or changed the way you think about your standing before God? What do you want to carry with you from this study?