

# Galatians 5:25 - 6:10

## True Spirituality Displayed in Love

### Launch

1. Arouse Attention:

I want to start out our time this afternoon by telling you about a man that I recently read about. He was called Simeon the Stylite, and he lived in the 5th century A.D. in what is now modern day Turkey. Simeon wanted to live in solitude away from people in order to commune more fully with God through his personal devotions. And so Simeon built himself a tall pillar in the wilderness near Aleppo, climbed to the top of it, and stayed there for 37 years until he died.

2. Surface a Fallen Condition:

The man I just described to you, Simeon, desired deeper spirituality. That's why he decided to draw away from society to spend solitary time in prayer and devotion to God. But I fear that he missed out on one of the key teachings of scripture: the Christian life of following Jesus is meant to be done together. We are meant to bear one another burdens, correct one another, provide for one another. All because we are bonded together in love.

3. Connect Audience to the FC:

We as 21st century western Christians aren't trying to build physical pillars where we go and live in spiritual solitude, but we're kidding ourselves if we don't recognize that we have an incredible bent toward trying to walk the Christian life on our own. We have grown up in such an industrious and individualistic culture that we often apply those same means of thinking to our personal lives. If we have a problem, we deal with it ourselves, no matter what it is. We worry we would burden one another or that we would show weakness if we asked for help.

4. Frame the MBI:

This afternoon we are going to look at how true spirituality is displayed in love. In particular, love toward those around us and especially those who are brothers and sisters in Christ. To put it more plainly: **true spirituality, as Paul will argue, is displayed in self-sacrificing love, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to the body of Christ.**

5. Introduce the Passage:

This afternoon we are going to look at Paul's exhortations to the Galatians in chapter 5 verse 25 all the way down to chapter 6 verse 10. If you have your Bibles, I would love it if you would turn there with me.

### The Passage - Galatians 5:25 to 6:10

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

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.

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.

### Explore

[5:25-26]

- In this passage we can see that Paul is beginning to draw his letter to a close.
- He begins giving practical exhortations to the Galatian church about what they need to be doing.
- Last week, Darrell walked you guys through Paul's treatise on walking filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit in order that we wouldn't gratify the desires of the flesh, but rather, that we would walk by the Spirit and display the fruits thereof.
- Paul uses what he's just written to the Galatians about walking in the Spirit to then transition to our passage today.
- Look at verse 25 of chapter five. If we live by the Spirit, which we all do as Christians, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
- The Greek verb there for "keep in step with the Spirit" means to "walk in line behind a leader."
- Meaning that we are to march in step behind the leading of the Holy Spirit, and this marching in step behind the Holy Spirit will mean that the things Paul is going to talk about will be true of the Galatian church.
- Right after this Paul tells the Galatians "Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."
- Paul wants the Galatian church to be humble and sober-minded as they think about themselves, a point he reiterated again later in the passage.

[6:1-5]

- Then Paul gives clear instructions on what the Galatians are to do in an instance when a brother is caught in a transgression.

- Look at how Paul phrases the exhortation. He starts off with “brothers.” Paul is immediately invoking the family nature of the body of Christ with the church. He wants to remind them that we are all sons and heirs through Jesus Christ.
- He then says that “if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.”
- Paul knows that there will be times in the church when a member of the family will fall into sin. It may be willful, known sin, it may be unwillful, unknown sin. But the command Paul gives is clear. “Those of you who are spiritual restore him in a spirit of gentleness.” Those of you who are spiritual, i.e. those of you who have new life in the Spirit through Jesus Christ and who are marching in line with the spirit are to restore the one who has fallen. And an important piece of that is the means by which he is to be restored: “in a spirit of gentleness”. Remember the fruits of the Spirit back in 5:22? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self control. Paul is making it clear that the Galatians must be walking by the Spirit in order to restore a brother or sister in Christ.
- At the end of verse one Paul then also adds “keeping watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted”. No one, even those who are walking by the Spirit to restore their brother or sister in Christ, are exempt to temptation. We see a little more clearly now why Paul said back in verse 26 of chapter five to not become conceited.
- But what is amazing is that after verse one, Paul doubles down on his exhortation to the Galatians about how they should be living in community. They are not only to restore brothers and sisters who have fallen into transgression, they are to “bear one another’s burdens” and in doing this they “fulfill the law of Christ”.
- This is the second time in this letter that Paul talked about something that “completed the law”. The other time was in chapter five verse 14 when Paul said “for the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”
- I love what John Stott wrote when he considered Galatians 6:2 and 5:14 together:
 

“It is very impressive that to ‘love our neighbor’, ‘bear one another’s burdens’, and ‘fulfill the law’ are three equivalent expressions. It shows that to love one another as Christ loved us may lead us not to some act of heroic, spectacular deed of self-sacrifice, but to the much more mundane and unspectacular ministry of burden bearing”
- And surely Paul knew that this task of burden bearing within the church would often be mundane and unspectacular, hence we see verse three: “For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself”.
- Paul wants the Galatians to remember their former state before Christ. That they were all sinners condemned under the law. It is only through the precious atoning sacrifice of Jesus that they were redeemed, and that was not a work of themselves. Thus, for them to bear one another’s burdens they must remember the grace that has been offered to them as sinners themselves.
- This line of humble, sober-minded thinking continues in verse four as Paul reminds the Galatians that each man should “test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.”

- In other words, Paul was telling the Galatians not to measure themselves in comparison to someone else, but measure themselves according to the standard and calling God has given them. Paul isn't literally encouraging the Galatians to boast, he is trying to help them see that they need to not measure their own lives as followers of Jesus based upon what another Christian is or isn't doing.
- Then Paul ends this block of thought with a statement in verse five that sounds contradictory with the rest of the passage up to this point: "For each will have to bear his own load."
- I say that this sounds contradictory because Paul wrote in verse two that we should bear one another's burdens, and now here he is saying that we will all have to bear our own load.
- But Paul is talking about two different things here. He is not saying that we should bear one another's burdens within the church and yet still expect to have to bear our own load. The greek for the word burdens and the greek for the word load makes it a little more clear. The Greek for the word burden in verse two is describing a heavy weight, something that is too much for one person to carry. The greek for the word load in verse five is talking about something more akin to a personal bag, something that is meant to be carried personally.
- And so what Paul is trying to remind the Galatians of here is that they each one have a load to carry. It is a load that one day each person will give an account to the giver of that load about how they have carried it. Thus Paul is again reminding the Galatians of the need for a humble, Spirit-empowered mindset of love to those around them.

[6:6-10]

- It feels natural then, that Paul's next block of thought in this chapter of Galatians flows to the concept of sowing and reaping.
- In verse six, the Galatians are reminded that those who are taught the Word are to share "all good things" with the one who teaches. He wants to ensure that the Galatians remember to give to those who teach and shepherd them in order that the work of teaching and shepherding may continue.
- He then makes an emphatically clear statement: "God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap".
- He goes on to add: "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."
- Pauls wants the Galatians to see that those who sow to the flesh, i.e. those who walk according to the flesh by partaking in envy, conceit, slander, sexual immorality, etc. will reap corruption accordingly. Conversely, those who sow to the Spirit, i.e. those to march in step with the Spirit and demonstrate love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc. will reap eternal life accordingly.
- I want to be clear, Paul is not saying that works of any kind can save us and lead us to eternal life. The whole purpose of the letter to the Galatians was to dispel that notion against those who claimed that believers also needed to be circumcised to be saved.
- But what Paul is saying is that those who are in Christ will march in step with the Spirit and will seek to sow those good things of the Spirit. From verse one of chapter six we

know that this does not mean that Christians will not sometimes stumble, but it does mean that even in the stumbles, those who follow Christ will seek again to sow according to the Spirit.

- In verse nine Paul acknowledges the need for perseverance to the Galatians as they seek to live out these exhortations. He tells them “and let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”
- Paul knows that bearing one another’s burdens, loving sacrificially, and sowing according to the Spirit will be hard. It will sometimes seem completely fruitless. But the follower of Christ can rest in knowing that one day the Lord will bring forth fruit from our labors in His name.
- Finally, Paul concludes his thought with this statement: “let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
- As followers of Jesus the Galatians were to do good unto all men, but there is a special calling to do good unto those who are co-heirs with Christ and of the family of God. That is why Paul calls them to bear one another’s burdens, that is why he reminded them to remain humble, and that is why he commanded them to sow according to the Spirit.

### **Connect**

- So how does this passage connect to us today as a church of 21st century western Christians in Southwestern Virginia?
- For starters, I think we have to ask ourselves if we are living out a model in our own church family like that we see Paul prescribing for the Galatians.
- Are we
  - Bearing one another’s burdens
  - Fostering a humble attitude about ourselves before God and others
  - Seeking to restore one another in gentleness
  - Marching in step with the Spirit
  - Sowing to the Spirit by doing good, especially to those who are of the household of faith?
- I am not here to give an analysis on how we as a church are doing in these areas.
- What I am doing is reminding us all of the reality that this is true spirituality: self-sacrificing love, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to the body of Christ.
- We are called to bear one another’s burdens through the Holy Spirit’s indwelling power, and thereby we fulfill the law of Christ because therein we are acting most like our savior.
- I think our western mentalities drive us to think more like Simeon the Stylite. We want to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. We want to live the Christian life through feats of spiritual strength.
- But according to Paul, the law of Christ is fulfilled not when we draw away, but when we come together and bear one another’s burdens.

### **Apply**

- So let’s ask ourselves how we’re doing at this.

- When you look around this room do you see the precious body of Christ of which you are a part?
- You should, because you are.

### **Close**

- I want to close by reading to you all two short paragraphs.
- The first is from a small Baptist church in England in 1790. Upon reflecting on Galatians six as a church they promised one another:
 

“To walk in love toward those with whom we stand connected in the bonds of Christian fellowship. As the effect of this, we will pray much for one another. As we have opportunity, we will associate together for religious purposes. Those of us who are in more comfortable situations in life than some of our brethren, with regard to the good things of providence, will administer as we have ability and see occasion, to their necessities. We will bear one another’s burdens, sympathize with the afflicted in body and mind, so far as we know their case, under their trials; and as we see occasion, advise, caution, and encourage one another. We will watch over one another for good. We will studiously avoid giving or taking offenses. Thus we will make it our study to fulfill the law of Christ.”
- The second is a quote from Scottish theologian John Brown. He says this upon reflecting on verse ten of chapter six:
 

“Christians, therefore, are particularly bound to do good to one another. Every poor and distressed man has a claim on me for pity, and, if I can afford it, for active exertion and pecuniary relief. But a poor Christian has a far stronger claim on my feelings, my labours, and my property. He is my brother, equally interested with myself in the blood and love of the Redeemer. I expect to spend an eternity with him in heaven. He is the representative of my unseen savior, and He considers everything done to this poor afflicted brother as done to himself. For a Christian to be unkind to a Christian, is not only wrong, it is monstrous.