

**Walking the Spirit: Family**  
**Galatians 6:1-10**  
**February 14, 2010**  
**FBC Waynesboro**

The Fruit of the Spirit is . . . and we examined last week the fruit that is the inevitable outcome of life lived under the control of the Holy Spirit. The fruit grows internally as a well-spring of joy that is fed by the experience of the love of God that gives us contentment in all circumstances. The fruit shows externally in compassionate care for others that is the result of our trust of the purpose of the Sovereign God in our own lives to do that which is good. And the fruit is eternal as we live our lives in trust of God and obedience to His Word because we are controlled by the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is real and it is revealed. And it continues to grow and to show as we live out our lives putting to death the desires of the flesh and submitting our lives to the obedience of the Word of God which is what it means to walk in the Spirit so as to live in the Spirit. But Paul wants us to know that there are two contexts in which we live out our Spirit-filled lives and that there is a core connection between the two. I believe that he wants us to know also that the first context is the foundation for the second context so that it is impossible to live under the control of the Holy Spirit in the second context if we are not doing that actively in the first context. Let me be very specific as I ask you to look at these verses to see first how they are laid out and then we will look into them to listen to what the Spirit of God is saying.

Chapter six, verses one through five show us how to live this Spirit filled life in the context of the church. A Spirit filled Christian is connected with and committed to the body of Christ. It is the primary context in which we live out our commitment to Christ. It is our first family. It is our primary priority. Verses seven through ten show us how to live out this Spirit filled life in the world. Living life together in the body of Christ is foundational for living life as the body of Christ in the world. People who think that they can do the second without the first are deeply deceived. And the connection between the two is found in verse six. That is where we must begin.

This verse teaches us of the connection between the teacher and those who are taught. To show the fruit of the Spirit we must be growing in the Spirit which means that we must be growing in our understanding and in the

application of the absolute truth of the Word of God to our lives. This requires both those who teach and those who are taught. It requires servants of God who are called to share the truth of God with the people of God and it requires those who willingly submit themselves to the authority of the Word of God as they respect the role of the teacher. And aren't we blessed with some strong teachers here in this church? I read this week the teaching notes of one of our teachers. I asked for them so as to learn from them. They were such a blessing to me and so much encouragement. And Paul says that those who are being taught should shared all good things with the one who teaches. Now I would want this mean money and material goods. The laborer is worthy of his hire, but this means that those who are taught are to show that the Spirit of God is at work in their lives as their lives are being transformed by the Truth of God. I would not want either those of us who teach or those who are taught to miss that in verse six the key is neither teacher nor taught, but THE WORD. Teach the Word to those who love the Word and The Word will do its Work in both the lives of the teacher and the taught. And it will show first in who we are in relationship to one another in the body of Christ and then who we are in fulfilling our responsibilities in the world.

The first five verses chapter six teach us that in relationship to one another in the church we have a mandate to minister restoration as we fulfill our own responsibilities. What is assumed in verse one is that any of us at any time can lose our focus and thus lose our way. The word for "caught" does not mean that we are living a sinful life and then get caught so that the remorse and repentance comes only after or because we were caught. The word means to be captured in a way of living that is in disobedience to God with it happening so slowly that when we finally fall we did not really see it coming. This is how it happens with believers. We start slowing down in our quiet times until its once a week and then not at all. We start finding reasons not to attend Sunday School or Sunday night church. We come only to morning worship and before you know it that is even infrequent. We begin to dabble in little things that we have control over until it last we are trapped. We have fallen. And the true believer is at this point miserable beyond consolation. He or she knows what is going on and cannot stand themselves. This is not the time to give a self-esteem lecture. This manifestation of misery is from the Spirit of God. Paul tells us what the church does in this situation that happens all the time in every church. What we do here determines whether we are a church or just a community religious club.

Those who are spiritual. Those in whom the Spirit of God lives whose lives are controlled by the Holy Spirit should go to this person. This is about love and care. It is about commitment to our brothers and sisters. Our women just had a wonderful weekend away in which the Spirit of God moved mightily but the real results of the weekend will unfold in the days and weeks and months ahead. Will the work of God in the lives of people result in this kind of care for one another? The men we pray will have a similar weekend the first weekend in March and the story will be the same. Will it make an eternal difference in the way we relate to one another? When a brother or sister is struggling in their walk, you should never ask, “should we go? Should we intervene?” The only kinds of people who do not welcome that intervention are lost people who only profess to be saved.

But Paul tells us here how we are to go. We are to go with care for the person that is tender and we are to work with them step by step. The word for “restore” is used of a fisherman mending broken nets; it took time and patience in order to make the nets so that they could do again what they were made to do in the first place. It takes this kind of care for those who have lost their way. That is why every born again believer in this church ought to crave a Sunday School Class or a Small Group Bible Study where people will watch you and watch out for you. We must have that among our Elders and Deacons. It is why we will launch soon a Celebrate Recovery Ministry here which Kevin Booth will facilitate. It is a ministry that will supplement and we pray strengthen the AA ministry as we will define real recovery in biblical terms. We want men and women who are struggling with addictions to know that this is a place that will love them and will lead them and will help them find the way of God for them through the Word of God to them. Not only must we care for each other when we fall in a way that is tender but in a way that is gentle. The word has to do with being controlled by the Holy Spirit and we must do it compassionately knowing that we could be where they are and frankly the best people to help those who have fallen are those who have fallen in the same way. This is how we are to care for one another. It is a fundamental responsibility of the body of Christ. It is the outcome in any church that is really filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul tells us how to do this kind of caring but then he tells us why we are to do it: We are to bear one another’s burdens because this is the fulfillment of the law of Christ. Listen to how John puts it in 1 John 3:11-18. If we are not willing to get involved in each other’s messes it is because we have failed to see what a

mess we really are. Pity the person who sees a fellow member in the body of Christ struggling and turns away from them. Here is a person who is proclaiming by such an action that they may not be at all who they say they are. Or as Paul puts it, “they think they are something and that something would be that they think that they are Christians when in fact they are nothing.” So Paul calls us to look at what we are doing in relationship to one another so as to test it; And what we are to test is why we are doing what we are doing: is it so that we can feel good about ourselves and exalt ourselves because we helped those poor people or is it because when we are ministering to those who are struggling we know that we are ministering to people just like us; we are not looking down our noses at them but we are nose to nose with them because we know that we have been or we could be right where they now are. We get under the load with them even while carrying our own load.

Now it is very important that we see here a tension that is kept intact in this passage. This tension is found in one word at the beginning of the passage in verse two and the word that ends this part of the passage in verse five. The tension in these two words helps resolve the dilemmas in most churches between those who want to help everybody and those who don't want to help anybody. The first word in verse two is that we are to bear each others burdens. We are to help people with loads that are too big for them to bear alone. But we are to do that while bearing our own load and to help them bear their own load. The goal of compassionate care for those who are struggling is to help them get back on the road to sanctification in godliness; it is not to affirm that their struggling with the same issues all the time is ok. For example, people in the body can get into financial struggles and we are to come alongside and help them bear that burden for a long enough time to help them bear their own burden. People can have emotional issues and we are to come alongside to help bear the burden so as to help them bear that burden. And if we not hold together the two ends of this text, the church can become a social agency rather than the body of Christ whose goal is to see people become effective servants of God both bearing their own burdens and bearing the burdens of others in the body. So, this is how we are to live in the body as a Spirit-filled, fruit-producing and faithful to Jesus saints of God.

But while we are living in the Body we are to also be serving in the world in accordance with the eternal principles of the harvest: whatever one sows, that

will he also reap. This cannot be disconnected from the prior text. So, if we are living this way in the body of Christ as those who genuinely care for one another, the result will be that we go into the world to sow the seed of the Gospel and watch as God gives the increase. It is His harvest. We are the sowers of the seed. But there are those in every body of believers who are the result of Satanic seed sown in our midst. They love themselves and what they want even in the church more than they love anything or anyone. They live for themselves in the church, most often insulated and isolated from hurting people. They are attracted to those who are like them and are disattracted from those who are not like them. They are living by flesh in the church and they are sowing the seeds of this in the world. It is corrupt seed from corrupt souls that will if let alone corrupt the church and spread a spiritual cancer in the world. I was talking with our photographers the other night as they were packing up their stuff to leave. I was grieved because it was becoming increasingly clear that neither were believers but one of them who was raised in a Baptist church by his grandmother said to me, "Pastor Al, I want to tell you what I have already told Don. I have been in this business a long, long time. I have photographed a lot of churches and I can tell where a Christian Spirit is that is real, and I knew it was here within ten minutes after we started. It was real. And so different. And I want to tell you something else: this is not typical First Baptist Church if you know what I mean; I've done too many of those . . ." and I wondered immediately if he got the connection or between those two things or if we do here and now.

Where the Spirit of God is alive and active in a church we are showing and sharing genuine love with each other in the body and sharing that same kind of love as we proclaim the Gospel in the world. So I would say to you what Paul says at the end here: do not grow weary in doing the good work to which God has called us for in due time we will see the harvest if we don't quit. So as God gives us opportunity let us do the good work of the Gospel among all people but especially and particularly here in our relationships with one another.