

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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## ***Breathing the Fresh Air of Liberty in Jesus Christ***

Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

***“We Reap What We Sow”***

**April 27, 2014**

**Sermon Text:** Galatians 6:6-8

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 13:1-32

**Introduction-**

One who is taught the word must 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. (Gal 6:6-8)

I remember the years that I worked on my uncle's farm. We raised all kinds of different crops – corn, strawberries, grain, alfalfa, bush beans. Every fall we plowed and disked the fields and then planted the winter wheat. We also raised barley and oats.

Now, here is a principle that is so obvious, it sounds a bit foolish to even say it. And yet it really is a remarkable thing: *the type of seed planted determines the nature of the crop harvested*. This is just another way of stating the principle we have here from the Apostle Paul – *whatever one sows, that will he also reap*. Wheat seed produces a harvest of wheat. Corn seed yields a crop of corn, and so on. You can't violate this rule. If you planted weed seed, then you would reap a crop of weeds – or rather, a crop to be burned up.

Our text this morning tells us that every single human being on this planet is, right at this moment, sowing seed, and the nature of that seed determines the nature of the crop they will harvest one day. Here, Paul is dealing with only two ultimate kinds of seed:

- Flesh
- Spirit

And only two resulting crops:

- Corruption (death)
- Eternal life

### **Share With Teachers**

It is somewhat difficult to determine just how closely connected Paul's thoughts are here, or whether he is closing his epistle with points that are more separate – much as you might close off a letter and more quickly write down several additional thoughts you had, but the postman is coming and you've got to get the thing in the mail.

However, it does seem to me that verses 1-10 do represent a unit of thought that flows logically around the theme of bearing one another's burdens and doing good to one another.

- Bear one another's burdens as we all engage in this battle of the Spirit against the flesh
- Look to yourself and don't be haughty, lest you fall
- Share good things with those who teach you the Word
- Sow to the Spirit, not to the flesh by doing good to others, especially to your fellows brothers and sisters in Christ

In other words, Paul is addressing various practical ways in which we walk by the Spirit rather than by the flesh (which we addressed back in 5:16ff).

Now, here in verse 6 we have this instruction to “share all good things with the one who teaches” the Word. This is a good reminder in this letter in which Paul has been exposing these wicked false teachers who had come to the Galatians. Teachers are not to be rejected entirely – just the ones who bring us the bad seed of a false gospel.

This is a theme that is repeated in Scripture:

Take care that you do not neglect the Levite as long as you live in your land. (Deu 12:19)

Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and

those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. (1Co 9:13-14)

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." (1Ti 5:17-18)

There is no doubt, as you will see if you study church history, that wicked people have established themselves as oppressive priests over Christ's people more than once. Just as with these Galatian false teachers, there are always men, and sometimes women, who crave power for themselves and they select the venue of religion to obtain it. Such men we must be wise to and reject. (See Diotrefes in 3 John).

However, Christ has deemed it necessary and good to give to His church pastors and teachers (see Eph 4) for the building up of His people into Christ-like maturity for His glory and for their own protection. Christ is the Chief Shepherd, and He has appointed His undershepherds.

What Paul is addressing here is *one very specific way in which we can do good to all people, one way in which we can sow to the Spirit*, and this way concerns the nature of the Word of God. The point here is not primarily about the people who teach us, but about the content of their teaching – The Word of God. In other words, here we are brought to carefully consider what our thinking is regarding God's Word. It isn't about the laborer himself who is so worthy that he is to be given his wages. No. This instruction concerns the indispensability and value of God's Word for His church. The Spirit will lead us to value that Word and to desire to be taught by it. The Galatians' remedy is not to cast off all teachers, but to cast off the evil ones and value the ministry of Christ's true teachers.

This is why then that very early on in church history – even in NT times – churches set aside men that they recognized were called and gifted for the pastoral and teaching ministry. In doing so they were not honoring these men, but were honoring the Word of God.

We *need* the Word. It is our spiritual meat. Scripture makes this very plain, and while some Christians acknowledge this, others do not really believe it. I remember a man one time

about 15 years ago or so who told me that he would never want to be a pastor because he would have to rely on others for his salary and so he wouldn't feel like he was really doing anything of real value. More than once I have heard men who work with their hands say things that obviously indicated that they did not think that pastors perform true work. Now, admittedly, some pastors don't! No question about that. If a pastor wants to be lazy, often there is no one to hold him to accounts – though he will have to give account to Christ one day. But the work of teaching and preaching and shepherding Christ's people is indeed labor – and Christ has set it down that the laborer is worthy of his hire.

What I want us to consider here this morning is not the pastor-teacher himself, but *the Word of God*. And specifically, our attitude toward the Word of God. My purpose is not to put everyone on some kind of guilt trip so that you will give more money to the church! If anyone needs to be more faithful in their giving to the Lord, then you already know that. But what I would like to do is at least briefly remind us from Scripture *that the teaching and preaching of the Word of God is absolutely essential to our own well-being and growth, and to the good of the world in which we live*. That is what this verse is really about.

We share all good things with the one who teaches us *the Word*. We gladly pay for what we value, right? Well then, let's be reminded of the value and preciousness of the Word of God:

Psa 1:1-2 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; (2) but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Psa 19:7-11 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; (8) the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; (9) the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. (10) More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. (11) Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Psa 119:1-16 Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! (2) Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with

their whole heart, (3) who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! (4) You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. (5) Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! (6) Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. (7) I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. (8) I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me! (9) How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. (10) With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! (11) I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (12) Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! (13) With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. (14) In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. (15) I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. (16) I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

2Ti 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it (15) and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make

you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (16) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

And of course we could go on and on and on. We don't live by bread alone, but by every Word...right? The Word of God is powerful and life-giving. He spoke and the creation came into being. It is by His Word and truth that we are made wise to the schemes of the devil, and to the lies that would steal the gospel away from us. It is by the Word and the Spirit's application of it that we are made aware of our sin so that we can see it and turn from it. It is the Word of God that assures us that we are the children of God and heirs in Christ. And it is the Word of God that shows us this world for what it is – something that we must not love because it is evil and it is perishing. This Word shows us Christ, the living Word, and it is the preaching of this Word that is the gospel by which sinners are rescued out of darkness.

Paul tells us then that the ministry of this Word is vital and valuable. In fact, it is by the Word that Christ's church is established and built:

Eph 2:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, (21) in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. (22) In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

See it? The “apostles and prophets” preached the Word, and Christ Himself is the living Word who came also preaching the Word. The church continues to grow by the ministry of the Word. This really is the key to church growth then, isn’t it? The Spirit-empowered Word declared and taught.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

There it is then. The great value of the Word of God. No doubt all of us, myself included, need to be reminded of this regularly. And we all could ask ourselves if there are any changes in

our present practices that need to be made so that our lives and our thinking more accurately evidence that we value the Word. Not only in regard to financial giving, but in respect to our own study of our Bible and our sharing it with others.

Over the years I have had opportunity to see people grow in Christ, or atrophy in their souls. I have never, ever seen a vital, growing, maturing Christian who did not value the Word of God. And consistently those who atrophied were people who:

- Complained about boring sermons
- Were careless in their gathering together in the meetings of the church
- Valued the world
- Were negligent in their personal study of Scripture
- Would not hear and obey the Word. They were not willing to pay the price of doing so.

And positively, we should be tremendously encouraged by all of this. Where the Word of God is valued, Christ’s church *will* grow. Christ’s people *will* grow and be renewed in their minds. Satan’s schemes will be exposed. We don’t need some “gimmick” to grow the church.

### **Sowing and Reaping**

Alright then, let's move on and consider vss 7-8,

Gal 6:7-8 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.

Sowing to the Spirit is the same as "walking by the Spirit that we saw back in 5:16, and then of course sowing to the flesh is the very opposite, "walking by the flesh" we might say. You will recall that we learned in chapter 5 the EVERY Christian is led by the Spirit (5:18). At the same time we war against our remaining sinful flesh as it sets its desires against the Spirit. We do not walk by the Spirit/Sow to the Spirit in order to be justified before God! We do so because we are justified before God and the Spirit is leading us.

God is not mocked. He knows man's heart perfectly so that the principle is inviolable. What a person sows, that is what he will reap in the judgment to come.

So you see then what Paul has done is made this specific statement in verse 6 about the one who is taught the Word

sharing with the one who teaches, and then he builds from that specific manner of sowing to the Spirit into this broad and general principle of vss 7-8. *whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.* Sow to the Spirit → reap eternal life. Sow to the flesh → reap corruption. The account of the rich man and Lazarus is a perfect illustration of this principle:

Luk 16:19-26 "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. (20) And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, (21) who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. (22) The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, (23) and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. (24) And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' (25) But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. (26) And

besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

And again –

Luk 12:16-21 And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, (17) and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' (18) And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' (20) But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' (21) So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Both of those rich men reaped a harvest of eternal death – corruption. Why? Because they sowed to the flesh, not the Spirit. The Spirit would have had them think of others and not just themselves, but they would not. They sowed flesh seed and they reaped the corruption it yields.

## **Do Not be Deceived**

"Do not be deceived." Paul has used this warning before:

1Co 6:9-10 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

This warning tells us then that we must take care – that it is possible for us to be deceived by the lies of the enemy. All the more reason we need the ministry of the Word.

Now, *deceived about what?* Well, that it is possible to fool God. To mock Him and get away with it. To sow to the flesh and reap a harvest of eternal life. Many, many people think this way today, don't they? They believe that they can walk by the flesh, sow the seed of their sin, and reap a harvest of life! Apparently not much has changed over the centuries because Paul was warning the Galatians of the very same thing – *don't be deceived. You can't mock God and get away with it.*

Job 13:9 Will it be well with you when he searches you out? Or can



you deceive him, as one deceives a man?

Job 34:21-22 "For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps. (22) There is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves.

Psa 14:1-3 To the choirmaster. Of David. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. (2) The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. (3) They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

Job 22:13 But you say, 'What does God know? Can he judge through the deep darkness?

Psa 10:1-4 Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? (2) In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised. (3) For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD. (4) In the pride of his face the wicked does

not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God."

Now, positively and for our encouragement, look at verses 9-10,

Gal 6:9-10 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.

See it? The same certainty by which the wicked will reap corruption assures us that we will enjoy a harvest of eternal life. No doubt. Don't be deceived by anyone telling you otherwise. Persevere in doing good and realize that "in due season" the harvest comes. Remember, the legalism the false teachers were bringing produces devouring and biting one another. But the Spirit moves us to love one another, to do good to one another, and no matter how grim things may seem sometimes as we obey Christ, we can know that it is inevitable that we will harvest eternal life.

Right now, especially if you drive over to the Willamette Valley, you will see bare dirt fields. They have all been plowed and tilled up and the farmers

have sown seed in them. They look like an empty field. But the farmer knows that his field is going to yield a crop in a few months.

So it is with our own lives, and we must not doubt it or let the enemy deceive us into hopelessness. Sow to the Spirit and you can know that the harvest is coming.

Now, one final thing as we close, and this in regard to this matter of mocking God and Him not being deceived. We are surrounded today by multitudes of people who claim to be Christians and who assure themselves and others that they have a harvest of eternal life ahead of them. But they don't. How do we know? Because they are not sowing to the Spirit. They are sowing to the flesh. They are walking in the flesh. They love the world and this self-love is what defines and characterizes them. They are hypocrites.

We live in a small town. I was talking this last week with several of you about this and we were reminding ourselves of how vital it is that we who profess Christ *sow to the Spirit/walk in the Spirit*. I have no doubt at all that THE chief obstacle in this community to the lost coming to faith in Christ is the stumbling block of hypocrites that they see all around them. We are not perfect. We all sin. We battle our flesh.

But if we are truly in Christ, this sin will not be our habit and our character.

The lost in this community know. They know if old Fred who claims to be a Christian is genuine or if he is a phony. They know. What is the image of Christ that is projected to unsaved people in this county by churches that contain hypocrites and permit them to continue in their sham? I can tell you, and you know the answer. They think that Christ is a sham.

We must never, never be guilty of announcing to the world that God can be mocked. That people can sow to the flesh and reap a harvest of reward and life. And therefore, we cannot permit any such notion to be present in our minds or in this church. Over the years we have experienced many hypocrites here, and I hope that they are all gone now. If you are a Christian and therefore you love Christ and desire to serve Him, you are welcome. If you are not a Christian but you know that you need Christ and need to be saved, then you are welcome here. But no one can be here who is a mocker of God.

I think better of each and every one of you. Let's sow to the Spirit and not lose hope, let's do good to one another and believe with certainty that in due time we will reap that harvest of eternal life.