

“Sowing and Reaping”
Galatians 6:7-9
(Preached at Trinity, August 25, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 5** Paul admonished the Galatian Christians to humble themselves under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
Galatians 5:16 NAU - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
Galatians 5:25 NAU - "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."
2. As we entered **Chapter 6** Paul has spent several verses giving a practical exposition of this by describing what this spiritual life looks like. What does it look like when a man walks by the Spirit?
 - A. In **Verses 1-2** we saw that it is a life that cares for the spiritual wellbeing of our brother. When a brother falls into sin those who are spiritual turn to him and give themselves to seeking his restoration.
 - B. In **Verses 3-5** we saw that the person walking by the Spirit does not seek to exalt himself above others. He looks to the matter of his own heart knowing he will give account for himself. He will not be judged by the standard of other men but by the righteousness of Christ.
Galatians 6:5 NAU - "For each one will bear his own load."
 - C. In **Verse 6** we saw that the man walking by the Spirit finds great value in the teaching of the Word of God and thus he finds great value in those who teach it. He will give to them of his good things.
3. **Verse 7** serves as a transition verse. It applies to **Verse 6**. The one who shares little to those who teach them will receive little—little by way of God's blessings, little by way of good teaching.
4. But we also find as we enter **Verses 7-9** Paul returning to the contrast of the “works of the flesh” versus the “fruit of the Spirit.” He puts it in the form of a solemn warning:
Galatians 6:8 NAU - "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."
5. Paul uses an agricultural illustration to apply an axiom. Every farmer knows the principles of sowing and reaping. He will always reap according to what he has sown. His harvest will be consistent with the quantity of the seed he has sown, the quality of the seed he has sown, and the type of seed he has sown. A farmer that sows wheat will never expect to harvest corn.
6. As we look at this passage this morning I want to attempt to answer three questions.
 - I. What does it mean to sow to the flesh?
 - II. What does it mean to sow to the Spirit?
 - III. What is the harvest expected by each?

I. What does it mean to sow to the flesh?

- A. As I pointed out in **Chapter 5**, the word “flesh” here is used in a negative moral sense to describe sinful human feelings and desires.
1. It speaks of corruption and self-indulgence.
Romans 7:18 NAU - "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh"
 2. It speaks of the desires of the human heart that are contrary to God and the way of holiness
Romans 8:6-8 NAU - "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."
 3. It speaks of that which is contrary to the redeemed life in Christ. Paul describes it as our former ways.
Ephesians 2:3 NAU - "Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."
 4. What does it look like to sow to the flesh?
- B. It is to live according to the mindset of this world – a world corrupted by sin
Ephesians 2:1-2 NAU - "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."
1. It is a mindset that lives as if there is no God
 2. It is a mindset that dismisses the Law of God
 - a. It is a mind instructed by the foolish ideas of men rather than the Word of God.
 - b. There are professing Christians who believe that homosexuality and same-sex marriage is OK as long as it doesn't hurt anyone
 - c. There are professing Christians who believe it is OK for a woman to terminate her pregnancy
 3. It is a mindset that seeks ultimate fulfillment in this life as if this is all there is.
 - a. They are consumed by an unceasing idolatry filling their lives with the gods they love.
2 Timothy 3:2-4 NAU - "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"
 - b. They are bound by the physical world – led by visible objects. They are governed only by his five physical senses – they seek material things

- C. It is to live according to fleshly priorities
1. Sowing to the flesh is a passionate pursuit
Paul says they are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"
 2. Seeking the things of this world and fulfilling the lust of the flesh is a high priority
 3. The mere religious man cannot reform his priorities
 - a. Reading the Bible will not be a high priority
 - b. Attending all of the services of the church will not be a high priority
 - c. The Law of God will continue to be irksome. He will justify every departure from the Law
 4. He will be undisciplined in Spiritual matters because they don't have his interest.
- D. It is to be governed by the deeds of the flesh
1. Paul described these in **Galatians 5:19-21 NAU** - "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these"
 2. Paul is simply describing the unbridled sins that satisfy the flesh
The person who sows to the flesh is characterized by these things.

II. What does it mean to sow to the Spirit?

- A. The Reformers tied **Verses 7-8** to **Verse 6**
1. Sowing to the Spirit is about sharing good things with the minister of the Word.
 2. It means much more than this.
We've seen the mindset, priorities, and deeds of those sowing to the flesh.
We'll now look at these same three areas in the life of the one sowing to the Spirit.
- B. We saw the the one sowing to the flesh has a worldly mindset. The one sowing to the Spirit has a redeemed mind. Instead of embracing the mindset of this world he has the mind of Christ.
1. His mind is continually being renewed by the Holy Spirit
Romans 12:2 NAU - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
 2. His mind is instructed by the Word of God
 3. He lives with an eye on eternity. This world is not his home and he doesn't seek to make this world his ultimate reward.
 4. He is moved by a love for Christ. He sees Christ as altogether lovely.
- C. We saw that the one sowing to the flesh has his priorities fixed on fulfilling the desires of the flesh. The one sowing to the Spirit has his priorities on following the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

1. There is a common element in the life of every Christian. God has transformed our hearts. We now love Jesus with an exclusive love, a passionate love. This love for our Master governs how we live, how we think – it governs how we set our priorities.
 2. Our priority is to seek heavenly things
Colossians 3:1-2 NAU - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."
 3. The spiritual person puts a great priority on spiritual things – prayer, the Bible, the church
If you want to know what you are sowing just look to your priorities.
- D. We saw the deeds of the flesh. The one sowing to the Spirit is characterized by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit
1. Paul described the Fruit of the Spirit
 2. Paul says those walking in the Spirit will not be governed by the deeds of the flesh.
Galatians 5:16 NAU - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."

III. What is the harvest expected by each?

- A. First, Paul is speaking of an active participation in these things
1. He is speaking of sowing and reaping. The farmer expects to harvest what he has sown.
Galatians 6:7 NAU - "for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."
 2. The fleshly person gives himself to the pursuit of the flesh. He is fleshly minded. He gives great energy on pursuing his fleshly interests. For the Christian to sow in this manner is completely inconsistent with the marks of God's transforming grace. It makes a mockery of the Gospel.
Galatians 6:7 NAU - "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked"
 3. The spiritual person gives himself to the pursuit of spiritual things. He is actively seeking to put the flesh to death
Romans 8:13 NAU - "for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live."
Galatians 5:24 NAU - "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."
Galatians 2:19 KJV - "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. ²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

- B. The one living only to the satisfaction of the flesh shall reap corruption
Galatians 6:8 NAU - "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption"
1. This is simply speaking of the one dead in sin. His life is characterized by corruption.
 The Christian has escaped the corruption of this world
2 Peter 1:3-4 NAU - "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."
 2. It also has eternal overtones.
 Timothy George writes "*It is drawn out on a canvas of eternity.*"
 Hell is the ultimate place of ruin and corruption. If we continue to descend into the chasm of sin and depravity we shall surely receive our just condemnation.
- C. The one who is sowing to the Spirit is simply demonstrating his redeemed nature.
1. He is actively following after the things of the Spirit as he follows hard after Christ.
 2. He is rewarded with eternal life but he is enjoying life in the Spirit now
 3. Such a life is not without trial. In fact it is full of trials, yet the spiritual man presses on.
Galatians 6:9 NAU - "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."

Conclusion:

1. The Christian consistently walks by the Spirit who dwells in him.
 The lost man consistently walks by the demands of his sinful flesh.
2. All will receive their just end; they will reap what they have sown.
Romans 2:5-8 NAS - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶ who will render to every man according to his deeds: ⁷ to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; ⁸ but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation."
3. Praise God for the transforming power of the Gospel.
1 Thessalonians 1:5-7 NAU - "for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia."