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GALATIANS 6:6-18

Galatians Series

[PRAYER] Lord, you are a powerful God and that power often exudes from your holiness, which I imagine is what lights up heaven. Just your holiness is the brightness, the light that makes heaven, that doesn't have a sun or a moon or stars, but as your presence that just lights it up. I'm sure that's your character, your holiness that makes that lit. It's really that energy that comes from your holiness that brings that power that we get a glimpse of and then we get to see every once in a while. I am so honored to see that. Sometimes we see it in some big nature incident with a storm or we see it in an earthquake or something like that, but often it's in that small voice where we hear your voice and the power that comes right at the right moment when we need a message from you and you rescue us from discouragement by providing hope for you. Pull us back from the edge of temptation with truth.

Lord, we thank you for the personal dynamic that we have with you, the relationship that we can enjoy because we're your children and the privilege we have to have regular fellowship and communion with you. We do thank you for your cross and for the salvation that we enjoy. Because of that, we have the Holy Spirit that draws us together here. Many of us don't know each other all that well, but we share a common bond in your Spirit because we fellowship together around you.

Lord, thank you for drawing us here together today. I pray for each of these folks. You know their hearts, you know their needs, you know the journey that they're on. I pray that this morning might be just a little bit of encouragement along that path. I pray for those who are feeling overwhelmed with life, that you'd give them the strength that they need to carry on this week. I pray for those who are struggling with a particular issue, that it's feeling heavy on their hearts. That you'd provide the encouragement and you'd carry their burdens today. Inspire us today, Lord. Give us the joy that only you can provide. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Next week we'll talk about the psalms.

Today I'm going to break this message into three parts that are totally unrelated except that it's all about the journey. We're all on a journey and so these three separate parts of this message indicate that. Other than that, I could not draw them all together. It just is coming out of Galatians 6.

I want to start by looking at Galatians 6:6, which says this: *Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.*

The point of that verse is saying that we need to care for those who are teachers, especially teachers of the word. Whether that's teachers like teaching in a worship service or teachers who are teaching children, the idea is that we should be caring for them.

The point there is that it's saying to share all good things with them. Now that could be money, but it could be other things as well. In our culture, money is given to the church and then the church ends up paying someone like me in order to do the work that I do here. So in that case, in that situation, it was likely that they would give things to the teacher because they didn't have the formal setting that we have here in our culture.

But I think it's more than just money. In fact I want to make a case here this morning. When it says *all good things*, one of the greatest things that a teacher appreciates is the encouragement that the message that they're sharing is making a difference. In order to help you understand that, I want to share with you a little bit about my journey at Calvary Chapel Living Hope.

I came here in 2012 to take over this fellowship, which was a video campus that I had started two years previously. They would show video teaching of me, but I wasn't here present in the worship service.

My wife and I came over here on one particular Sunday and determined that it would be wise for us and most beneficial for this fellowship if we came over and resigned from our position at Calvary Chapel Mercer County. We came over here to pastor this church full time.

So we made that decision in 2012 and that was in September when we first started here. The church at Mercer County agreed to pay me till the end of the year. Four months I received my salary that I was getting paid over at Mercer while I was here working. But then in 2013 that stopped and we knew that that would stop. In fact when we started Calvary Chapel Mercer County we didn't get paid for nine months as the church was starting. That's part of church planting and we know that, so we were prepared for that.

In 2013 we didn't get paid, but the particular challenge came for us in the second half of the year when there were a couple of months when not only did we not get paid but the church didn't have enough money to pay its bills. So in one month I paid \$1200 to pay the bills and the next month paid \$1400 to pay the bills. So two months in that year of 2013 I was paying to be a pastor. That was not quite what I had in mind. It was one thing to not get paid to be a pastor; it's another thing to pay to be a pastor.

So I had to wrestle with some things in my heart, like how long can we do this and is this something I really want to do. The Lord used that in my heart, as He has my whole journey here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope, to draw me deeper in my walk with the Lord. In my time with Calvary Chapel Living Hope, God has taken me deeper in my walk with Him. So my prayer life has become more significant and also I have to ask some questions about why I'm doing what I'm doing.

In 2014 (that was just this last year) I averaged \$300 a month. That's how much I got paid. So obviously I'm not doing this for the money. More people have come to this church, for which I'm grateful, and likely that will increase in 2015.

But the point I want to make here is that it's not about the money. I would suggest that teachers (that's the word there, *instructors*), most instructors go into instructing or teaching not for the money. They go in there for another reason – they want to make the world a better place. They want to help people. They want to contribute to the world somehow.

I would suggest that one of the greatest things that you can do, if you want to do what this verse says (*share all good things with their instructor*) is to share encouragement. I am greatly encouraged when I get emails that say, "I really appreciated the teaching that took place last week" or "I really appreciate that teaching that gave such and such and I'm using that somehow in my life." When that takes place or when I hear that, that's an encouragement to me. It's also encouraging to me, as it happened in the past couple weeks, where people posted on Facebook – "Wow, we had a great sermon at our church." And so they tag me and I get to see that. One of the things that is very encouraging for me is to see the results. If it's having an impact on people's lives, that is very meaningful for me as a teacher.

So between those two things (that is, my relationship with the Lord and my calling that God has given me, and the encouragement that comes from the folks that I minister to), I am encouraged to move forward, as I would suggest most instructors are.

I think this is a great exhortation for you. You may just be passing through here. Who knows how long we'll be together. People come and go now from churches all the time. I would encourage you in the next church that you're in to apply this verse and encourage those who instruct.

Notice it says those who instruct *in the word*. So that could be someone who leads a small group for you. It could be someone who's teaching your children. It could be someone who teaches on Sunday morning. But you want to *share all good things with your instructor*, and I would suggest that a good way to do it is through encouragement. That's part one.

Part two is totally different. This part of the message that I want to share today I'm dedicating to Tyler. Tyler's twenty years old and he's homeless. I spent four hours with Tyler before I put him on a bus or dropped him off at the bus station to take a 650-mile journey away from home to start a new life. Tyler wants to be independent and grow. I expect that I'll coach him along the way in order to help him do that.

Tyler, I'm glad you're listening to this today. There's an important message in this audio for you. I want to encourage you that whenever you feel discouraged or you want to give up or you've messed up and you want to get back onto the right path that you would listen to this audio. I'll put it right here on your web page so that you can easily find it whenever you want.

What I want to do with you is I want to share the verses that I shared with you in the parking lot before I dropped you off. I want to explain them a little bit more to you. These are the verses in

Galatians 6:7-10. Each time you listen to this you'll probably hear something different because every time we come to the Bible and we read it we often get something different than we got the time before. So I would encourage you to listen to this audio message more than once. I would encourage you to listen to it over and over again because in these words are some truths that will help you to stay on the right path and to move to the next level like you want to do. The verses come from Galatians 6:7-10.

Verse 7 says this: *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

Those words *do not be deceived* are important because all of us tend to be deceived. I tend to be deceived. I think my greatest enemy is myself. We're deceived to think that we can do it on our own or we'll get pleasure out of those substances or that telling someone off will make us feel better, then we get ourselves into trouble. The verse there is *do not be deceived* and you want to be careful in your heart that you're not deceived. It's easy for us to get deceived. So don't be deceived, don't go back into old ways. You can get easily into trouble.

The next phrase says *God cannot be mocked*. The word there, *mocked*, means to put your nose up as if you'll turn your nose up to someone. It says *God cannot be mocked*. The reason for that is because God designed our world. He designed every rule, every principle that makes our world work.

You were telling me this week that you walked seventeen miles to get from one place to another and it hurt your shoulders because you were carrying that twenty-pound pack on your back. There's a rule that made that happen. It's called gravity. You experienced it for seventeen miles and it was hard for you to walk – not because you were walking, you said, but because of the pack on your back. It's hard. There's a rule that governs that.

So when we know those rules we can prepare for them. There's one particular rule that God has designed built into the universe that's talked about in these verses and he describes them in the next phrase. I want to unpack that for you so that you can understand this because I think it will help you as you're on your pilgrimage.

It says, *A man reaps what he sows*. That's a farming illustration. The idea of sowing means planting. When you plant something you expect that it's going to grow and you're going to reap a harvest. So reaping is the harvesting. If you sow a corn seed or a bunch of corn seeds in rows then it's going to come up and turn into corn. If you plant wheat seeds they're going to grow up and they're going to turn into wheat.

But he's not talking about plants here. He's talking about the things that we do. He's going to talk about doing good or doing bad. I want to encourage you to keep this in mind because it says *a man reaps what he sows*. So if you sow good things, you'll get good things in return. If you sow bad things, you're going to get bad things. That's the principle. *A man reaps what he sows*.

It's described a little bit more in these next verses, so let me continue on and share with you verse 8. In verse 8 it says, *Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction*.

The idea to sow means to do things that please the flesh. The flesh is your enemy. The flesh is inside you and it tries to take you off the path. You want to be on a path to move toward the independence that you want and there's a distraction and that's your flesh. The flesh is going to try to get you to be lazy. The flesh is going to try to get you to give up. The flesh is going to try to get you to go back to substances for relief. It's going to do all kinds of things.

Notice it says, *Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction.* Destruction will come into your life. You will not be successful in moving forward.

The rest of the verse says *whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.* So you want to be thinking in terms of doing what's right, obeying God, moving forward, and allowing that to reap some good things in your life.

One of the principles we see here is that you reap the same kinds of things you sow. So if you sow bad things, you're going to get bad things coming to you. If you sow good things, then you have good things coming to you. That's the principle that's implied there.

If you sow laziness, you're going to reap poverty. If you sow indulging yourself with substances, it's going to damage you. If you sow meanness and hate, then it will make you an ugly person.

On the other hand if you sow working hard, it will pay off. If you're honest under pressure, it will be better for you. If you're patient with people, you'll go further in relationships. If you're helpful, people will see that and appreciate you. You reap what you sow.

I want to tell you a story about a man traveling, like you are, with a pack on his back. He comes into town. He walks into town and he sees a man rocking on a rocking chair, sitting on his porch.

He says to the old man, "Are the folks friendly in this town?"

The man rocking in his rocking chair said, "Hmm. Let me ask you a question. Were the people friendly in the last town where you came from?"

"Oh no. They weren't friendly. They were mean, they were hard on me, and they gave me a lot of insults."

"Hmm," the old man said, "I think you'll find people the same way as you come into this town."

The man walked on.

A few minutes later, another man came into town with a pack on his back. He looked up at the man who was rocking on his porch and he said, "Hey mister, are the people in this town friendly?"

The man rocking on his chair said, "Hmm. Let me ask you a question. Were the people in the last town friendly?"

He says, "Oh yeah. They were friendly. They were helpful and they encouraged me along the way."

He said, "You'll probably find the people in this town the same."

Now the lesson that we learn from that particular story is that the friendliness of the town wasn't determined by the people in the town; it was determined by the person coming into town. I want to suggest the same thing will happen to you. You will reap the same kinds of things you sow. That's what that verse is talking about.

Now let's go to verse 9, the next verse, which says this: *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Weary. We all experience weariness and discouragement and you will do that at times. What are you going to do when that happens? Don't get tired and give up. The point is you want to keep going. Do the right thing.

When it says there *don't be weary in doing good*, that's doing the right thing. Don't become weary in doing the right thing. Hang in there. People are unreasonable. The jobs you get are going to be unfair. People are going to be mean to you. You're going to work with people who will mistreat you. Your job is to hang in there and do the right thing. Don't become weary in doing good. The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have. Sometimes you get kicked in the teeth. That's okay. Give the world the best you've got anyway.

Don't become weary in doing good, *for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.* The *proper time* is important words there because you have to understand when you're doing good you might not get an immediate response. Don't give up if you don't see the results right away. Because when you're planting corn, if you put a seed in the ground, you can't expect to have corn on the cob the next day. It's going to take time for that corn to grow up.

So it says *at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.* Hang in there. You need to do what's right. Don't give up. Do the right thing. Keep going. Stay at it. Don't go back to doing immature things. Stay on the right path.

The next verse is also important. It says this: *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

Now this is really a message for Christians that we should all be helping other people. It says *let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers.* But I want to apply this to you in a special way.

I want you to know that when you get stuck, or you don't have a meal, or you don't have a job, or you don't have a place to sleep, you can go to Christians. Because Christians have in them this command that God has given to them that we are to care for all people, including homeless people like you. We want to help you. Go to a church, find a pastor, visit during the week, go to church on Sunday, introduce yourself to people. Show them this website. Try to get yourself some help moving forward. Christians can help you along the way.

The most important thing that I hope will happen in your journey as you continue on is you will find Christians whose faith is real to them and you can experience that personally. Because my

desire for you is that you would come and understand a personal relationship with God – that He'll be with you on the journey, that you interact with Him in the midst of all of that, and God would do some great things in you, and He will reveal His power to you in ways that you can't even imagine. It would be so powerful to you that you would say, "Wow, this has got to be God," and that you would trust Him yourself and that you would have that personal relationship with Him.

So Tyler, keep going. Do the right thing. Let me just pray for you.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I pray for Tyler right now that you'd bless him today. That in this next day you would reveal your power to him. In this next day you would encourage him. In this next day you would help him to do what's right. In this next day you would not allow him to be weary and tired and give up, but he would be able to stay on the path and move forward. I pray, Lord, that you would bring him across special people, Christians, who can help him understand more about what it means to follow you on his journey. In Jesus' name, amen.

Here's part number three. Turn with me to verse 11. Paul is concluding his book here. I want you to understand the conclusion because I think it's powerful for us as we're tying the book together. We're going to end the book of Galatians today.

In verse 11 it says this: *See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!*

Now either he's writing with large letters with his own hand because he has a hard time with his eyes. He may have an eye problem. We have indication of that at other places in the Bible that an eye problem may be present. So maybe he's writing with large letters. Or maybe he's writing in emphasis like sometimes we put capital letters in an email – "I want you to listen here" kind of thing. Because he's saying this is really important. Either way, it's an emphasis. This is really important. "Pay attention because I'm going to wrap it up here," he's saying at the end of the book. This is the message of the book of Galatians tied up in these last verses.

Verse 12 says, *Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.*

You see, in that particular time in the Galatian church there were some Jews who came along who probably were Christians, but they believed that in order to be real, true Christians you had to have something else besides the cross. You needed to have circumcision too, or you needed to worship on the Sabbath day, or keep the laws that were in the Old Testament because that was so important to them and their Jewish history. But now they come to salvation and they say, "Oh this can't be enough."

In the same way that these Judaizers were coming to the Christians and trying to persuade them that it was more than the cross, they also had to embrace the Jewish laws. There are people today in our society; I would suggest most of them are Christians who say to us, "It's not good enough for you to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You also have to have [this list of

holiness things that I've created]. This is what's right for me and therefore it must be right for all of us." They imply that in order for you to be a good Christian you must follow this list of rules. Likely it's a lot of good things that they should do and a lot of good things that we ought to do too.

But the decision about which ones of those things on that list is left up to the individual and it doesn't come as part of your salvation process, it comes after the fact. So you don't become a good Christian by doing any list of dos and staying away from the don'ts.

There are lots of people (we call them legalists) who have lists of dos and don'ts that they not only apply to themselves but they apply to other people. That's the danger. The list is not bad. It's what's really important list. You probably have your own list.

I have my list of things I don't do because I'm a Christian, but if I start implying that list onto you and start saying, "You've got to do these things," then I find myself in error and then we get into a serious problem. Because then what happens is the person (you) becomes externally motivated (that is, you're following some list that the church puts out there or that someone else places on you) instead of being internally motivated by the Holy Spirit.

That's the story, that's the whole message of Galatians. The fruit of the Spirit is what needs to come out of you instead of this list that comes from the outside. God wants every one of us as Christians to be internally motivated. That doesn't mean we have freedom to do whatever we want. We limit that freedom for a number of different reasons, but that list that's developed is individualized and we need to be able to accept that for ourselves.

So he says there *the only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ*. In other words, they're doing it because it will appease some people so that they won't have to be persecuted. Not a very good reason to have some rules that you're going to follow.

Verse 13: *Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh.*

Verse 14: *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

It's because we've been crucified with Christ that we lay ourselves down to each other, that there's this humility that we have, enough humility that says, "You're on a different path than I am. Our paths may cross at times; we may be on the same path for a period of times, like we are at this church. We cross on Sunday mornings. We have an opportunity to connect with each other, to encourage one another. But we are on different paths as we go forward and we need to recognize that. But it's the cross of Christ that draws us together. Because in order to be on that path, we have all had to pass through the cross of Christ.

There's only one way they get to heaven and that's through the cross of Jesus Christ. But if you pass through that cross then the path broadens and some person might go this direction and some person might go this direction. Some of those directions are bad directions. Some person may go

a direction that is harmful to them for a period of time and someone else may do something else. We're all on a journey as we're going forward and we need to be sensitive to the fact that it's only because of the cross that any of us are on the journey. It's because of God's grace that we can move forward.

So verse 14 says, *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation.*

Now this *new creation* that he's describing here is the salvation that comes to us through the cross of Christ. I just want you to understand if you're here today and you've never experienced that, you want to have that new creation inside of you and that's because you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. When you do that, He does something new inside of you, puts you on a path where you're following Him, being led by Him, and, as he says at the end of chapter 5, we are in step with the Spirit on the path. That's what He wants us to be.

Now it's my attempt to illustrate this in art, so I had one of my artists work with me to take what was in my head and try to put it on paper. I wanted to illustrate what I think is a picture of this freedom in Christ issue from Galatians. We're all on this path moving and the only way to get to heaven in the distance is to go through the cross. Everyone must go through the cross. There's no alternative way to get there.

We're all on the path, but after we get through the cross people take different paths. I can't judge you for the path that you're on and you can't judge me for the path I'm on. Now I'll give you some advice because I can tell you there are big holes over here on the other side, and if you're not careful you could fall into them. I might give you some advice and warning about them, but the choices that you make in regard to that are part of your journey with Christ. I don't want to be judging you and I don't expect you're going to be judging me about our choices that we make about the individual decisions we make in areas where it is not clearly specified in God's word.

There are some things that are very clear in God's word. It is wrong, for example, the Bible says, to get drunk. It's wrong to sleep with someone outside of marriage. That's wrong. There are clear things that are right and wrong.

There are a lot of things that we have to make choices about – what kind of movies you're going to watch or how much time you're going to spend in entertainment or how you're going to spend your money. All those things are choices that we make that are individual choices between you and God. Not between you, me, and God. It's between you and God.

We limit the freedom that we have many times for several reasons, which we talked about in this study. You'll have to go back and listen to them in the book of Galatians if you want to see the different reasons why we limit our freedom. But that freedom is something that we protect because it's something that we have before the Lord and now we're on this path together as we're going forward.

At times our paths converge and at some times they don't. We go in different directions and that's part of living the Christian life that God has designed for us.

Verse 16 says this: *Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule.* Now if you go back to what he's talking about in verse 15 he says *what counts is the new creation.* Now he says, *Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God. From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.*

He really had marks on his body for the sake of Christ. He was beaten. He had stripes because he was beaten, scars because of that. So he's saying, *I bear on my body the marks of Christ.* But I would suggest we all bear in our bodies the marks of Christ, marked by victory we have over sin, marked by decisions we've made that have said we're not going to do this particular thing, we're going to serve the Lord instead. All those are the marks that we carry around in our lives.

Verse 18 is a great way to conclude this book. It's a great verse to end our study because it talks about God's grace. Verse 18: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.*

It's only because of the grace that comes with the cross that we are able to appreciate who God is and what He's doing in our lives. We all are on the path only because of God's grace. We need to come to a place where we appreciate so much the cross of Christ. It's that cross where Jesus Christ died for our sins and took the penalty that frees us. That's the freedom talked about in this book. Frees us to enjoy who He is, to enjoy the path, to experience the love, the joy, the peace, and all through the fruit of the Spirit. It's God's grace that allows us to enjoy those things.

So I would encourage you to read the book of Galatians. Enjoy it and be reminded that the freedom that we have came at a price and that price was the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for us. It's the cross of Christ that we enjoy.

I want to encourage you too, if you've never accepted the Lord into your life, to ask Him to come into your heart. We're going to sing a song in a moment. We have prayer counselors available on the sides here. If you'd like to pray and ask God to come into your heart, then just talk to one of our prayer counselors. They'll help you in that process so you can be on the path and you can be moving forward in the direction that God wants you to move.

Let's pray together. Would you stand with me?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we do thank you for the journey that we're all on. I thank you for the journey that you've provided for me here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope. I thank you for the journey that you've got Tyler on this week and I pray that you would protect him. And for each of us Lord, we're on that journey, I pray that you would make it clear to us how we're to follow you and to follow your leadership. Guide us through your Spirit on the path that you want to take us on now as we move from the cross to heaven. We ask, Lord, that you would guide us and lead us. Direct us. Make those paths straight, we ask. In Jesus' name, amen.