

NOTES FROM TIM GAMSTON'S SERMON – Sunday 4th May 2025 am

TITLE: “Caught and Restored” Text: Galatians Chapter 6

SERIES: Freedom in Christ -Pt 6

Scripture references from the ESV

Galatians 6 Brothers,^[a] 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 neighbour. 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.

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which^[b] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

¹⁷ From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

How would you react if a church member was dragged before the congregation, accused of committing adultery? Her accusers are calling for punishment in order to maintain the honour of the church, but how should we react?

In v1 (above), Paul helps us to know how we are to treat anyone who has shown any behaviour that falls short of God's moral standards.

**The church is to be a place where the redemptive grace of Christ is ministered
so that those caught in any transgression
are restored to the Lord and to the fellowship of the church**

This ministry of grace is a ministry in which every member of the church is involved. It is not just for the elders, though they are to take the lead. Paul wrote: **And he gave**

the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Eph 4:11-12).

- Everyone of us is to be involved in pointing broken sinners to Christ, so that they will experience his redemptive grace to restore them. (v2 above)

God calls everyone of us to be burden bearers

Paul was writing to churches that had been infiltrated by legalists and he had to remind the believers that no one is ever put right through keeping the law, but only through receiving the righteousness of Christ as a gift of God's grace.

Legalism puts burdens on people. It causes them to be crushed under a weight of rules and expectations

that they have to keep and meet if they are going to have eternal life. Christians easily move from the

gospel of grace to setting up rules and traditions, and so we all need to hear what Paul writes in v2.

Paul is calling us to do the opposite of what legalists do. Rather than laying burdens on people,

Jesus expects us to lift the burdens of his people

- If your religion is one of works based righteousness, you will only ever burden people
- If your religion is one of grace, you will be a brother/sister who carries the burdens of others

Resting in the grace of God is absolutely essential to working out relationships in church life

Three observations about burden bearing come to mind:

1. **Burden bearing will be necessary.** There will be times when we will need people to help us carry our burdens. The two words burden (v2) and load (v5) have different meanings and these verses are not contradictory. We are to bear one another's burdens but carry our own load.
- Load indicates a small easily carried back pack
 - Burden means a heavy load the is too much for one person to carry

We all have responsibilities (loads), such as our family responsibilities, that are ours alone to bear. By God's grace these are loads that we are able to carry. Sometimes the load God gives us is a burden that is too great to bear alone.

As an example, leadership of this church, now that it has grown so much, is a burden of shepherding that is too big to be carried by one person, though it is his responsibility for which he will have to give an account to Christ. Hence, other shepherds have been appointed to help shoulder the burden alongside our pastor.

- We all have our own load to carry but there will be times when the load becomes a burden and we will need someone to help us carry it.

We tend to think that we should manage on our own and it is a sign of weakness if we need help. Alternatively, we might become super spiritual and say that we just need Jesus to carry our burden. The command of Christ shows that:

It is right to seek the help of other believers when the burden becomes too great for us.

2. Burden bearing is Christlike. Addressing the legalists who want to add laws to faith, Paul gives them a law! He gives them the law of Christ (v2). The law of Christ is the law of love. **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another (John 13:34)** Jesus said that the whole of the law of God can be summed up with two commands:

- To love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength
- To love our neighbour as ourself

Love is the fulfilment of the law

We have been set free from sin, death, Satan, ourselves and law keeping for justification so that we might love God and show that love by obeying him, and so that we might love one another and show that love by serving one another. **For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (Gal 5:13).**

Love fulfils the law of God because God who gave the law is love

We are to love one another in the same way that Jesus loved us (John 13:34 quoted above). How does Jesus love us?

He loves us by bearing our burden of sin and guilt.

Previously, we were those who were struggling under the weight of our sin and guilt. Jesus did not add to our burden by adding more rules for us to keep in order to be right with God. Instead, he came and bore the weight of our sin and guilt on himself. Out of love for us, Jesus bore the burden of sin that was overwhelming us. We love one another by bearing one another's burdens. When we carry someone else's burden, we not only fulfil Christ's command to love others, we also show what Christ has done for us.

As Jesus carried our burdens so we are to carry the burdens of others

Burden bearing is a Christlike thing to do

3. Burden bearing requires humility (vv3-4). There is a hindrance to burden bearing, and that hindrance is pride. When someone thinks they are better than they really are, having never properly evaluated themselves in the light of God's holiness and his amazing grace, it impacts relationships. The proud person compares themselves to others. The proud Pharisee (see **Luke 18:10-14**) went to the temple to pray compared himself to the tax collector, a social outcast, and thinking he was doing far better, he began to congratulate himself before God.

Pride is a sickening sin and will stop a person from bearing the burdens of others

Pride sees the failures in others and, rather than stooping down to help, the proud person uses those failures to make themselves look good. That is the opposite of what Jesus did: **Jesus ... Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!** (Philippians 2:6-8 NIV). To bear our burden of sin:

Jesus had to humble himself to the disgrace of the cross

He had to get himself dirty with our sin, bear the shame of being stripped naked and suffer the ridicule of looking weak and helpless. The glory of being the great burden bearer only came after he had borne the shame of the cross. Unless we are willing to humble ourselves, we will never properly bear one another's burdens.

We are to bear one another's burdens in a way that makes Jesus look glorious

- If you suffer from pride, you may bear someone's burden, but it will only be to make you look good. You will be using their suffering as a way to exalt yourself.
- We can only bear the burdens of others in a way that shows the glory of Christ by being the humble people that Christ expects us to be

Paul gives us an example of burden bearing that brings all three elements together (v1). We are not to do nothing, and nor are we to condemn the person. We are not to gossip about them or shun them. We are to restore them. In the Greek, that is a medical term referring to the resetting of a bone or joint, restoring it back to the right place. When a brother or sister has fallen into sin, we are to set them back on the right path and look to see them repenting of their sin, trusting in the grace of Christ and walking with Jesus. Those entrusted with this task are those who are spiritual. That means those who are walking by the Spirit of God:

- Those who are displaying the fruit of the Spirit -love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control
- Those who have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires

When you keep in step with the Spirit, you will be better able to help others. If you are not seeing the fruit of the Spirit growing in your life, or you are not crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires, you will not be able to do burden bearing effectively and in a way that glorifies Christ.

**To bear the burden of someone who has sinned means
spiritual people restoring that person to fellowship with Christ**

We are to do that with:

- Gentleness, and a real sense that we too could easily fall into that same sin (v1). Jesus is not harsh with repentant sinners and neither should we be.
- Humility (v3). We should never go into burden bearing thinking we could never fall into the same sin. That displays the same attitude as the proud Pharisee, and pride comes before a fall.

Before we open our mouth in seeking to put others right, we need to pray.

- Confess the sins that lurk in your own heart, especially the sin of pride.
- Seek God's grace to humbly help your brothers and sisters

When you go to the person, you need to confront them with the sin in their life, and then:

Apply the gospel of God's grace.

Jesus Christ crucified is the remedy God offers

The gospel is good news that Jesus forgives sinners and restores them

If we are going to see people set right, we need to set the gospel of grace before them.

If we do not do this, they are likely to become more entrenched in their sin.

- The same potential to sin is in all of us. Given the same circumstances, we would make the same choices.

We need to show them that Jesus has born the burden of their sin on the cross, and this act means he is free to forgive and restore repentant sinners. We see this in his earthly life.

- After Peter had denied him, Jesus confronted him by asking Peter if he loved him and then set him back on track with the words '**Feed my sheep**' (John 21:17)
- With the woman caught in adultery, Jesus did not need to confront her with her sin. She knew she was a sinner. After her accusers had walked away because they knew they were as guilty as she was, Jesus set her on the right path with the words: '**Go and sin no more**' (John 8:11)

At the heart of all of this is the gospel of God's grace, as expressed in **Galatians 1:3-4**.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

⁴ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age,

according to the will of our God and Father

This is a message that needs to be worked out in our lives every day and applied to our relationships in church life.

- It will look like us bearing one another's burdens in the same way Christ bore our burden.
- It will look like us working hard to see those who have sinned set on the right path again
- We will do this in the knowledge that one day we might need that same help.

Your grace that I cannot explain
Not by my earthly wisdom
The Prince of life, without a stain
Was traded for this sinner

By grace I am redeemed
By grace I am restored
And now I freely walk
Into the arms of Christ my Lord

(Grace – City Alight)