

The Epistle to the Galatians: The Gospel of Grace

Lesson 19: Sowing and Reaping (6:7-10)

“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. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Never has a jalapeno been harvested from a strawberry patch. Never has a housecat been birthed by a giraffe. Never has a helicopter rolled off the assembly line at Chrysler. You reap what you sow. Simple right? It's what we call an absolute principle. “What goes up, will come down.” You can bank on always receiving what you put into something, whether it's your garden, or your marriage, or your children, or your job, or your friendships, or your ministry, or your body, you will always reap what you sow. Sow a steady diet of fast food and you'll reap obesity and a list of health problems. Sow wild spending habits and you'll reap poverty. Abuse your relationships, and you'll find yourself lonely. This is the corruption that verse 8 speaks about when we reap to our own flesh. When we sow the seeds of sin, we will always reap the disaster of destruction. If you are someone who habitually lies to people, you will reap the reputation of being untrustworthy by even those who you've not lied too yet.

Paul begins verse 7 by warning us to **‘not be deceived’**. Sin has a way of clouding our vision. Our sin puts the blinders on our eyes, so that we tend to not see sin in our own lives, and we tend to downplay its significance when we do. Sin also blurs our understanding of God, His righteousness, His justice, and His judgment. To prove this, ask an unsaved friend or family member who admits that there is a God, if they'll go to Heaven one day. People always refer to themselves as good people with insignificant faults. I've spoken to countless people who get upset with God at the thought of being left out of Heaven, as though God's goodness were on trial, rather than their sin. People tend to deceive themselves into thinking that they're on the right path, making the right choices, when they aren't. They think they can plant the seeds of their hearts desire everywhere in the garden of life, and reap eternal life at the end, and they're deceived. **“God is not mocked”** by this. You can't cheat the system and fool Him! God has created the law of sowing and reaping, if you want a tomato, you have to start with a tomato seed...period.

So it is with the matter of eternal life. There is only one way have you sin forgiven, and to ushered into a right relationship with God, and that is through the finished work of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only hope for people, there is no other named by which we must be saved. The deception of the sinful heart is that we can and will be our own savior. If someone rejects the gospel of free grace, the only path remaining is go about proving your own righteousness before God, and that path ends in destruction. But there is another way to sow, **“the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”**

The Christian who is sowing to the Spirit will reap eternal life. We will produce the fruit of the Spirit that Paul just spoke of a few verses earlier. To sow to the Spirit is the same thing as to walk by the Spirit, or to be led by the Spirit, or to be filled with the Spirit. To sow to the Spirit is to have your mind fixated on the God of your salvation throughout your days. His Word is active in our hearts, and on our minds. The trajectory of our lives is for His glory, and for the fame of His name to be spread about the earth. To

sow to the Spirit is to have our lives transformed into the image of Christ, so that we no longer look like we once did, but we look just like Christ.

We shouldn't draw a wrong conclusion from verse this verse, and assume that eternal life is the reward for the work of sowing to the Spirit. Someone could be misled to believe that there are believers who walk by the Spirit who reap eternal life, and there are believers who don't walk by the Spirit, who won't reap eternal life. I suppose someone with no theological training, whose only knowledge of the Bible was Galatians 6:8 might conclude that. But against the backdrop of the rest of scripture, we know that every believer already reaps eternal life because of the what *God* has sown in us. So what is Paul talking about here?

Throughout scripture, when eternal life is referred to, it speaks primarily to quality, not duration. What I mean by that, is that we understand what living eternally means, but the scriptures help us to understand what living eternally in Christ means. For example, the quality of your life changed when you were saved. The moment that the sacrifice of Christ was applied to your account, your eternal life in Christ began. Even though we await our final glorification, we walk with Christ even now. What we deal with a believer on this side of Heaven, is a resident sin nature that dims the light of the glorious relationship with our Father, it robs us of joy in the here and now. So, as we sow to the flesh, the quality of our eternal life will be inhibited. Conversely, as true believers sow to the Spirit, the quality of our eternal life will flourish, and our joy in the Lord will blossom.

John MacArthur writes, *"Because it is external, no sin in a believer's life can separate him from eternal life, but any sin in his life corrupts his reflection and enjoyment of that eternal life. That is why some Christians are among the most miserable, unhappy, and wretched of people. A persistently sinning believers can sometimes be more miserable than an unbeliever, simply because his sin is in constant conflict with an warring against his new nature in Christ. The sinning Christian has a battle raging within him that an unbeliever never experiences. The believer who sows to his own flesh does not lose the Spirit, but he loses the fruit of the Spirit, among which are love, joy, peace, and patience (5:22). David did not pray, 'Restore my salvation to me,' but, 'Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation' (Ps. 51:12)."*¹

Verse 9, **"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."** Allow me to read another motivating word from Charles Spurgeon. Someone who is sowing to the Spirit, is one who spends their days working hard, and doing good. They will be someone who is busy investing their emotion and time into people in the church, even those people who are unstable, immature, and in special need of care and direction. Because of their investment in people, these saints of God will put themselves into stressful situations, they will have difficult conversations, they will cry with those who cry, and mourn with those who mourn. They will put themselves through a list of things that they could have avoided by keeping to themselves, but they will also see their brothers and sisters grow in Christlikeness! These saints will give of their time, their money, and their assets, so they will leave themselves tired, and unable to do other things, but the harvest for their efforts will be sweeter!

But sometimes that doesn't seem to be the case. Sometimes we give to people from all that we have, and we pray fervently for their souls, and with all of our best intentions we see little to no harvest for all of that effort, and the tug on our hearts is to give up. We tend to forget *who* gives the growth. We forget that God is the One orchestrating the symphony. We forget that He calls whom He wishes—

¹ John MacArthur, *Commentary: Galatians* Moody, 1987 p.189

when He wishes. We forget that He can soften the hardest heart. And we forget to be patient as He does all things in His good time.

So we are not to “**grow weary**” of doing good. The term carries the idea of becoming exhausted. To counter growing weary, believers need to heed what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:58, “**Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.**” We need to stand like a rock so that we’re in place when the storms come. But sometimes, we’re not planted firmly in the ground. Sometimes the problem isn’t that we weren’t planted securely and the storm got the best of us. Sometimes the problem is that as selfish and lazy people, we sat ourselves on top of the sand, rather than bury our roots firmly into the ground. Sometimes, people simply hear the word a lot, and deceive themselves into thinking that they’re well-rooted and profitable, when in reality they’re no doer of the Word at all. Remember James 1:22, “**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**”

Christians, you will reap what you sow into this Christian life. So be faithful to walk by the Spirit. Be faithful, and you will produce the fruit of the Spirit. Be faithful, and invest your efforts into others, and in due season, the harvest will come, and we will take great pleasure in it! Recall what we know about the character of Paul, Acts 20:24, “**But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.**” Also throughout 2 Corinthians chapter 4 we read, “**Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God...verses 8-10...We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies...verse 14...knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence.**”

Paul was one who sowed into this life with all that he had. And he reaped the benefits in the *present* and in *eternity*. In the present, Paul reminded the Thessalonians, “**For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.**” (1 Thess. 2:19-20) And at the end of his life, looking back on his work for Christ, Paul wrote to Timothy, “**I have fought the good fight. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.**”

Verse 10, “**So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**” The first word to consider here is the word **opportunity** (*kairos*). The term isn’t used in reference to taking advantage of fleeting moments, so that we just coast through life, and do good to people when situations fall into our lap. *Kairos* has to do with a fixed and distinct period of time. IOW, “So then, while you remain here as a servant of Christ and await glorification, do good to everyone.” This new life that you’ve been born again into *is* your opportunity to do good to everyone. Your eternal life has begun, and will carry on...eternally...but you have a small window, a small fraction of your existence where you can reach the lost and make an impact for Christ.

So we better understand that we are living in our ‘opportunity’ today, and that ‘opportunity’ may be taken from us tomorrow. So what are we to do? Be active! “**Let us do...**” Let’s be active, let’s be

precise, let's be concerned, let's be emotional, let's be fervent, let's be loving and kind and gentle, let's be **Good!** Let us sow seeds into this life we have the privileged opportunity to live! We are to be *agathos* (good) to all people. But we aren't to be *just* generally good to everyone, we're to be particularly good to everyone. We should manifest general goodness to everyone, but we ought to be particularly aimed at seeing them taken care of with the greatest good, meeting their greatest need. So we should work at caring for their personal and temporal needs, that type of goodness is *kalos* goodness. But within the context of sowing and reaping, we need to particularly show the world *agathos* goodness and bring Christ to them.

This world needs Christ, and although the omnipotent God *could* miraculously call them to Christ without human contact, that is not the way that He has designed His Word to spread. He has called us to take the Word to the ends of the world, and to know that He is with us always. So let us do *kalos* good to the world. Let's help them by caring for their needs, and let's help them in the midst of adversity. Let's help them even when they're the ones who are against us, and causing our persecution. And let us also do *agathos* goodness to those same people, and share the gospel to Christ with them. Paul said to Titus in 2:7-8, **"Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us."**

And as important as it is to do good to the world around us, it's especially good, to do good to those who are of the household of faith. As believers in Christ, the more serious that we become at magnifying the glory of Christ with our lives, the more the world will be against us. Let's read the words of Jesus in John 15:18-25. So let us remember that while we have a responsibility to love the world, the have a special responsibility to care for our fellow cast-away brothers and sisters. As our fellow siblings in Christ, they too facing the loss of family, employment, persecution. Every good soldier for Christ has wounds that need tending too. So let's sow a special goodness into our fellow Christians, that we might reap healing and unity together as a family.