

OPENING STORY ON SOWING AND REAPING

So, a chaplain is walking through the ward of a state prison, and he notices an inmate serving a life sentence who is sewing a patch on his jeans with needle and thread. Making conversation with the inmate, the chaplain remarks: “I see you’re sewing.” The inmate looks back with a grim look and replies: “no chaplain, I’m reaping.”

Today our Heavenly Father, through the apostle Paul to the Galatians, gives us one of the classic verses of the Bible: **Galatians 6:7** – “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.” We will look at this profound, eternal principle from a number of angles. And may God give us fresh eyes to see and hearts to receive His message to each of us. Now let’s read this passage, tuning in the practical ways that we can exhibit the fruit of the spirit and serve one another in love as we live out our freedom in Christ.

GALATIANS 6:6-10 *The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will 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 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

VERSE BY VERSE

Galatians 6:6 is one of the bluntest verses of the Bible. Paul teaches that it is the responsibility of the spiritually taught to support the teacher financially. Some commentators feel this verse is somewhat out of context. But I believe that the verse makes perfect sense in the context both of what comes before as well as what comes after. What comes before, is that there are burdens that should be shared and other burdens that should be borne alone by the individual. Paul wants his hearers to know that the support of the spiritual teacher is a “burden” that should be shared by the taught, not borne alone by the teacher.

This principle is well-supported in the Scripture – that the spiritual teacher is to be supported by the spiritually taught.

Note these supporting Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 9:11, 14 *If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13a *But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.*

May I make a personal comment and encouragement that you, the family of Oaks, do this very well. Pastor Tyler and I feel well-loved and esteemed by you as well as sufficiently supported financially. I know that you give your tithes and offerings as unto the Lord, but I also know that a large portion of the gifts given come to your pastors – and this is the way that God has ordered it. I also point out that both Tyler and I are called by the Lord to do the same – so we too give to support the work of the church, for this teaching is for all the family of God, pastors included. We all share in the load.

It is valuable to note that the Greek word for “taught” is the word from which we get “catechize” – the teaching of sound doctrine. And the Greek word for “share” is the word “koineneia” which speaks of fellowshiping together in communion. It is a beautiful word picture that the teacher and taught are to fellowship together as the taught bears the financial burden of the one who teaches and the teacher in

return teaches sound doctrine.

This verse also makes sense in the context of what comes after. Surely the principle of "sowing and reaping" is exemplified as the teacher sows the Word and the taught reap the doctrine. Likewise the taught sow the financial support and the teacher, as well as the givers, reaps the blessing. This is true Biblical "koineneia" as the body shares together.

Galatians 6:7

So let's take a closer look at the classic verse. It begins by saying "do not be deceived." If we look back at the earlier part of this chapter we can see that Paul is greatly concerned for the spiritual well being of his flock:

6:1 "looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted"

6:3 "if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceived himself"

6:4 we must not boast "in regard to another"

In fact, it might well be noted that the entire letter of Galatians is about "do not be deceived." Remember that the Galatians were being "deceived" by the Judaizers who were trying to pull the new Galatian Christians back into a law-based religion. Note these previous concerns of Paul about "being deceived":

1:6 "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you"

3:1 "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you ...?"

3:3 "Are you so foolish ... are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

4:9 "how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless..."

4:11 "I fear for you"

4:19 "I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you"

5:1 "do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery"

5:7 "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?"

5:13 "do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh"

We have said that the theme of Galatians in one word is FREEDOM. But certainly a sub-theme is clearly DO NOT BE DECEIVED. And let's be honest with one another, fellow followers of the Lord – we are so easily deceived! We are easily deceived by our dual adversaries: (1) our SARX (our internal self, not yet yielded to the Holy Spirit) and (2) SATAN (our deadly foe who is ever "seeking someone to devour" – 1 Peter 5:8).

So, the opening phrase of this classic verse in 6:7 is a needed warning: "do not be deceived."

Then we note that we are particularly not to be deceived in this: "God is not mocked." How is it that God would be mocked? – well, by acting as if God's spiritual laws were not in effect. Suppose that I try to throw something into the air, trying to get it to just keep going up. Foolish, yes? For "gravity is not mocked" – meaning that the physical laws of the universe will not stop operating for me. Trying to reverse gravity is "mocking" the physical law. And trying to reverse the principle of "you reap what you sow" is mocking God.

And we are to realize that every time we sow discord, or anger, or rebellion, or sin of any kind we are "mocking God" if we think His law of "you reap what you sow" will not operate this time. You sow corn and it ALWAYS comes up as corn. You sow wheat and it ALWAYS comes up wheat. This is a physical law of our world. Yet there are spiritual laws that are just as consistent and predictable. You sow discord and it will ALWAYS reap discord. You sow anger and it will ALWAYS reap anger. You sow rebellion and it will ALWAYS reap rebellion. Not sometimes – always!

Let's look at a couple of Biblical examples (and there are MANY more):

SOWING AND REAPING – an O.T. & N.T. example

1. Sowing: Jacob deceived father-in-law Laban
Reaping: Laban deceived Jacob by giving him Leah (Genesis 29)
2. Sowing: Paul led in the stoning of Steven
Reaping: Paul was stoned in Lystra of Galatia (Acts 14)

Note that even the great apostle Paul, washed in the blood of the Lamb and forgiven his sins past and present, could not reverse the spiritual law of sowing and reaping

SOWING AND REAPING from Proverbs 3:1-12

<u>Verses</u>	<u>SOW</u>	<u>REAP</u>
1-2	Godly learning	Long, peaceful life
3-4	Kindness & Honesty	Favor
5-6	Trusting God	ease of life
7-8	Humility	Bodily healing
9-10	Tithes & offerings	Plenty overflowing
11-12	Receiving discipline	Correction for life

Galatians 6:8 Verse 7 is the irreversible spiritual principle. Verse 8 is Paul's specific interpretation of it for us: sow the SARX and you will reap the SARX in "corruption" which means things will "fall apart" literally or "disintegrate." This is true in individual lives, in families, in churches and in governments. But the reverse is also true: sow the fruit of the Spirit and you will reap the Spirit in eternal life. This "eternal life" is not so much talking about eternal salvation, but eternal, godly results of your sowing spiritual fruit. This too is true in individual lives, families, churches and governments.

Where you sow love, you will reap back love. Where you sow joy, you will reap back joy. Where you sow peace, you will reap back peace. And so on. Remember, "God is not mocked" – this principle is sewn into the spiritual fabric of our universe, just as certain and predictable as gravity in the physical realm.

Galatians 6:9-10 Now Paul teaches the principle of sowing and reaping in the practical example of sowing "good."

It is delightful to note that the Greek work translated "doing good" literally means "making beautiful." This is a word picture that helps us see what "doing good" does in the spiritual realm – it "makes beautiful" both for the receiver and in the eyes of God.

"Let us not lose heart" and "do not grow weary" remind us that it is easy to get complacent or discouraged in "doing good." We might not immediately see the result or reap the reward. But so is it with sowing seed – it takes time and patience to reap the harvest. But like the Word of God, which when shared will never "return void" (Isaiah 55:11), "doing good" will also never fail to yield the harvest of return and reward if we "do not grow weary." Again – the principle of sowing and reaping is ALWAYS in effect as an unstoppable spiritual principle. Paul reminds us to continually "make beautiful" our world by sowing LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS and SELF-CONTROL.

Verse 10 of chapter 6 is a fitting close to the practical section of Galatians (before the final greetings and challenges, yet to come). The summary of Chapters 5-6 was given in 5:1 in the phrase "keep standing firm" (in our spiritual freedom). The practical working out of this in the serving one another in love by the fruit of the Spirit is beautifully summarized in 6:10 – a verse well worth memorizing and enacting.

Galatians 6:10 *So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

"So then" lets us know that this is Paul's summary statement.

"While we have opportunity" lets us know that we are not expected to "do good" to every person we encounter, but to seize every reasonable opportunity.

"To all people" reminds us that our "making beautiful" is for both inside and outside the faith. We must not become too ingrown, but shine our light for all to see.

"Especially ..." gives us special charge to show special service of love to our brothers and sisters of the faith. Remember our Lord's words that "they shall know us by the love we have for one another." (John 13:35)

A final companion verse on sowing and reaping:

1 Corinthians 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*