

Galatians 6

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[0 : 0 0] together the Word of God found in Galatians chapter 6. We're reading the entire chapter, it's only 18 verses. Paul writing to a church which he was very familiar with, a church in which he spent much time with. One of the earliest letters which Paul wrote.

He actually probably wrote this letter back to the church at Galatia while he was still on his missionary travels. This was not one that he wrote from prison, but rather one that he wrote shortly after he left the church.

He planted the church, he helped grow the church, the birth of the church. He rose up, which was his practice, multiple elders inside the church and left behind a healthy church. And it didn't take long before the enemy crept in and began to disrupt this church. But Paul closes his letter to the church as recorded in Galatians chapter 6. Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each one looking to yourself so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But each one must examine his own work and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone and not in regard to another. For each one will bear his own load. The one who has taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will 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. Let us not lose heart in doing good.

For in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 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. See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

For those who are circumcised do not even keep the law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. But may it never be that I would boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one cause trouble for me for I bear on my body the brand marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for your word and Lord, we thank you for the opportunity we have to hear it and to read it. We pray now, God, as we have heard it and we have seen it. Lord, that it would begin to move with power and purpose into each one of our hearts and minds. We pray that its truth would grip us.

[2 : 5 7] Lord, we pray that the application would move us. And Lord, that it would draw us closer to you and to one another for your glory and your honor and your namesake. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated.

We have been making our way through the book of Galatians and we have seen how Paul has encouraged the church, which he had so much invested in, to stay true to the foundational aspects of the gospel. This was not the book of Romans in which he was writing so that the church would know them. This was rather a letter in which he was writing that the church would return or stay true to them. For the first three chapters, Paul lays out the problem for us in the book of Galatians that Paul had taught them the truth and yet others had come in and began to kind of twist the truth and said, yes, you are saved by grace, but you need to do this, this, and this.

And yes, it is true that Jesus paid it all, but you need to add this, this, and this to it. And it began with a list of rules, a list of do's and don'ts. And Paul saw the danger in this, that it was becoming from more of a Christ-focused salvation to a man-centered work. And Paul began to admonish the church to stay away from that and to flee from that. We know that as the law versus grace, the law with a capital L, the law you find in the Old Testament, because it was the Judaizers who would come in teaching the Jewish law and all of its truth, yes, but trying to apply it to the time of the church age after the cross. And then Paul spends the last three chapters applying this teaching which he has taught them in the first three, that if you are saved by grace and faith alone, and if you are trusting in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and if there is nothing you need to do in response to that, then this is what your life will look like. Last week, we ended the year looking at the struggle of the believer. When we saw the struggle, we find in Galatians 5, the struggle of the flesh versus the Spirit, with a capital S, that is the Holy Spirit, that the believer has within them the very Spirit of God. It is leading them and trying to move them to bear the fruit of the Spirit, the love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, kindness, and self-control. We saw those truths, how the Spirit inside of us desperately wants to bear fruit.

As a matter of fact, Jesus says that if you abide in me, you will bear fruits. It doesn't say you may, it doesn't say you can, it says you will. It says if you stay in me, the Spirit that is inside of you will produce fruit. But we saw the truth of the matter is that there is a struggle because while the Spirit is present in the life of the believer, so is this thing which we call the flesh. And that flesh is also trying to work its works and do its deeds. And rather than the flesh bearing fruit, we saw that the flesh is all about deeds. It does something. And we saw the listing of that. And the struggle for the believer is that they would cast aside the deeds of the flesh and bear the fruit of the Spirit through living and abiding in the Spirit. Paul closes this letter with this final application to the church at Galatia. He is encouraging the church that yes, there is a struggle in your life.

And if we were to end there, we would be in so many places in Testament, in Scripture, where we open up the Bibles and we tend to get discouraged. And this is why you have to have an ongoing Bible reading.

[6 : 09] Because you can open up the Scripture. And if you were to read the Old Testament, and if you were to stop in the book of Malachi, and you were to see in the book of Malachi that God says, I reject your offerings. I reject these things you're doing. Your worship is displeasing to me. I wish that you would just shut the doors of the church because I don't like what you're doing. We would have the tendency to be discouraged because God says, I don't even like how my own people worship me. But if we were to stop in the book of Malachi, we would stop on a somber moment and we would stop being upset and wondering what God is going to do. But praise be to God that we don't have to stop in Malachi because we can turn the page to Matthew. And we can see the birth and genealogy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That while God was displeased with the worship of His people, He made an avenue for His people to worship Him. And we get to see these things and we get to see the truth of them. The Scripture does not leave us in discouragement. Rather, the Scripture takes us through the valley of discouragement so that it can bring us to the mountaintop of joy and the mountaintop of rejoicing. And here Paul closes his letter as he does most of them with the encouragement that he's offering to the believers. And I want you to see this morning the keys to the believers' victory in spite of the struggle they possess.

So we're going to see three keys to the believers' victory. And I want to go ahead and tell you, some of us, most of us are all home folk, as we like to say. We're here. Some of you are not. I'm so glad that you're here. But I want to go ahead and reiterate what we have seen throughout Scripture is that every promise God gives us in the New Testament is directly connected to a New Testament church. Every promise that God gives us in the New Testament is directly connected to the church.

I am a believer. I am a believer full of conviction for the power and the purpose of the church. And I don't mean the church, capital C, the universal church. I believe in the universal church.

I believe, and this may be shocking to you, that there are members of the universal church who are not Southern Baptists. I believe there are members of the universal church found across all denominational boundaries because God is not a God of denominations. I believe when I sit in heaven and I worship in glory, I may be worshiping with someone with a more of a Pentecostal spirit than me. I believe, at least I hope so, I believe that when we're in glory, we may be surprised by the universality of the church, how we are so diverse. I believe in the universal church, and I believe it with all of my being that God is calling a people of every tribe, of every tongue, and every nation to himself.

[8 : 40] They look starkly different. They are sporadic in their appearance, and they behave, and they even worship differently. I remember reading a book written by Pastor J.D. Greer, who pastors Summit Life Church in Raleigh, Durham, North Carolina, president of the Southern Baptist Convention. And he said, I was preaching in a church, and a pastor in my church, and this church is full of college people.

And he said, and there was a distinct ethnic group of individuals that were there from the Asian countries, and they were sitting on the front row. And he said, I remember when they first came, he said, during our worship service, they were jumping up and down. They were excited. They were worshiping.

They sat on the front, so they didn't care what anybody thought about them. He said, I mean, they were carried away. He said, I was so excited watching them. He said, then I stood up to preach. He said, when I stood up to preach, they never said amen. They never said a word. They sat so solemn, and I thought to myself, man, I must be a terrible preacher. He said, they were excited about the worship, and they didn't move. They were like stone statues during the preaching. He said, so I asked them after service. He said, this went on for a couple of weeks. I had to ask them, am I that bad? I don't know if you've ever heard J.D. Greer. I love J.D. Greer. I've had the privilege of hearing him preach in person a number of times.

If you've never heard it, you need to listen. He is great. He's really good. He may, he appeals to the college age, okay? So just be careful. If you're of the older church age and you want to listen to him, he may say things that kind of offend you every now and then, but he has a college age full of church. He's always doctrinally sound. But anyway, he asked them, and they said, J.D., you don't understand. In our culture, worship is everything, but we have such a great respect for the word that we dare not say a thing when the word is being read and being expounded.

So really what they were showing was a reverence for the word rather than not a displeasure for his preaching. But what we see is the diversity of people that God has put in his body. So I believe in the universal church. With that being said, I believe, now listen to me, this is one of the convictions I have. And you say, well, sure you have it because you're a pastor. No, I had this conviction before I became a pastor. And this is probably one of the reasons why God called me to be a pastor because he began to stir these convictions in me. I believe that to be a full functioning member of the universal church, you also ought to be connected to a local church.

[10:57] I believe that with all of my heart, my soul, and my being. Because the universal church is something that is invisible and the local church is something that is very visible. And I am thankful that I am not married to an invisible bride. I'm so thankful for that. I am married, and she gets so upset at me when I say this. And I am so thankful that my wife is not invisible, but rather she is visible. And the church is the bride of Christ, and we ought to have fellowship with her. So I tell you that because what you're going to see in these keys to the believer's victory, they're all found within the confines of a local church. Paul is writing to the church at Galatia, and he wants to tell you, you're in a struggle. Individually, personally, every believer has this struggle going on. I have the power of the Spirit inside of me, and I have the temptations of the flesh going on. I have the flesh pulling me to do these deeds, and then the Spirit wants to bear these fruit. And you're saying, how can I do this? Paul has this same wrestle in Romans chapter 7. It says, oh, this wicked man that I am, who will deliver me from such a desperate state of being? But he says, praise be to Christ, Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, who has more than conquered all these things. We see this, but where do we find this power? Where do we find this ability to live victoriously in the life he's called us to? This is a great conclusion to the message, but it's also a great start to the new year.

We see, number one, that there is the help that sustains us. There's the help that sustains us. We read in this passage what is called to, or what is often referred to as one of the great one another's in passage. The New Testament gives us over 100 one another's. I used to have a list, and I'm sure I do somewhere in my office, of all of the one another's that we have in the New Testament. And it is the one another's that we are to do for one another, that the believer is to do for another believer. And there is a listing of over 100 one another's in the New Testament alone of how the believer is to help one another. Now, my friend, the reason this is so important is because you cannot one another one another apart from being together with one another, which is what we call the church, right? So we cannot be that because most of the times, I mean, let's just be honest. You say, well, I'm married to a believer and they can support me.

Right. That is a great thing. But when things are going bad in your house, both one another's are going bad, right? So we need to lean on someone else. But we see this passage. We see the help that sustains us. Paul writing to the church says, brethren, that word, by the way, lets you know he's writing to believers because he doesn't refer to everyone in the world as brethren. He is writing to a Gentile church. So you know, he's not referring to brethren according to birth through the Jewish nation. He is writing to believers. So this is a believer issue. Pay attention to us, believers, even. Now, you know, I've read this passage, I don't know how many times this week, and it wasn't until this morning that I read it afresh that I saw the word even there in the New American Standard. I don't know why that just stood out to me, but I was like, wow, it says even.

Because I would always read it as we most do or familiar with scriptures. Brethren, if anyone is caught in a trespass, it doesn't say that. New American Standard says, brethren, even if. So this is like the extent part. If something bad happens and you hear something, look at what it says. Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass. Oh, this is powerful.

Listen to this. This is a church issue. And I love how he says this. Brethren, he's talked about the deeds of the flesh. I don't need to go back and read the deeds of the flesh, but the deeds of the flesh, some of them were pretty ugly, right? Some of them would be things we're like, I can't believe they did that. We were reading this morning, and I got to share this is so good. We're reading through the book of Genesis in our reading in Genesis chapter five, because it's January 5th, and you have all those being born. And then you reach that man, Maheliel, who had his first son at the age of 65. And Carrie said, can you imagine everybody else going, oh, I can't believe it's 65.

[14:36] He's so young. Why? Because other people were having their kids at 130 or 180. Like, that boy can't even drive, and he's already having kids. He's 65 years old. People were gossiping. People were talking.

Maheliel, he's going to start at young. What is he doing? And this is kind of the concept we get here. People are looking at you. Paul says, brethren, even if anyone among you is caught in any trespass.

He doesn't say certain sins, the ones we can talk about. He says, any sin. He says, brethren, if you have a church member who does anything. Oh, wait a minute. Now the church gets called to attention because he is writing to the church and says, any of the deeds of the flesh which may be represented in that list. You think of those sins, the sins that we would think of like unspeakable sins, the things we wouldn't talk about. Paul says, this is a church issue, and this is why you're in the church. Because if any one of us falls, to be caught, by the way, means to be caught off guard or to trip and stumble into a sin. This does not say if anyone among you is habitually practicing any of these sins. That's not what it says. If we want to cover how the church should respond to that, we have to turn to Matthew 18. And some of us will get very uncomfortable because Matthew 18 is the second mentioning of the church, and it deals with church discipline. And that means when someone is habitually sinning, the church disciplines them in a loving manner for the purpose of restoration.

It's never for the purpose of excommunication. It's for the purpose of restoration. That means the church is to call them back to themselves and restore them, to have such a love for them and a care for them. If you see your children doing something habitually that you know is going to hurt them, you discipline them for the purpose of loving them, right? Not because you disloved them, but that's what the habitual practice is. But Paul here, right into the church, says, if anyone, which opens it up to everyone, right? It could be any of us, falls into or is caught off guard because there is an enemy prowling around like a roaring lion, sinking whom he may destroy and devour, if any of us were to fall in any sin, any trespass. That means nothing's off limits.

This is a good place to be honest because this is the first year. How many times really do we have what we call off-limits sins in the church? We're not going to talk about that. We're not going to confess that. We're not going to say, you know what, I messed up and I did that. Paul says that's not what the church is about because why? Listen, if you fall into any sin, the very first place you should go is the church. Why? Because you who are spiritual, which means that some of us in the church ought to be spiritual. The church is always comprised of a multitude of people that we are spiritual.

[17:15] Some of us are on a spiritual high. Some of us are in a spiritual low. God is so good in that. You who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness. Each one looking to yourself so that you too will not be tempted. Let me just give you the weight of this verse. Okay, let me just give you the weight of this verse. And I'm not going to fill in the blank for you, but say we're sitting here and someone steps up and they confess to falling into whatever the most hideous sin you can imagine right now. Okay, you, you, some of us, that sin would be one thing. Some of us, it'd be another. Maybe it's the most hideous sin you could ever think of. Someone says, you know what? I, you know, Satan got a hold of me this week. I filed a foothold for Satan in my life and I stumbled and I tripped and I did this. Paul says the spiritual person will go to them not in a spirit of judgmentality or judging or not in a spirit of condemnation, but in a spirit of gentleness and restore them to the fellowship of the church, looking out for them own selves, the spiritual person, because the spiritual person knows if I don't watch out, the same thing's going to happen to me.

Now all of a sudden the church begins to look like the church because rather than going, see, I would never do that. That would never happen to me. And since that won't ever happen to me, I can talk about them because it happened to them. That's not spirit. The spirit says, I need to go love that person because they did something that I very easily could do.

And I could fall and I could stumble just like them. And if I don't watch out, what happened to them will happen to me. And if I'm not careful, what's going on in their life is going to be going on in my life. And since I know that it could happen to me, then I'm going to go love on that person in a gentle manner and call them back and pull them back. And I'm going to restore them and I'm going to hold them up and I'm going to uplift them and I'm going to support them.

And I am going to be the help that sustains them. Because look at what it says, bear one another's burdens and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. Here's a one another, bear one another's burdens. This tells us here that sometime in your life, this is why God has commanded us to be the church together. Sometime in your life, there is going to be a burden in your life that is too great for you to carry alone. There is too big. There is something that has caused you to trip up. There is something that is causing you to fall. There is something that is causing you to be hindered in your spiritual walk and you cannot carry it alone.

Proverbs 18, I think it's verse one who says that is a fool who isolates himself and thinks he can do everything on his own. You want to know why I know what that verse is? It's because I had a fellow pastor tell me that verse about me. I used to separate myself so much from so many people and I would always get in my little corner and I loved being in the pastor's office and I loved sitting there and I loved reading and I had such a distrust for other, not other pastors, but for other people because I really, just the way my spirit is, I love being around people but I have a hard time giving myself to people and he looked at me and he said, brother, I want to tell you something, Proverbs 18 calls you a fool and he was absolutely right because I isolated myself and I would separate myself and I would try to carry my own loads and I'd try to carry my own burdens and friend, it's not me being judgmental, it's not me, it's just me being biblical. There are times in our lives when we are tripped up because the burden we're trying to carry is too much and we can't do it and we keep stumbling and we keep falling and what we are called as a church to do is to be those people who in gentleness, in humility, tell them, you know what, what you're trying to carry is too much,

[20 : 38] I want to come underneath you and I want to help you bear this, it's bear one another's burdens, thereby fulfill the law of Christ for if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself, this is judgmental towards us, Paul says, if I'm sitting in church and I think I have it all together and I think this could never happen to me and I think I'm really thinking something about myself, guess what, I'm deceiving myself, I'm really nothing.

How do we maintain our humility as we be reminded of this, if anyone thinks he is something, he is nothing, he deceives himself but each must examine his own work, that means instead of casting a judgmental eye towards those who fall, look to our own selves and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone and not in regard to one another, that does not mean that you brag about who you are because this is what I have found, when I sit down and honestly evaluate myself, you know what I find?

Sometimes I find a whole lot more bad than I find good but in the midst of all that bad, I find a Savior who loves me and I have reason to boast in the Savior who loves me and I have reason to boast in the Savior who died for me and I have reason to boast in the Spirit who resides in me and I don't have reason to boast in me, says in verse 5, for each will bear his own load.

You say, wait a minute, the scripture contradicts itself here. He says we are to bear one another's burdens but each is to bear his own load and I've told you this before, there are two different words there, to bear one another's burdens, that is a boulder that is too big to carry a load. To bear your own load means you have your own lunch sack and you're not asking me to carry your lunch sack. I'm going to take care of what I can take care of but I'm going to help you take care of what you can't take care of because sometime or another my load's going to be too busy, too heavy. So this is the biblical command for the church. There ought to be in two types of people walking to the building this morning. I want you to pay attention to me, only two types of people.

Only two types of people should have come into the building this morning, myself included. If we are a born again believer in Jesus Christ, one, we either walked in here with a burden attached to us so heavy that we could not carry it on our own and we're looking for someone else to help us carry it or two, we walked in here with our lunch sack looking for someone with a burden too heavy to carry and we're going to carry it for them. We either came in here looking for someone to help us or we came in here looking to help someone. That's the only two types of people that come into the church because the building is just a building but it's full of the church which is the help that sustains us. If we want the church to be healthy and we want believers to live victoriously and we want them to live in the joy of the Savior and we want them to overcome the temptations of the flesh, we will live in such a manner that either I entered the building looking for one of you to help me carry a burden or number two, I entered into the building looking for you to help you carry your burden. I didn't come here just so I could hear a message and go home. I came here to fulfill the law of Christ which means I want to bear somebody's burden so this is my prayer and my aim is before I leave today I hope that I'm carrying somebody's burden and I hope that each one of us that if a burden's too heavy you'll bring that to someone and you'll look at somebody beside you, a brother or sister in Christ beside you and you'll be honest. You know what, last week we had a great week.

[23 : 44] We had, there's two different opportunities last week. People testified to me and it allowed the church to carry a burden with them. That is exciting. Someone finally broke through and said, you know what, I can't do it. I need the church's help and I want to, that's awesome. That's what it's supposed to be about. So my prayer is that this morning either one, you came looking for someone whose burden you could carry or two, you came looking for someone to help you carry your burden because this is the help that sustains us. Number two, we see that the believer has victory because of the hope that moves us.

It is one thing to live a sustained life, it's a whole other thing to live a moving life. We see here the hope that moves us and Paul transitions in verse six. The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. This is a really hard passage for pastors to preach on because basically it speaks of the pastor's responsibility and the church's responsibility. I'm not going to take a lot of time to expound upon it because it's very clear there. The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. I will say this, this church does a wonderful job of sharing things with the one who teaches. I'm just going to say that and proclaim that and just say that's not a problem where we have to struggle there. It is just a beautiful picture. Number seven, or verse seven, do not be deceived. God is not mocked for whatever man sows, this he will also reap.

Here Paul begins to transition from the help we have to the hope we have. And he bases his hope on one of these unchangeable laws of nature that God has laid out, that whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. You do not sow a corn seed and hope to pick green beans later.

That's just not how it happens, right? If that's what happens, something messed up along the road. You don't plant a peach tree and hope to go get apples from it. These things are laws of nature.

We see it in the book of Genesis that every tree of the field and every tree of the earth should bear seed after its own kind, right? So that it could reproduce after its own kind. We see this law given to us. And here's the hope we have. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. If all I care about is myself, if all I care about is my flesh, and all I want to please is my flesh, then the Bible is very clear and says the only thing I can expect to reap from the flesh is corruption. Because chapter 5 tells us the deeds of the flesh. So I will only get what I'm sowing.

[26 : 03] If everything in my life has to do with me and has to do with my flesh and has to do with pleasing me, making sure I'm happy, making sure I'm comfortable, making sure that everything I want is there, if it's all about me, if it's me, me, me, me, me, then all I am going to get is me, me, me, me, me.

And the problem is, is that the me I get is never good. It's corruption. That's the issue here. And we see here, there's a hope though. I want you to stay with me. It says in verse 8, the second part, but the one who sows to the Spirit, capital S, will from the Spirit reap eternal life. If all I take care of is myself, I'm going to get corruption. But if I begin to sow to the Spirit, I reap eternal life. Well, how am I going to do that?

How am I going to sow to the Spirit? Paul, please let me know. He does in verse 9. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. Here it is. This is the hope that moves us. Let us not lose heart in doing good. So very clearly, Paul is telling us that the way to sow to the Spirit is to continue to do the good deeds of the Spirit, to do what God has called us to do. He tells a church in another letter, he says, let us look for opportunities to do good. We must learn to do good. We must seek to do good. So he says, let us not lose heart in doing good. This is the physical things we do, along with the spiritual. For in due time, the hope we have is we will reap if we do not grow weary. My friend, I want to go ahead and just be honest with you. Giving of yourself, continuously giving of yourself, continuously giving of yourself for others wears you out. Right? There's this thing called compassion fatigue that if you're constantly, and some of you have experienced it, if you're constantly caring for someone else and you're constantly giving yourself, it is a tiresome, wearisome thing. And it's something that is actual, you know, is actuality there. And it is so hard. Some of you have walked through that. And I pray for you as you walk through that, because it is a very difficult thing. In the church life, when we continuously give of ourselves as a church body, and we're continually looking to do good, it is a tiresome thing. This is a thing that as a pastor I wrestle with is, do I want to wear the church out? Well, I don't want to wear the church out, but I want the church to see the hope it has. If we do not lose heart and grow weary, we will reap eternal blessings. He says, if you sow to the Spirit, then you will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

While so many churches fail, it's because they start out doing good. They get tired of doing good, and they stop right before the harvest comes in. You can't stop right before the harvest. One of the hardest things we've ever found, and we've actually had to adjust our planting schedules. When we put out a garden, Southern Baptist Convention is always the second week in June. If you plant your garden, at the time you're supposed to technically plant your garden, our harvest was always coming in when we were gone for a week at the Southern Baptist Convention. It's always so discouraging, because we would have this bumper crops of everything coming in, and we'd have to just either one, leave it, or two, have someone else come pick it. I wanted the fruit from the garden, right? I wanted the vegetables. I wanted all that stuff. So we began to change when we plant, so that it comes in when we get back. That may mean we have to water a little bit, but that's just how it works. You can't just stop short of the harvest. We just did a lot of work for nothing. But the Bible says, if we do not lose heart, we do not grow weary, we continue to do good. A harvest is coming. This is the hope.

This is the hope we have. So it says in verse 10, so then while we have opportunity, friend, listen to me, we do not, church, listen to me, we will not always have the opportunity to do good.

[29 : 30] There are some things we don't get to do in glory. There are some things we do not get to do in glory. I will never preach another message once I enter glory, because who am I going to tell about Jesus when he's standing there? I can't tell you, I'm not going to say, you know what Paul really meant was, I can't, when Paul was right beside me. I can't do that. There's some things I can't do in glory, but there's some things the church can't do in glory. We can't love a lost and dying world, because there is no lost and dying world in glory. We cannot feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give a drink of water to the thirsty, because whoever thirsts, let him come, let him drink from the fountain of life freely, let him take from the tree of life. All those things are there. We, it'll be closed in the righteous deeds of the saints. We cannot, there's some things we cannot do in glory. We cannot do good in glory because the one who is good will be there and all good will be there.

So we see that while we have opportunity, he says, let us do good to all people. Just as it could be any sin, it must be all people. We cannot be discerning, well, I don't know about that person, or I don't know, let us do good to all people. And I know this verse ends with a very high command for the church, especially, it says, especially to those who are of the household of the faith. When Paul was writing this church, when you became a member of the church, especially in the regions of Galatia, you were excommunicated from your family, you were turning your back on the idolatrous worship of that region. You were being cut out from commerce, you were being cut out from society. The Jewish people would be separated from one another. Nobody would do anything for you. So inside the household of the church, there was great need. And Paul says, look out for one another. This is to bear your burdens. Even today, the church still needs to focus on itself, but it does not need to focus solely on itself. Do good to all people, and especially to those of the household of faith. If there is a need within the church, that person ought to find that need met, how? By the church. So find that need being met by the church. And we ought to not lose heart.

Why? Because there is a reward coming. Here's the hope we have. The hope is that the Spirit will give us a reward of eternal life. Now, third and finally, we don't only see the hope that sustains us, the hope that moves us. Third and finally, we see the hand that guides us. The hand that guides us. Paul has been dictating this letter to a scribe. He's been telling him what to write. Being moved to the Lord, he tells the scribe what to write, and the scribe is writing it. In verse 11, Paul says, give me the pen.

I'm going to write this last part. Paul's common practice was to close his letters with his own handwriting. He said, you know, I'm not going to tell you this. I want them to pay attention to this, so I'm going to write this myself. So in verse 11, he says, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hands. Some see in this that what Paul had was a disease of the eyes, so his writing was really big. Could be. Others see this in that Paul was writing in all caps, bold print.

He wanted them to pay attention to this. In either way, the writing was distinct. It was different. If Paul wrote big because he couldn't see, or if he wrote big because he wanted them to pay attention, it gets the same point across. Paul means what he's about to write, and he's going to talk to us about the hand that guides us, which ensures the believer's victory. He says, those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised. We see, first of all, that some are guided by the hand of popularity. Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh, they want to be popular. They want the critics to like them. They want everyone to love them.

[33 : 09] They want everyone to care about them. They want everyone to applaud them. He said, these people who are guided by the hand of popularity are trying to compel you to be circumcised because it makes them more popular if they have more people being circumcised. And this is the hand of popularity.

He says, but that's not us. He says, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. He says, some people are guided by the hand of self-preservation, which means I'm not going to do anything that's going to cause me any pain, discomfort, or inconvenience. I'm not going to follow a hand that will ever cause me to go somewhere that I do not want to go or will maybe inconvenience me or cause me any discomfort or cause me any pain. You would be surprised how many people today allow the hand of self-preservation to guide them. Because if it ever comes up that it may be inconvenient or it may cause a little discomfort or it may cause a little pain, they're like, well, wait a minute, I can't go there. They're guided by the hand of self-preservation. Paul says, but that's not us. That's not what I'm about. I want to see the hand that guides us. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. Paul says, all they're trying to do is brag. They're guided by the hand of self-exaltation.

They want everyone to know how good they are, but Paul says, that's not us. Look at what it says. Verse 14, here it is, the hand that guides us. But may it never be that I would boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world, for neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God. From now on, let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Paul says, the hand that guides the believer, the hand that guides the believers ensures that victory is a nail-pierced hand. He says, I'm following the hand of a crucified, risen Savior. I'm following the hand that held onto a nail onto a cross that was despised. Some of us have crossed as jewelry, some of us have crossed on our vehicles or crosses in our homes and crosses in our churches, and I'm not against it. It's a reminder. But I want you to understand that it was almost unheard of to even publicly speak of the cross in the days of Paul, because the cross was such a symbol of shame and suffering. It was such a symbol of dishonor and disrepute. Paul says, the thing I'm going to boast in is the thing the world hates, and that is the cross. The thing that I'm going to hold to and the thing that I'm going to follow is the hand that held onto that cross. He says, I'm not following man's pleasure. I'm not following self-preservation. I'm not following my own popularity. I'm following the hand of the one who is crucified and is risen for me. He says, I'm following my Lord and Savior,

Jesus Christ. Over and over again, he reminds us in this passage that the hand that guides us is not the hand of the world. It is not the hand of convenience, but rather it is a hand of the Savior who died for us. And he has already overcome death, hell, and the grave. And if he's overcome those, then surely he can help us overcome ourselves, help us overcome our personal struggles, and help us to live victoriously for him. He says, I would not boast in anything except for the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because it's not who I am or what I do. It's the fact that I am made new to the price he paid. And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God. Now, how can you argue with Paul? Look at verse 17. From now on, let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand marks of Jesus. He said, I've been branded for Jesus. I've been beaten. I've been shipwrecked, left dead. People have stoned me. All these things. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen. Paul says, I know it's a struggle, and I know it's a battle. You have the church there. You have the help that sustains you. That's the one another's. You have the hope that moves you. That's the fact that if you continue to persevere and you go forward, then the spirit will, in due time, bring forth a bountiful harvest.

[37 : 21] But more importantly than all these, Paul says in all caps, there is the hand of the Savior who guides you for his glory and his glory alone. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you so much for this day. God, I give you so much thanksgiving for allowing us to take the opportunity to look at your word. I pray that the truth of this word would grip our hearts and change our minds. We ask it all in the sweet name of Jesus. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[40 : 11] Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.