

Sunday Sermon: July 28, 2019

Sermon Text: Galatians 6:1-10, 14-16

Sermon Theme: Don't Miss the Chance to do Good!

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, ⁵ for each one should carry his own load.

⁶ Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

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. ¹⁵ Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. ¹⁶ Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

Good works is not a phrase that Lutherans use very often. As part of our reformation heritage, we reject any teaching that says that we earn or deserve our salvation by our own works. The Bible teaches these same things. Ephesians 2:8,9 says, “ **It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works so that no one can boast.**” When Jesus was speaking with Mary and Martha near the tomb of Lazarus, he said this, “**I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.**”

We don't use the phrase, good works, because it has been taken and twisted by other church bodies as a way to earn salvation. When good works is taught it robs the sinner of the hope and comfort that God wants us to have,

On the other hand the true teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, without works, gives the sinner the hope and comfort that they are looking for because their salvation is not based upon something they have done. Rather, it is based upon what Jesus has already done in winning their salvation and what he alone gives in that forgiveness. It is Christ who has been more than good, he has satisfied God's level of perfect for us. It is Christ who earned salvation for us. It is Christ who won salvation and gives us that victory freely and fully now and forever.

While good works cannot save us, they are still a part of our life of faith. Martin Luther said, “We are saved by faith alone, but faith is never alone.” The Apostle Paul says puts our faith and life together when he wrote his letters to the early churches teaching these new Christians what a God-pleasing life was like. “**Live a life worthy of the calling you have received.**” “**You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off the old self, which is corrupted by its deceitful desires and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**”

In short, good works are important, they just don't save. They do not cause our salvation, but they are a response of thanks to what Jesus has already given to us. Good works are the way that we say thank you in this because we know Jesus has given us forgiveness and eternal life.

This morning, the Apostle Paul has more to say about good works. He tells us to Never Miss a Chance to do Good.

Paul is a master of the illustration. Often, when he wants to emphasize a thought, or a point, he uses an illustration to bring that point home. If we look for the illustration in our sermon text, we see that the illustration in verses 7-9 really bring home Paul's point about doing good. ⁷ **Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.** ⁸ **The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.**

Paul's illustration is a truism. A truism is something that is usually true under normal circumstances. Under normal circumstances a man reaps what he sows. In the agricultural arena, the man who sows his seed

carefully on good ground and then tends that ground, will usually reap a better harvest than a man who sows badly on bad ground and doesn't tend it at all.

In our daily life that also tends to be true. We reap what we sow. In general, if we are nice to people, they are nice back to us. If we are rude and mean to others, they will be mean and rude to us.

A man reaps what he sows, also helps us understand the spiritual point that Paul is making about doing good. In general, if our life is lived to please sinful cravings like sex, money, alcohol, or ego we will not reap the blessings of heaven, because our hearts will not be focused on the Savior who has given that heaven to us.

On the other hand, with our eyes of faith firmly on our Savior, actions will also flow from that faith. These actions will be the God-pleasing actions of love. This is the good that flows from faith that Paul is talking about when he says, **“⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. “**

Paul lists a number of ways that Christians can do good to others. The first is in verse 1, **Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.**

The Apostle Paul, inspired by God, tells us not to miss a chance to do good for those who are caught in sin. He tells us that we can and should do good by speaking with them about the sin they are caught in in order to lead them to repentance. This one might catch you off guard. One of the things that society teaches us is that we can't and shouldn't point out sin because judging someone is bad.

Let's look at all that Paul said again. **Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.**

Speaking with someone about a sin has never been easy. The prophets of the Old Testament were thrown into prison and killed. John the Baptist was beheaded. People turned away from Jesus. Many have lost friends and family because they are trying to lead them to repentance.

Paul's words show us not only to do good, but also to be loving as we do it. He tells us to gently restore someone. He doesn't want us to come in the spirit of the Pharisees who were pointing out sins because they were full of themselves and conceited. He doesn't want us to wave an abortion sign in the face of a young woman who is scared and confused, is that gently restoring them? If we have some statement about Adam and Eve and not Adam and Steve is that gently leading someone to repentance? If we tell someone that they are going to straight to hell because they are caught in sin, is that loving?

He does want us to confront the sin with our hearts are in the right place. So that we can go to someone to speak with them about their sin because we sincerely want them to see their sin and repent of it. To restore them to the right relationship with their God because we love them and we want to see them in heaven.

Paul tells us not to miss a chance to do good by carrying others burdens. As we live this life, we might need to empathize and show love to those who are lost in sin. We may need to lend a helping hand to someone who does not yet understand that they are lost in sin. We can let our faith shine, by doing good, showing love, even carrying a burden until we have the opportunity to talk about Jesus.

Paul tells us not to miss a chance to do good to those who bring us the Word of God. Don't let the devil tempt you to blow the 10% that you don't like out of proportion or to light a fire when it isn't needed. Paul asks us to do the right thing. Provide for the bringers of the Gospel so that they have the same general lifestyle that you enjoy. Share with him your gifts, even your money, so that he can devote himself to bringing the Word to you.

Paul tells us not to miss a chance to do good especially to those who belong to the family of believers. This should go without saying, but it's often forgotten. When was the last time the devil tempted you to think, speak or even do evil against one of your own family of believers? The devil works hard to try to have overlook those who share the same worship space or Bible Study table. We often don't think that the devil is trying to drive wedges and encourage divisiveness so that the Word of God is destroyed. But he does. Sometimes we need to be reminded to do good to those who share our faith. To overlook things, to understand issues, and yes, even to forgive when it is necessary.

Paul tells us to not miss a chance by becoming weary of doing good. It is so easy to become weary and to forget to do the good that God wants us to do. It is so easy to turn a blind eye to a sin in our family, friends

or neighbors. It is so easy to harbor resentment and anger towards our leaders, it is so easy to take our church family for granted. Paul says don't. Don't miss a chance to put your faith and thanks to Jesus into action,

Paul closes this section with the reminder that our faith is not built on works, but on the work of Jesus. It is Jesus who has forgiven us, Jesus who saves us, and Jesus who gives us the reason to go good. Paul reminds us that if our eyes of faith are not focused on Jesus, we will not do the good we are supposed to.

Doing good will not get us one step closer to heaven, however doing good is what Christians do. May God bless us with hearts that are filled with love for Jesus, that we never miss a chance to do good to others.