

If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab them. If you don't have a Bible, don't own a Bible, there should be a hardback black one somewhere around you. If you literally don't own a Bible, that's our gift to you. Feel free to take that with you. My plan...it's *mine*, not the Lord's; hopefully we're lined up on this...is to finish our study of the book of Galatians next weekend. We'll do about four or five verses today, and then next week we will land the plane on this great study out of the book of Galatians.

If you're a guest with us, I'm going to very, very, very quickly catch you up on what we've been learning since February. I'm going to do that in about (counting this awkward introduction into doing that) six minutes. Here's what we've done. The book of Galatians is a full-scale assault on perversions of the gospel. The book of Galatians, the letter to the churches in Galatia, set out clearly that this is what the gospel is.

The gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of Jesus Christ, coming, living, dying, and being resurrected, is that he has done for us what we were never going to be able to do for ourselves. The good news of the gospel isn't that you've kind of figured out morally how to behave. So that bum you were in college, you're not that guy anymore. You're your new adult guy, and you're going to put Jesus' name on that. That's not the gospel at all. The gospel of Jesus Christ is that God has imputed to you in Jesus Christ a righteousness that you were never going to be able to earn, never going to be able to get to.

So for all of your striving and for all of your pursuit of moral perfection, you are going to always fall short of the glory of God. So God intervenes, and he provides for you a righteousness that is greater than any righteousness you could ever get on your own. That's the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Then the cross of Jesus Christ is God absorbing his wrath toward you because of your rebellion. So the reason the gospel is called *the gospel* (that literally translates, the good news) is because in Jesus Christ, we are viewed as spotless, blameless, and perfect in his sight.

Here's the catch: it's not because of *anything* we've done. It all is owing completely to Christ and to God's plan to redeem and restore us through Jesus Christ. So our celebration today is not us. It's not that we used to be *this* and now we're *this*. It's not that we were hooked on *this* and now we're not. It's not that we had this bad moment and now we don't. Our celebration is simply that our God counts us as righteous and doesn't only forgive us, but here's the thing that's even crazier... He likes us. I mean, you might giggle, but I have found that piece to be the hardest piece for most people to believe.

A lot of people go, *Oh yeah, he forgives me. Absolutely. That's what God does.* God forgives, but if you really dig down, most people have a hard time imagining God actually likes them. "I did that Jesus thing, so I have to put with you until I get you to heaven." He actually likes you. All right? That's the gospel. That's the good news, but what happens when that good news goes out is kind of these slippery slopes emerge.

So if you're at kind of the pinnacle, the summit of God's redeeming plan in the gospel, resting in Christ, resting in that righteousness, resting in that belief that your sins have been atoned for and you are delighted in by the God of the universe, you have a tendency... All of us have tendencies to kind of slide down one side of the mountain. So the first error a lot of people fall into...and if you have a long background in church, predominantly this is you...is the error of legalism. It's a gospel that is no gospel at all. It's what happens when we attempt to help God save us.

So yes, Jesus Christ. Yes, his cross. Yes, that imputed righteousness. But I have this list of things I want to do better so I feel better about me. That's legalism. It's an outside/in type of operation that is no gospel at all. It's not good news. In fact, the argument out of the book of Galatians is that if you are attempting to earn the favor of God with your behavior, then you are enslaving yourself, and you'll never walk in true freedom.

The other error is license. So license is just the belief you can do whatever you want, and in the end, God will forgive you because that's what God does. He forgives. *So I'll do whatever I want, say whatever I want, go wherever I want because in the end, I'm getting to heaven because I'm better than my neighbor Bill.* It's license. *I'll do what I want. I'm my own authority.* I want to lovingly point out that the thing Galatians has pointed out is you make, if I can be straight with you (Happy Father's Day), is you make a crummy, crummy, crummy god. You just do. You make an awful god.

Some of you in here, I like you. I like hanging out with you. I like having dinner with you. I like getting a drink with you really quickly. I am never in any of that going, "Do you know what? I was just thinking. I wish you were God. Instead of God, I wish *you* were God. I mean, you are just so *lights out*. I just feel like you would nail it." No. The more I get to know you and the more you would get to know me, the more we would all be grateful that ultimately we're not sovereign. That doesn't stop many of us from operating as though we are our own gods, right?

I know better than God. I know how this should work. When it comes to marriage, when it comes to sex, when it comes to (you insert whatever topic you want to insert), I know more. I know what the Bible says, but I don't think the Bible is speaking to me when it says that. I think that's cultural. I think that's

something else that has no bearing on me. That is a declaration of rebellion against the Most High, and it is a decree in your heart that you think you're a better god than God. You're not. All you have is history that evidences that you make a crummy god. That doesn't stop you from worshiping that weak little god of yourself, but these are the two great errors.

So the book has basically been just a full-on frontal assault on those two errors trying to get you back to the centrality and the beauty of just a simple gospel. My identity is found in Jesus Christ. My hope is found in Jesus Christ. My righteousness is found in Jesus Christ. The fuel I need to follow him is a fuel motivated by love, not motivated by fear, that comes out from understanding I am loved, delighted in, and ransomed by the God of the universe.

Then just a few weeks ago, the book turned on us, and it went from kind of really deconstructing these errors around the gospel and reconstructing what the real legitimate gospel is. Then it moved into the type of community that is created when a group of people actually believe the gospel. So when you believe the gospel, *really* believe it... I'm not talking about intellectual assent. I'm not talking about being able to give facts about...

Because if we could break this down into a relational level, you can give me facts about a lot of people you don't know. You can give me all sorts of facts about people you've read about in *People* magazine or *US Weekly* or whatever rag you have that you would read that you don't actually know. You just know *about*. I'm not talking about intellectual assent. I'm not talking about facts about. I'm talking about a knowledge of. When a group of people believe, embrace, understand the gospel, a type of community is formed.

So what we read starting in chapter 5 and through chapter 6 is that where there's a group of men and women who believe in and trust in the gospel, you have a place where we serve one another, where we consider others as better than ourselves. You have an environment where we're willing to engage and rebuke a brother or sister where we see them erring into sin. You have a community that bears one another's burdens.

You have a community that begins to manifest the fruit of the Spirit, a community where love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control are growing among all the people. Not one at a time. All of those growing together. It's singular: *fruit* of the Spirit. You can't grow in love and at the same time not grow in patience. Right? You can't go, *I'm really loving. I just... People need to get with it!* That's contrary. That's counterfeit. You can't say that. *I have a lot of joy in me. I just really lack patience.* No, because if you lack patience, then there is not going to be a lot of joy. Those things grow simultaneously.

The environment the gospel creates is this type of environment. He is going to go on fleshing out what happens when a group of people gladly submit, motivated by love, to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let's pick it up in verse 6. **"Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches."** Now we're going to just stop here and take up an offering for me. I'm kidding. That would be so shady (and awesome). No, I want to talk about this verse. It's a little awkward. Let me just talk about the heart of the text. Then I'm going to defer. That's my plan: talk about the text, defer.

Paul's interest and the Word of God's interest here is that the Scriptures would be faithfully proclaimed, because as the Scriptures are faithfully proclaimed, men and women are drawn to Jesus Christ. God's appointed means by which the church grows and people are drawn to Christ is primarily the proclamation of the Word. That's how it happened. Now I'm not saying there aren't other ways God operates, because he absolutely does, but primarily God's means for building his church, God's means for drawing men and women unto salvation, is the proclamation of the Word.

So Paul is ferociously for faithful proclaimers of the Word being honored. All right? Now here's one of the things. I think we're very quick to give credit where maybe credit doesn't belong. Then I think some of us are very quick to not honor where maybe honor is deserved. So let me flesh that out a little bit for you. One of the things I've heard many of you say as we've had the opportunity to have conversations is you've said, "Man, when I first started coming to The Village, I felt like you were talking just to me, like you were talking directly to me."

Okay, I wasn't. I didn't know you were coming that weekend. Nobody gave me a heads up. Your buddy didn't email me and tell me where you guys would be sitting and ask that at a particular time in a sermon, I could stare at you. That's not how it worked. But what I've learned over the years is I've been in all kinds of different environments where the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed. I've been in hyper-traditional models. I mean, very formal, kind of high church. You don't move. Suit and tie. Maybe even speaking King James, reading off of a manuscript, where I'm much more conversational. I've heard people say to their pastor, "I felt like you were talking just to me."

Then I've been in places that are far more casual than us. I know for some of you, that's going to blow your mind. *Far more casual than us? What are they...naked? Are they in their pajamas? Is it like a dine-in service? What's more casual than us? I'm wearing flip-flops and shorts!* There are more casual places than us. I've heard people say the same thing. "It felt like when the pastor was preaching, he was speaking just to me."

So if it's not style then, then there is something that's drawing. The only consistent thing across the spectrum of our preference is the Word of God. It's the faithful proclamation of the Word of God that

makes you feel as though something is speaking directly to you. Because if I don't know you, I'm not speaking directly to you, which means someone else *is* through what I'm reading out of the Word. It's almost as if the Bible knows what's going on in the human heart. Right? It's almost like...now follow me here...what we say we believe is actually true.

It's like the Word of God has these unreal insights into how the human heart and human mind operate. So if you've been coming to The Village, if you've been coming, if you're listening on podcast, to a place where you feel as though the pastor, the preacher, the teacher of the Word is speaking directly to you, someone *is* speaking directly to you. The Holy Spirit of God, through the faithful proclamation of the Word, the hound of heaven, is after you. Submit in glad submission to real life.

So with that said, the apostle Paul, who only took money as we can see once in the Scriptures and had a tendency to just work and make tents and earn his keep that way but then as he would leave the church and leave another man in charge, would say, "Take care of that man." So he is saying, "Don't take a faithful preacher and teacher of the Word for granted. Honor them. Bless them. Be generous to them." Now with that said, let me say this. I am a blessed man. I am a blessed man, cared for well by the elders of this church. I've been loved well by the elders of this church. My family is cared for well.

When I can work a ton, we were blessed. Then when I could hardly work at all going through chemo, we were blessed. So we are very well taken care of, very well honored by this church. With that said, let me try to defer. This week, I've spent quite a bit of time, like almost every week, praying for you, thinking about you, digging in the Scriptures, asking the Lord to really bring life and power into what the Word is saying this week as I speak, that he would draw, that he would move. So I've felt a bit of weight for you this week.

Here's the reality of that. I am not the only one this week who has been preparing, praying, in the Word, and building a part of their week around the hope that Jesus might grow you, minister to you, and speak to you. So let me point out just a couple of others who have done that this week and who will faithfully lay before you the Word of God. If you're in a home group here, your home group leader has prepped, has prepared, has prayed, probably feels more for you than, say, I do. Because for some of you, I don't know you at all, but your group leader knows you, if you've been honest enough to be known. If not, that's on you.

Right now, if you dropped off a child in any of our areas, your child is being taught the Word of God. *Well, it's a newborn.* Well, here's what I can tell you. We don't babysit. Ever. We are not Adventure Kids. That's not what we do. It's not, "Drop your kid off, and come to adult time." So if you have a 6-week old you just dropped off, at this very moment while I'm unpacking Galatians, chapter 6, there is a man or woman

holding your child, praying over your child, asking God to save your child, praying for you, praying that you might have the wisdom to lead, the wisdom to guide, the wisdom to impart to them the glories of God.

If you have a first through fifth grader, they are learning the characteristics of God. We're not teaching moralistic lessons here. "Don't lie. God hates liars." That's not what they're learning. They're learning, "This is who God is. In light of who God is, this should be our response. If this isn't our response, grace fills in the gap."

That's happening right now while we're in here. Here's what's going to happen this week. Andrea, who runs my world... That's not my wife. My wife is Lauren, but Andrea is my administrative assistant. She runs my world. She will filter tomorrow a lot of, "Great job" and two or three, "You suck. We hate you." All right? That's what's going to happen tomorrow.

Once it hits podcast, that's going to get worse on both ends. The people loving your children right now may or may not hear anything. The people leading your home group may or may not hear anything. Yet the Word of God says where someone faithfully brings you the Word of God, bless them. Be generous to them and honor them. So here's how I want to encourage you. When it comes to those who are watching your children, when it comes to those who are teaching your youth, when it comes to those who are studying, praying, and setting aside major pieces of their week in order to impart to you the Word of God, honor them and bless them.

I know we're all over the range here. For some of you, man, you're just broke. Write them a letter. Words are powerful. Get them a gift card to dinner. Just bless them. Buy them a car, for those of you in the big tax brackets. Go to work. That's not my bracket, but if that's yours, just... There needs to be a culture of honor for those who faithfully handle the text across the board at this church and, according to the Bible, at all churches. I want to encourage you to think that way about The Village outside of just the guys who stand on the main stage and bring the Word week in and week out.

I think you guys do a phenomenal job of honoring those guys: myself, Shea, Beau, Steve, the other guys we put up here. They're all very much honored and taken care of by this church. But it's those other little areas I think have a tendency to get overlooked, and it's a shame. They shouldn't get overlooked, because I get to set aside my week to do this. Those other guys get to set aside their week. Bleecker, Isaac, John Warren are setting aside their week to do this.

But the people teaching your children, the people running your small group, they have full-time jobs they're pouring their lives into, families they're pouring their lives into. Then they take time after the kids go to bed, after life settles down, early in the morning to prepare in order to deliver to you the Word of God

faithfully. So let's think rightly and let's, being driven by love by the gospel of Jesus Christ, honor those who would impart to us the Word of God well, whether that's recovery, group, or them loving on our children in one way or another. All right?

Now he is going to warn us now. So he has gone from creating this culture of what happens in the gospel, and then he moves onto being deceived. So we have to be careful here. Let's look at verse 7. **"Do not be deceived..."** Now anytime the Bible says, **"Do not be deceived,"** you need to perk up and pay attention. Here's why. Because when it says, **"Do not be deceived,"** it's about to address an area that all of us have a tendency to believe that we're right when we're wrong. Nothing is more dangerous than thinking you're right when you're wrong, specifically if you're talking about God.

So when the Bible says, **"Do not be deceived,"** it's beginning to address an area where we have a tendency to think we're right when we're wrong. So he says, **"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked..."** So in light of the theme of this book, as the book begins to wind down and Paul is talking about the culture of a gospel-driven community, the deception we can walk in is to walk in a way that we believe is honoring to God, that in the end, is actually a mockery of God, a showing contempt for God.

So in light of the study of Galatians, how would you and I, believing that we're right, mock God? Well, I mean, the answer is trying to earn salvation. It's legalism. It has to be. Where most of us think we're right and end up being deceived is trying to earn what's been freely given. How is that mockery? Because you're like, *That doesn't sound like mockery for me to try to not do this and try to do this. That's not mocking God.* No, it's absolutely mocking God because what you're saying is you have no need for Jesus. You have no need for the cross. You have no need for his death and resurrection. You have it on your own despite the fact you know this isn't true.

To stop getting your righteousness from Jesus and start trying to make your own righteousness shows contempt for, shows a mocking of, the God of the universe. The other way you can mock him is in license. The other way you can mock him is just to decide that you're smarter than, you know what you need more than he does, you don't need his forgiveness because you haven't rebelled against him. That's mockery, and it's a dangerous, dangerous game. **"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."** Then he gives this universal truth I think will be helpful for us today. **"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap."**

Okay, so this is easy, isn't it? Whatever you sow, you'll reap. So let's think about it in two ways. The first way is that you right now sitting in this place didn't just poof up out of nowhere. You are here today as a result of what you have historically sown. So if you're here today and relationships are a bit of a train wreck; if you're here today and you have some addictions; if you're here today and you're frustrated, lonely, angry,

bitter, whatever; if you're here today and you're happy and you're walking with the Lord; if you're distant from the Lord, you have sown seeds you are now reaping.

I think one of the great errors in a lot of evangelicals I've had the opportunity to spend time with is they really *want* to be godly, but they have kind of this belief, although they would never verbalize it this way, that one day they'll just wake up and be godly. They're looking for that silver bullet sermon. You know, it's that one sermon that's just going to destroy everything and set everything up. It's not coming. It's simply not coming.

Maybe this will help you. I just got back from Peru. There were several guys on our team who were fluent in Spanish. I would love to be fluent in Spanish. I took two years in high school. "¿Cómo se llama?" "Me llamo Mateo." That's literally all I have. All right. Two years of my life, and that's what I have. I think I might be able to do the Pledge of Allegiance, but I'm not even going to try. So I would love to speak Spanish.

I can look at the statistics... Look, this is going to be necessary. Do you know that for the first time (this is *Wall Street Journal*, two weeks ago) in American history, Anglos born this year were the minorities to not only Spanish speakers but also African Americans. My 3-year-old daughter is now officially, as an Anglo, a minority in her age group. So not only are Anglos behind in regard to birth and number of children, Spanish-speakers, but also African Americans. So if you're looking at where we are in Dallas and the trajectory of where we're going, Spanish is going to come in handy. I would love to know Spanish, but here's what I know. I even bought the Rosetta Stone. Anybody else?

Let's just confess. Has anybody bought the Rosetta Stone? Come on. It's safe. It's a safe place for you. Are you fluent in that language now? Me neither. I did learn *debajo* means underneath. So that was a good \$500 I spent. Now in the end, here's what it's going to take for me to know Spanish. If I'm going to know Spanish, I'm going to need to work on, train, and begin to use Spanish. I'm not just going to wake up one day and be fluent. Yet for many of us, when it comes to the things of God, we live as though there is going to be this day where we just wake up, and we pray more than we do. We know more than we do. We know the Bible. We read deep theological books, and we're captivated by all things about God.

Listen. You're going to have to take some steps to get there. So here's one of the things I've tried to chat with you about a couple of weeks ago that really... He ended the last section of Galatians we were in as he said each of us will have to carry our own loads. So what that text was talking about is you've been called to Christ, and you've been given specific opportunities. I've been called to Christ, and I've been given specific opportunities. We need to be faithful in those opportunities to follow Jesus Christ. The thing I want to throw out to you is the good news about reaping what you sow is all you have to do is reap or sow really tiny seeds, and those seeds grow into very, very large trees.

So I think what ends up happening is we have a tendency to get into this game of comparison. It makes us lose heart. So what we do is we get all geeked up in January. Bible reading plan. Read seven chapters. I always know when it happens because everybody starts quoting Kings and Chronicles to me. I'm like, "How are you doing?"

"Well, you know, it's like 2 Chronicles says..."

"Ah, Bible reading plan, huh? All right."

So that's how I always know, because no one else is quoting Leviticus except in January and February. What we end up doing is read five or six chapters, and then we lose heart. We get around people who know a lot of Bible or are deep thinkers when it comes to about God. We feel so far behind. It's kind of how I would think of Spanish. Man, I'm 38 years old. My brain doesn't work that way anymore. I'm not good at languages. I have all these reasons why it's not happening for me. So I think what happens spiritually is we kind of approach that same deal. *Well, I feel so far behind. Other people are so much farther ahead. I'm not.* In reality, just small, small seeds lead to giant trees.

Let me give you a couple of examples here. So I did some math, which is always dangerous. I had Finance check it. Let me just run through a couple of these. I went to Washington, DC about six or eight weeks ago. I was teaching there. The night before (Saturday night), I went and saw the Lincoln Memorial at night. Have you seen the Lincoln Memorial at night? Just spectacular. Did you read the speech on the side of the wall? I mean, I read that, and I just think, *We're idiots. What happened to us? If that's how they were writing 100 years ago, what happened to us?*

I mean, we've progressively gotten dumber. I can tell you this now. You're literally looking at a generation that's going to be borderline illiterate if you don't make margin for your kids to read, because what do you think they're going to choose: reading or Lego *Star Wars* on the Xbox? I can tell you what they're choosing in my house! Halo. I'm like, "Why don't you read this adventure series?" "What? Huh?" Right? So you have to make margin for them to read.

So you have this collision happening where we're not really thinkers anymore and you don't really process stuff. You process information in 140 characters very quickly, never really allowing it to kind of get down deep into your hearts. All fast paced. You know everything and nothing simultaneously. So in that type of environment, you want it now. In reality, you plant seeds, and seeds grow. So let's say you really stink at prayer. Well, if you pray for 15 minutes a day, can we agree that's not a lot of time? Unless you're doing a

CrossFit WOD, that is nothing. Pray for 15 minutes a day, 365 days a year. That's 5,475 minutes or 91-1/2 hours of prayer. That's four days of prayer a year.

Now that sounds like next to nothing, all right? But we haven't included any type of prayer meeting, small group time, church time. We've included no other prayer except you, for 15 minutes a day, kind of backing off and just praying. Praying for your family, praying for your heart. Praying for 15 minutes a day. Now you have four full days of prayer. Here's what I know about prayer. The more you pray, the more you'll see God work, the more you'll understand God's delight in you, and the more you'll be driven into more prayer.

So don't do that thing where you're like, *I'm going to get up at five in the morning and pray for an hour.* You're probably not. Let's start with just a faithful 15 minutes and see where God takes us. Maybe you'll get to that hour. Maybe you'll get to two. Who knows? But let's just start somewhere and then... What if we stopped reading the Bible like it was the newspaper? Maybe not even just a verse. What if we just picked a sentence and really chewed on it?

Let's just say today you got up and you read out of Psalms 1, "**The Lord watches over the path of the righteous...**" That's one sentence, half a verse in Psalms 1. What if all day long today you just chewed on, "**The Lord watches over the path of the righteous...**"? What if you thought on that, you thought about what that meant, you fleshed out the implications in your life? What are you talking? Five minutes of Bible treading to get a sentence you can pull out and latch into your heart? You chewed on it 'til you *felt* the verse, until you understood God watches over your path. He declares you as righteous.

So now we're thinking about the gospel. God sees me as righteous. Therefore, since he sees me as righteous, he has a special attention that he pays to my steps. Now that carries a great deal of weight when I step in something on my path, because the Lord watches over the path of the righteous. That carries a ton of weight when difficult situations arise on my path, because that's when I know this didn't surprise God. It didn't surprise him. He is not driving the ambulance up late trying to work a triage and figure out how to fix this. That's not what's happening here.

Now if you did that every day, 28 to 31 days a month depending on the month, think of how many pieces of Scripture, think of how much of the Word of God is in your heart. Let's just go now two years of that. Can you imagine two years of that? We're talking 20 minutes at this point. Fifteen minutes of prayer, 5 minutes to find some little piece to put in your heart, chew on, think on, dwell on, marinate in. Then let's get to reading because it blows my mind people are like, *I don't read well. I can't read.* You can read, bro. So I'm going to do this one with you.

Suppose you read at about 250 words a minute. Now the reason I wanted to make this 250 words a minute is because the average American reads between 300 and 350 words a minute. So what I've tried to do is pull you down to a fourth grade elementary school reading level. I'm not saying that's where you are. I'm saying if you want to try to use the "I don't read well" excuse, I've just stolen it from you. I've literally just taken from you the "I don't read well" because I'm giving you fourth grade reading level. Okay?

Suppose you read about 250 words a minute and you resolve to devote just 15 minutes a day to...I'm wording this correctly...*serious* theological reading to deepen your grasp of biblical truth. In one year, you would have read for 5,475 minutes. Multiply that times 250 words per minute, and you get 1.3 million words per year. Now most books have between 300 and 400 words per page. So if you take 350 words per page and divide that into 1.3 million... Are you still with me? Because it's hurting my head just reading it. Divide that into 1.3 million words per year. You get 3,910 pages per year.

This means that at 250 words a minute for 15 minutes a day, you would have read 20 average-sized books a year. So let's look at small seeds becoming big trees. You now add 15 minutes of prayer, five minutes of Bible reading, and 15 minutes of serious theological reading around the biblical text and we're now at what? Do the math. Thirty-five minutes? Thirty-five minutes. At the end of the year, you have 365 bits of Scripture that you've meditated on, you've thought on, and you've read 20 serious theological books. So this is *not* complex.

Here's what the math does. The math shows me we're lazy idolaters, because you can read. You're just not fascinated enough with God to read about him. Because, man, when we get into your little projects, I bet you read, man. When it comes to your sports team, you read. I bet you when it comes to fitness, you read. I bet you when it comes to diet, you read. I bet you when it comes to health, you read. See, what gets revealed when you look at the math... See, I love math for only this reason: it doesn't have an agenda.

Now Mark Twain would say some things about statistics that I have a tendency to agree with him. I can't quote it here. I would get in a lot of trouble, all right? But ultimately these numbers don't have an agenda. They just reveal we're lazy, right? In the amount of time to watch a sitcom, we could see this happen, but we're too busy. I think if you would really be honest with yourself, the logical conclusion is there are things we have greater affection for than God. There are things we love more than we love him. I'm not saying you don't love the Lord. I'm just saying there are things you love more, and that's where you're putting your mental energy.

Where the affections are, the mind will go. Where the affections are, you'll find your mind going. So some of that today needs to be repented of. We need to repent of our laziness. We need to repent of the fact that we have not been sowing seeds in this area of our lives. We need to repent of the fact that when all is said

and done, we're just hoping one day we wake up and are more godly, more confident, and walking in more maturity with the Lord than we are now.

Let's look where he goes after this. **"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."** Now if you haven't been here, he is going back to an illustration he set up in chapter 5:16 through 26 where there are these two forces that are opposed in our hearts. There are the flesh and the spirit, and they are opposed to one another.

So if you want to go back and read those verses, it will be helpful to see what exactly he means when he is talking about the flesh and what exactly he means when he is talking about the Spirit. But here's what he just said. If you sow in the flesh, you're going to reap from the flesh corruption. Now don't think political corruption because that's not what this word means. This literally is the word that's used for decaying or the decomposition of a body. Death. You sow in the flesh, you're going to reap death. You sow in the flesh, you're going to reap death! But if you sow in the Spirit, you get eternal life.

Now I want to flesh out eternal life in the fullness of its meaning. In one sense, he very much has to be talking about the Eschaton, the making of all things new by Jesus Christ when there are no more tears, no more crying, no more hurt, no more loss, no more tragedy, all things being made new in Christ. But also if you go back to what Jesus said he has come for. In John 10:10 he says, **"The thief has come to kill, steal, and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."**

So Jesus' work in the gospel isn't just about heaven but about the fullness of life here and now. So if there is an increase in the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control), there is an increase in that as we submit to the gospel and walk with one another. Then we want to sow those seeds because we reap, then, not just the Eschaton, but we reap the fullness of life now, so that the sowing of seeds in the Spirit, those daily decisions to walk in line, in step with the Spirit, yields the type of fruit that is not transient but rather eternal.

When you sow in the flesh, you reap from the flesh what the flesh has to offer you: enslavement, destruction, the decomposition of hopes. So do not be deceived. You will not mock God. What you sow, you will reap. You want to sow rebellion? You want to sow legalism? You want to sow license? You will reap what you sow. Small seeds make really big trees. I have to wonder where you are today, what you have sown, what you're... Even if we just look at the last week. Let's look at your schedule the last week, the time you've kind of set aside for different things the last week.

What are you actually planting? Are you planting seeds of laziness? Are you planting seeds of indifference? Are you sowing into your life a lackadaisical approach to the things of God? That's not a complex question. That has a real answer. If we just took last week and looked at what you... Are you sowing in the flesh? Are you sowing in the Spirit? If you're saying, *I don't think I sowed everything*. Then you're sowing in the flesh. You did sow this last week. You did plant seed this past week. You did contribute to tomorrow this past week.

Even in this moment, you are simultaneously sowing and reaping. Right now, sowing and reaping in this very moment. Then from there, there's an interesting sentence. Look at verse 9. Again, this is talking about what the Christian community should look like. **"And let us not grow weary of doing good..."** Now let me try to explain how we grow weary in doing good. Let me read a quote by Calvin (Not "Calvin and Hobbes." This is John Calvin, one of the Reformers.) I'm just going to read it to you.

"We are naturally lazy in the duties of love, and many little stumbling blocks hinder and put off even the well-disposed. We meet with many unworthy, many ungrateful people. The vast number of the needy overwhelms us. We are drained by paying out on every side, and our warmth is damped by the coldness of others. Finally, the whole world is full of hindrances, which turn us aside from the right path." Now when I first read this, I just was like, *John! Get some new friends, bro! Find somebody you can pour into. Find somebody you like to do something with*. But if you have lived long enough, isn't this true?

Because of the fallenness of the world, isn't the default of most people one of cynicism? Isn't there kind of a hypercritical element to almost everything? I would probably press that there is someone in your life right now who you would feel walks in a bit of entitlement and ingratitude and thanklessness, who you've even tried to love and tried to serve and tried to encourage, and you're just sick of it because the more you pay out, the more they demand. Even when you *have* tried to be nice, even when you *have* tried to do good, they still don't acknowledge it was good. It wasn't *enough* good for them.

Hey, maybe you *are* that guy. So what the Bible does here is say, "Don't grow weary in doing good." Then it reminds us of motivation. What is our motivation in doing good? Let's look at the next line. **"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."** Now do you see this play on language here? So he already said you will reap what you sow. If you sow in the Spirit, you'll reap eternal life. He is going to come back around. He is going to use this word *reap* again to tie it back to what he has already said.

So he is saying, "Here's why you don't grow weary in doing good to people who are thankless and cold and walk in a sense of entitlement. Because when you were thankless and cold, God extended grace to you. God did good to you when you did not deserve good." We don't do good to others for reciprocity. That's not

why we do good. I'm not doing good to others so they might get that I've done good to them and they might return that favor. Doesn't Jesus attack that idea that if you just give to those who can give back to you, you're no better than the tax collectors and Pharisees? You're no better than the Gentiles. But that's us. We are Gentiles.

He is on to something here. Our motivation for doing good to others is that good has been done to us in Christ when we were not worthy of that good. So if your standard of doing good to others is only to do good to others who can return that favor or who will be unbelievably grateful for your good deed done to them, it's coming out of a wrong motivation in your heart. The gospel frees me to do good to all men, even the exhausting ones, maybe even *especially* the exhausting ones. I'm not saying that doesn't take quite a bit of prayer and asking the Lord for more mercy, but that's the command.

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."** Now he makes one statement here that's kind of all encompassing and universal, and then he makes one that's very specific. So he says, "Okay, since our motivation is that we've been the recipients of good when we didn't deserve good, let us do good to all men, to all people, but especially those who belong to the household of faith."

So you have this universal, all-encompassing call to be on mission, on point, doing good to all. I think in the end, this has a lot to do with many of you in the domain you work in, the gifts you have, the places God has put you, that you would do good to all men. You have skills, abilities, and margin to serve and help people whether they are believers in Christ or not. The command is to do good to all. In fact, in another part of the Scriptures, the Bible says they'll see our good deeds to all, and they'll glorify God who is in heaven. That being good to all, even those who are not believers, actually is a picture of the freedom we have in Christ.

But then he turns it, and he makes it really specific after kind of that all-encompassing teaching, and he says, "But do *especially* good to those who belong to the household of faith." It keeps happening in this text. There's this continual call for us as brothers and sisters in Christ within the confines of a covenant community to love and serve one another, to seek out the welfare of one another, and to bear one another's burdens with one another, even when it hurts us to come underneath that burden and serve one another.

So for me as a pastor looking at a text like this (and it will just continue next week before the series is completely over), I find in me this real hope for us because I see so much of this here and this angst for us because I know we're not quite there yet. The reason why I want to consistently push you towards community here and not just attending a service is because the good stuff, this stuff, that's not happening

here right now. Maybe little bits and pieces of it, but the fullness of this isn't found in attending a service. The fullness of this is found in the trenches with other couples where we are fully known and where we're engaging others. That has to be fought for. It's exhausting. All right?

You're going to meet people you don't like. People aren't going to like you. Iron is going to sharpen iron. To be committed to one another come hell or high water (both are coming), to suffer together, to rejoice together, and to walk in these things together. You get to live out this really spectacular redeemed community of faith. Where the gospel isn't driving this, you have no real shot at it because, see, if you're on the legalism side of things, then everybody becomes competition. You know what happens when everybody calls competition if you've watched any reality television show.

If you are walking in license, then the whole world is about you because you're god. How well do relationships work if everything is competition or you're god and everyone must serve you? Well, I can tell you it doesn't work. But if we're walking in step with the gospel and we're considering others as better than ourselves and we're outdoing one another in honor and we're bearing one another's burdens and we're ferociously committed to one another, so much so that we're willing to go, "I fear for you, brother. I feel like you're getting off the rails. I feel like you're drifting from the gospel. I want to call you back to these things."

When we get to that place where there's a culture of honor that honors generously and graciously those who serve us, when you're being watchful and mindful that you reap what you sow so you're paying close attention to what you're sowing on a day-in/day-out basis, then ultimately when you're doing good to all men, but especially to those who belong to the covenant community of faith, do you see how you've created this counterculture that will probably seem a bit odd and cult-like to the world? That's why you can't try to make this thing cool. It runs countercultural. You try to *James Dean* the church, and the church has lost its beauty.

The beauty of the church is this deep reliance we have on one another. It's a confession of weakness and need for one another. Culture is never going to think that's sexy. We think William Wallace is sexy. Don't need anybody, kill. Well, that's a bad example because he wanted to unite the clans. Remember that scene? We don't have time for that.

So in the end, we are in desperate need for one another, desperate need for community. I continue to be baffled by how often I say that, and yet how often you sit here and hear me say that and yet make very little moves to community as though one day you'll wake up and be fluent in biblical gospel community. No, you'll need to put some seeds in the ground. So let me pray for us.

Holy Spirit, help us. I know there are those here today who have come in and life is really difficult. We are reaping today decisions and seeds we've planted, some of us a long time ago and some of us seeds we continue to plant to this day. I thank you for your mercy in drawing us into this place today. I thank you for your mercy that today from the Word we've heard that there is a different kind of seed that can be sown. We thank you that grace is available to us, forgiveness is available to us, and the invitation to submit our lives to Jesus and believe in his righteousness is available to us.

So I pray that after we worship in song and are taught the Word through song and after the other things that will take place, God, that we might rush to men and women who are up front or in the back, depending on the campus, and we might confess where we've been lazy and confess where we believe we're god, confess where we have sown into the flesh and that we might today start anew, sowing very small seeds of the Spirit so we might reap by the Spirit eternal life. I pray for salvation today, the opening of hearts and minds. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

Love you guys.

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