

Life Application Notes

Galatians 6:6-18 - 16th May 2021

Well done for making it all the way to our last session on Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia. We're going to finish the same way that Paul did - by recapping what he's discussed so far.

- **Read Galatians 6:6-18 together**

Verses 6-10

It's worth noting that these five verses are often abused by taking them out of context to preach the so-called "prosperity gospel" - however, in context, it's clear that Paul is concluding an argument he began in v. 4:12. We can be confident that one can neither buy nor earn salvation (see also: Romans 6:23, Romans 11:35).

- **In light of this, what does it mean that God is not mocked?**
 - As Christians, we believe that in the end, God will mete out justice - but according to his wisdom and standards and not ours.
- **How does this differ from (our common Western understanding of) Karma?**
 - God is a person with free will - the Universe is not. Consequently God can be gracious. God can (and does) choose to accept Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross in place of our due punishment.
 - Christianity turns the causality between actions and goodness on its head - Many who believe in Karma teach that good actions make you a better person, whereas Christianity teaches that being a better person (through the transformative work of God's Holy Spirit) leads to better actions (or fruit).
 - And yet, God gives us the promise of rewards for the good we do in due season. (Generally interpreted as meaning in Heaven.)

Verses 9 and 10 specifically refer to "doing good" - to everyone, but especially to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

- **What are the ways that we are likely to become "weary" in doing this?**
- **How can we prevent ourselves from becoming weary and not "give up"?**

Verses 11-16

Here we see Paul remind the Galatians of the points he had made in the earlier part of the letter - specifically addressing the need (or lack thereof) for the Galatians to adopt the Jewish custom of circumcision - but he also ties this into the argument we've been discussing already, because he clearly believes that they are linked.

- **Paul talks about a new creation. What is the thing newly created?**
 - It will ultimately include everything - but in this passage Paul is specifically talking about Christians - and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit mentioned above.

- **Consequently, what is the rule by which people should walk in order to gain the peace and mercy described in v. 16?**
 - FAITH IN CHRIST! Boast in him and his sacrifice! Crucify the old you and live a new life, free and empowered by the Spirit.

Paul highlights that he bears on his body the marks of Jesus - not referring to the fact that he'd been circumcised - but instead all of the beatings and ill treatment he had received as part of his Christian walk.

- **What does this tell us about when we will reap the good that we've sown?**
What does this tell us about watering down the Gospel to avoid persecution?
 - God can bless us in this life - and in Paul's letters he is clear that he considers himself blessed - but that we are never promised an easy, pain-free life. There will be a cost and, as Jesus told us, we should count it (Luke 14:28).

Closing

Over the last thirteen sermons, we have covered a lot of territory. To bring it all together, perhaps spend some time discussing the letter as a whole. What is the most important message of this letter? What was the biggest surprise?

Perhaps most importantly, what impact do people think that studying this letter will have on their lives? Have they noticed any differences already? Are they wanting to make any changes or focus effort or attention working on a particular aspect of their lives? (Not out of a sense of needing to fulfil the Law, I hope!) How will studying this letter affect how they share the Gospel with others?