

## **Never become weary of doing good!**

*Reformed Christians do believe that good deeds are important.*

**Scripture readings: Deut 15: 7 - 11; Galatians 6:1-10.**

Anchor verse: Galatians 6: 9 and 10.

## **Broad introduction to the Letter to the Galatians and to chapter 6.**

Paul closes his letter to the Galatians by continuing to apply the realities of life in the Holy Spirit, which receives a lot of emphasis in this letter, in wonderfully practical ways.

Paul seeks throughout this letter to pull the Galatians back to *the gospel of the grace of God* in Christ. He shows the essential characteristics of a life motivated by God's grace: *when we know deep down that Christ is our only and complete righteousness, then we become likewise gracious and bear true spiritual fruit.*

If we become legalistic concerning our relationship with God, on the other hand, it will show in our relationships with others and particularly with fellow Christians. What we believe to be before God, is who we will become for each other. Paul in chapter 6 shows in detail some traits of a Christian community who understands the fruit bearing qualities of the grace of God.

### **We do not shoot our wounded (v. 1).**

*Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.*

We should seek and show mercy and restoration, in gentleness and with grace, as has been shown to us. We only stand, after all, because Christ is strong, and not because we are persistent.

**We carry one another's burdens (vv. 2ff.).** These burdens are not the *sins* of fellow Christians, but the *pressures and anxieties and difficulties* of life. It necessitates that we know each others needs and that we take care of one another. Christ fully and finally has borne all burdens. In the light of what Jesus did, we evaluate ourselves realistically and not deceive ourselves in thinking that we are strong. (v. 3): *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

### **We each stand before God (v. 4):**

On the other hand Paul says that we must 'bear one another's burdens', while we each have to bear our own load; that our 'reason to boast' will be in ourselves alone. Paul, however, will not dare 'to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ' (v. 14). Paul is *constantly and radically* pointing us to our own load-bearing and boasting of the only one in whom we may have true confidence and hope, our Lord Jesus Christ. 'In Christ' is *who we truly are*. This protects against self-righteousness at one extreme, and self-loathing at the other, which so easily creeps in through comparing and evaluating ourselves in the light of the lives of others, rather than the confidence we have when we all look to Christ and his gracious gifts and fruit through his Spirit.

In the Lord's service, it is always too soon to quit, because in Christ we have the confidence to continue our efforts for his sake. In the Lord's service, there is never time to relax our efforts. In the Lord's service, we never come to the point of giving up. Paul had this in mind when he wrote,

*(Gal 6:9) Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Whenever we are tempted to do less than our best for Christ, or to quit completely, we should remember this verse and the truth that it contains. Whenever we find ourselves getting tired, burned out, despondent and losing enthusiasm for the Lord's work, we need to remember these words.

### **1. Christians are called to a life of good deeds.**

Paul speaks to us about our Christian calling to do good. It is what our Christian life and being in Christ's service are all about. We are not only believers; we also are doers who respond to God's grace with a servant's heart. James says,

*(James 1:22) Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

And Paul says: *(Gal 6:10) Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

God expects all his people to be involved in doing good. He demands that we respond to his acts of mercy and grace by living a life of Christian service. Paul is writing to the churches in Galatia. To all these church members,

whoever they are and whatever their roles in the church are, he says, "Let us not become weary in doing good ..." Every church member is expected to do good. All God's people are to consider it their calling to do good.

We are to do good to all people. But it starts with our fellow Christians. We will not help our unbelieving neighbour, if we ignore our own family in Christ.

What is the good we are being called to do? In both the Old and the New Testaments, God tells us what he expects of us.

*(Deut 15:7-8 and 11) If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tight fisted toward your poor brother. (8) Rather be open handed and freely lend him whatever he needs. (vs 11) There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open handed toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.*

James is renowned for encouraging us to have a faith that is alive with good deeds towards all. James tells us that (James 1:27) *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress ...* (Also see James 2:15-17)

And our good deeds are not to be limited to acts of charity. Also remember the causes of the church and the kingdom of God. Be willing to serve on a committee or session, to be a leader, to help each other in projects that grow the church, or be willing to work with the youth, or using your talents in worship; leading Bible Study, or whatever the need and your gifting might be.

When we do all these things, we are following the example of Christ. We are reacting to God's grace in Christ by acknowledging Jesus also as Lord, and therefore we adopt the mind of Christ and imitate his example. (Phil 2:5). Jesus "went around doing good" (Acts 10:38). He healed the disabled - the lame, the deaf, the blind. He included the outcasts into his circle: lepers, prostitutes and tax-collectors. He made time for widows and children. He took the side of the poor, the underdog, against those who were powerful, and influential. He fed the hungry. He befriended the lonely. He went out of his way to minister to all. He had compassion with the crowds and he taught them about the coming kingdom of God.

When we do good, we are simply following in the steps of the Master who became our righteousness and who also gave us what we never deserved.

As a church we too have projects and programs to do good "to those who belong to the family of believers." We run the Love Basket project. We have a team specialising in visiting the sick, the frail and the home bound. We are willing to serve in positions of leadership. We minister to visitors. We do as much as we can to provide a music and singing ministry and lead God's people in worship. It is clear that we as a congregation wants to respond to God's perfect grace in "doing good."

## **2. Do not become weary in doing Good.**

Paul speaks to us not only about our calling to do good, but he also warns against the danger of growing "weary in doing good."

"Let us not become weary in doing good." We must be aware that Christians sometimes develop a weariness in doing God's work, a loss of enthusiasm and slackness in taking on the challenges in Christ's cause. It produces ministry that becomes lifeless, mere routine and it therefore becomes ineffective. Many even become critical and resentful of all that has to be done.

Sometimes Christians are tempted to quit doing good, because it seems to do no good.

Sometimes Christians get turned off from doing good, because those they are helping are taking advantage of them.

Sometimes Christians think they don't have the time to do good, because it takes away time from my leisure and from my many responsibilities.

Then we should remember these words; (v. 3): *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

To do this necessitates that we should know each others needs and that we should take care of one another. Christ fully and finally has borne all burdens. In the light of what Jesus did, we have to evaluate ourselves realistically. We should not be deceived, but respond to what Jesus did for us with humble service, giving thanks to God for his mercy and love. Say to yourself, "God has chosen me to be his servant and Christ has died to make me one" and be amazed at the wonder of this.

I came across these thoughts on the internet, which speaks to us when we are tempted to become weary in doing good, when we are tempted to quit doing good:

*People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centred. Get over it and love them anyway.*

*If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.*

*If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.*

*Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.*

*The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.*

*The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest pride.*

*Think big anyway.*

*People favour underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for underdogs anyway.*

*What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.*

*Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you've got anyway!*

*In other words, "Let us not become weary in doing good."*

### **3. At the appropriate time we will reap a harvest.**

Paul is *constantly and radically* pointing us in our own load-bearing to the only one in whom we may have true confidence and hope, our Lord Jesus Christ. 'In Christ' is *who we truly are*. This protects against self-righteousness at one extreme, and self-loathing at the other, which so easily creeps in through comparing and evaluating ourselves in the light of the lives of others, rather than the confidence we have when we all look to Christ and his gracious gifts and fruit of his Spirit.

These gifts and fruit ensures, also by grace, a harvest promised by God.

"Let us not become weary in doing good," says Paul, *"for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."*

This image is of a farm. If there is one job where you learn to not grow weary, it is farming. The farmer must prepare the soil, sow the seed, pull the weeds, and water the plants. He cannot afford to give up or quit until harvest time comes. The farmer has no guarantee of the harvest, but the Christian worker does have a guarantee. God, in his grace and to encourage us to remain in the footsteps of Christ, our complete righteousness, promises a harvest to those who do not give up on doing good. God promises a harvest to those who do not become weary in doing good.

*What is this harvest promised, guaranteed, by the Lord? Gal 6: 8 says: ...the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

And listen to this: (Matt 5:16) *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

According to these verses, something wonderful happens when God's people do not become weary of doing good. What happens is that people are attracted to us and to our God, because of our love, because we are doing good. There is a whole world out there that is desperate for love, for the grace and for the mercy of God. There is a whole world out there that knows who they really are and know that they are beyond saving themselves.

People are surrounded by hate, murder, rape, theft, abuse, selfishness, and greed. They struggle with the results of corruption. They are looking for and crying out for love and mercy. When they see God's unconditional love in the church, they respond to God's mercy in faith. The result is that the church grows and that God's name is praised, glorified and exalted.

### **In closing:**

The harvest of doing good, is a harvest of many more receiving the love and the grace of God.

When we know deep down that Christ is our only and complete righteousness, then we become likewise gracious and bear true Spiritual fruit. We do not judge and we do not legalistically require people to earn their salvation. We show them, without growing weary, the love of God. And they too find rest and inspiration in his grace - and in the end, eternal life.

This is the word of God.

Amen