

“Humble Self-evaluation”
Galatians 6:3-5
(Preached at Trinity, August 11, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After spending four chapters defending the Gospel against those who were perverting it by adding the works of the Law Paul then deals with the other extreme—those who were exploiting their freedom from the Law by denying the Law's demand for holy living.
Galatians 5:13 NAU - "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."
2. There were sin issues running throughout the Galatian churches. Without going into detail Paul stated:
Galatians 5:15 NAU - "But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another."
3. The ultimate solution:
Galatians 5:16 NAU - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
Galatians 5:25 NAU - "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."
4. Now in **Chapter 6** Paul is describing what this spiritual life looks like. What does it look like when a man walks by the Spirit?
Last week we saw in **Verses 1-2** that it is a life that cares for the spiritual wellbeing of our brother.
When a brother falls into sin those who are spiritual turn to him and give themselves to seeking his restoration.
5. This morning I want to focus on **Verses 3-5** as we continue to examine the qualities of a spiritual life. In these verses we see that the person walking by the Spirit does not seek to exalt himself above others.
 - A. Living by the flesh causes a man to concern himself only with those things that pertain to him. Apparently there were some in the Galatian churches who were most concerned for building up themselves.
Galatians 5:26 NAU - "Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another."
 - B. Paul expressed this life well in **Philippians 2**
Philippians 2:3-4 NAU - "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

- I. First, Paul warns of the danger of self-deception – **Verse 3**
- A. The fundamental problem of all humanity is an elevated opinion of self
1. What is the root cause of all sin? Is it not our self-satisfying pride
What was the cause of the fall of man – see **Genesis 3:4-6**
Cain & Abel – **Genesis 4:3-8**
Tower of Babel – **Genesis 11:1-4**
 2. Nebuchadnezzar epitomizes the pride of Satan – **Isaiah 14:13-14**
Isaiah 14:13-14 NAS - "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."
 3. With every sin we are declaring in our heart that we are God. We are seeking to establish our own throne.
Isaiah 14:14 NAU - "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."
- B. Our great problem is that we love ourselves above all else
1. Self love crowds out all other love
 2. Self love focuses only upon our needs, our desires, our hopes
 3. Every human being naturally thinks his life is most important – my ideas are the best, my possessions are the most precious, my kids are the most wonderful
 4. The problem of humanity is not a low self-esteem. It is an elevated self-esteem. We consider ourselves greater than all.
- C. Our great problem is we do not submit ourselves to God
1. This is the issue of sin. Sin is elevating ourselves above God
 2. Our problem is we think too highly of ourselves. We think we can set our own course, do our own thing.
 3. Pride is one of the greatest indicators of our fallen condition. Before a man is saved from his sin he has to humble himself before God.
- D. This selfish pride affects how we treat others
1. In **Verse 2** Paul admonishes his readers to “Bear one another’s burdens” (in the imperative)
 2. Men in their pride often fail in this in one of two ways:
 - a. Either, in their pride they give little regard to the burdens of others. They are too focused on their own needs.
 - b. Or, in their pride and self-sufficiency they are too proud to receive help from others since it would be an admission of weakness.
- E. Paul says it is great self-deception
"For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."
1. No man is self-sufficient
 2. The man who only sees his greatness fails to see his terrible weakness.
 3. In our self-deception we justify all manner of selfish behavior.
It is at the heart of lives consumed by the works of the flesh:
Galatians 5:20-21 NAU - "enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying"

II. The need for honest self-evaluation – Verse 4

- A. The problem with prideful men is they compare themselves with others
1. The NIV translates the verse:
Galatians 6:4 NIV - "Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else,"
 2. Comparing ourselves with other men is like one leper comparing himself with another.
 3. Even if we were to rise above the greatest man upon the earth we would still be but a weak, unstable, sin-laden human being. Compared with the perfections of God we would still stand corrupt and abominable.
 4. Wicked men pride themselves in looking down upon others. They try to bring others down in order to lift themselves up.
This was obviously taking place within the memberships of the Galatian churches or, perhaps, even between the churches themselves.
Galatians 5:26 NAU - "Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another."
- B. Instead of comparing ourselves with others we must open ourselves to a proper examination - "But each one must examine his own work"
1. Each of us is to examine himself
2 Corinthians 13:5 NAS - "Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?"
 2. The word for "examine" in both 2 Cor. 13:5 and **Verse 4** of Galatians 6 is δοκιμάζω – it carries the idea of analyzing
It presupposes that there is some standard for making the analysis
 3. How are we to adequately examine ourselves?
Are we to examine ourselves by the lives of others?
By the opinions of men? By the practices of our culture?
Are we to examine ourselves by our own self-righteousness opinion of ourselves?
 4. In the end there is only one opinion that counts. What does God think of your life?
1 Corinthians 4:3-4 NAS - " But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by *any* human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. ⁴ For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord."
 5. Our hope is not based upon our good works. Our hope is based upon the righteousness of Christ
2 Corinthians 13:5 NAS - "Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?" **Galatians 5:5 NAU** - "For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness."

6. Our boast is in Christ alone
1 Corinthians 1:30-31 NAS - "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹ that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.""
7. This doesn't mean our own works are irrelevant.
 "But each one must examine his own work"
- a. Paul has made it clear throughout this epistle that our works have no justifying merit
Galatians 2:16 NAS - "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."
- b. But our works do give evidence to our saving faith.
Matthew 7:21-23 NAS - "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹ "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ "So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"
6. Don't forget the context. Paul is continuing to contrast the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit

III. Each of us will bear his own load – Verse 5

- A. **Verse 5** ties the first four verses together
1. **Verse 1** – How do we react when a brother falls into sin?
- a. Those walking after the flesh are quick to condemn. With a censorious spirit they gossip about him.
- b. Those walking after the Spirit gather around him in gentleness and grace and seek to restore him.
2. The self-righteous compare themselves with him boasting in their hearts that they would never do such a thing.
Galatians 6:3 NAU - "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."
3. Each man is to examine himself by the righteousness of Christ.
- B. Now in **Verse 5** Paul seems to be contradicting **Verse 2**
1. In **Verse 2** Paul commands us to bear one another's burdens. Now he declares every man must bear his own burden.
 "For each one will bear his own load."

2. There are two different Greek words being used in **Verses 2 & 5**.
 - **Verse 2** speaks of a heavy weight that we cannot bear alone. It is in the present tense. We must help one another bear these burdens.
 - But **Verse 5** speaks of a burden that no man can share with another. This is speaking of our accountability before God. It is in the future tense. It has an eye to eternity when every man shall answer for himself.
3. **Verses 4-5** should be taken together.
 - a. **Verse 4** – we must examine ourselves
 - b. **Verse 5** – for we shall be judged – we shall bear our own accountability before God
4. If your heart is harsh and judgmental you need to go back and examine your own life.
 Our lives need to be filled with grace, mercy, forgiveness
Matthew 6:15 – “But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”
Matthew 5:7 – “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

Conclusion:

1. The New Testament is full of warnings against pride and a condemning spirit. Even in the Lord’s Prayer we pray, “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”
2. The Lord’s Prayer is then followed by our Lord’s warning against a harsh unforgiving spirit.
Matthew 6:14-15 NAU - "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."
3. Paul is warning of this in these verses in **Galatians 6**. The man living by the flesh is selfish, harsh, and unforgiving. He is self-righteous and quick to condemn others. The man walking by the Spirit is merciful and forgiving. When a brother sins he goes to him in gentleness and love. But he also goes in trembling for he knows the weakness of his own heart.
4. May God grant us a heart of love and mercy as we dwell together as the body of Christ. May we watch over one another, and seek to restore those who stumble with a spirit of meekness and humility.