

“When Our Brother Sins”
Galatians 6:1-2
(Preached at Trinity, August 4, 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. Paul spend most of this letter defending the Gospel from those who were misapplying the Law. In **Verse 15** Paul inserts a statement without giving us any context.
Galatians 5:15 NAU - "But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another."
 - A. Most likely the false teaching was beginning to cause division within the church. This is very common and another reason why we must maintain such diligence against every form of false teaching. A member or other person begins to embrace a false teaching or concept and begins to share it with others. Some begin to listen to their error.
2 Timothy 2:16-17 NAU - "But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, ¹⁷ and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,"
 - B. We don’t have the details but Paul hints at bitter division that was occurring among some – biting and devouring one another.
 - C. Paul uses this as the basis for the following verses. Such behavior was fleshly and contrary to being led by the Spirit. The solution:
Galatians 5:18 NAU - "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."
2. At the end of **Chapter 5** Paul gives a similar admonition:
Galatians 5:25 NAU - "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."
3. As we come to the end of **Chapter 5** and then into **Chapter 6** Paul again appears to be contrasting the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit.
 - A. In **5:26** speaks again of the apparent division that was happening in the churches. Again we can see evidence of the works of the flesh.
Galatians 5:26-1 NAU - "Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another. "
 - B. Now as we enter **Chapter 6** Paul declares the great contrast of those walking after the Spirit. His words demonstrates that he clearly has this in mind:
"you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness"
 - C. In **Verse 2** he speaks of bearing one another’s burdens as fulfilling the Law that he has already stated as the essence of love.
Galatians 5:14 NAU - "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."
4. **Chapter 6** describes the nature of the Spiritual life. We’ll continue to look at what it means to walk by the Spirit.
This morning I want to direct your attention to these first two verses of **Chapter 6**. Paul speaks of the issues of sin and restoration, of spiritual brothers watching over the weaker, and of the ever present danger for all of us to be tempted.
Walking by the Spirit demands watching over one another in love.

- I Paul first speaks of the issue of falling into sin
- A. Paul uses the word for “trespass” or “transgression”
1. It is a word that refers to sin
Romans 4:25 NAU - "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."
 2. Paul also uses it to describe the fall of Adam
Romans 5:15 NAU - "For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many."
 3. The Children’s Catechism says it well
Q. What is sin?
A. Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the Law of God.
 4. Paul doesn’t give any details regarding the sin. In the context it most likely among those sins listed as “works of the flesh”
- B. Paul speaks of the suddenness of the transgression
1. The exact force of the word is unclear
 - a. The NASB uses the word “caught”
 - b. The KJV translates it “overtaken”
 - c. It can refer to being taken by surprise – sin usually takes us by surprise. For the Christian it is almost never premeditated.
 2. Although the exact nature of the sin is not clear it doesn’t appear to be a persistent offense worthy of church discipline. Instead it appears to be a transgression that any one of us might fall into.
 3. Again, the context would place it among the “works of the flesh” Paul outlined in **Chapter 5**.
 4. Paul makes it clear that falling into such sin is a danger for all “if anyone” - ἄνθρωπος – man in the generic sense – “any person”
No one is above the ever present danger of sin.
 5. We are continually warned to be alert. Paul admonishes us to walk by the Spirit.
In **1 Timothy 6** Paul commands us to flee from the lust of the flesh but rather pursue the things of the Spirit.
1 Timothy 6:10-11 NAS - "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. ¹¹ But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness."

- II. We have a duty to watch over one another
- A. Paul addresses those who are spiritual
1. Many claim to be “spiritual” today. I’ve often heard people say, “I’m not religious but I’m a very spiritual person.” What does it mean to be spiritual? Simply speaking, it means to walk by the Spirit.
Galatians 5:16 NAU - "walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
 2. The word refers to that which is pertaining to the Holy Spirit. Paul is using it in contrast to walking after the flesh. Paul makes this contrast in 1 Cor. 3
1 Corinthians 3:1 NAS - "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ."
 3. Paul is speaking of those who are mature, who have an ongoing relationship with God, who seek His rule in their lives—who walk by the Spirit.
 4. Paul says here that one of the first ways we walk by the Spirit is in how we deal with one another. This passage is in the context of the local church. Notice the word “brother” in **Verse 1**
- B. The duty of those who are spiritual in dealing with a brother in sin
1. Far too often we abuse one another regarding our sins. Either we ignore the sins of our brother or we gossip about him. It is difficult to deal properly with sin. It demands great care – it demands the wisdom of God. It demands those who walk by the Spirit.
 2. Those who are spiritual must seek restoration of their fallen brother. **καταρτίζω** - to complete. It means to recover the individual from his fleshly behavior – to restore him to his previous condition. Restoration cannot occur without confrontation.
 3. This was no small matter for Paul
Galatians 6:8 NAU - "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."
- C. This is at the heart of a covenant community of faith – we must bear one another’s burdens
1. Timothy George writes in the *New American Commentary*:
“One of the much-neglected features of contemporary Baptist church life is the congregational covenant, an expression of communal commitment in responsibility, setting forth the ethical standards and obligations incumbent upon all members. Historically, Baptist church covenants have encouraged not only public worship, personal devotion, and congregational discipline but also a caring and pastoral attitude on the part of each church member towards every other member. In this context Gal. 6:2 has been frequently paraphrased in these historic documents.”
 2. In our own Church Covenant we pledge:
“I further promise, therefore, to watch over my brothers and sisters in Christ in brotherly love, and faithfully warn, exhort, and admonish them as occasion may require.”

- D. The methodology
1. Paul is saying this must be carried out in a manner consistent with walking in the Spirit – in love, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control.
 2. Paul says particularly it must be done with gentleness – same word in **5:23**
This is no place for harshness or a censorious spirit
 3. All of our behavior must be tempered by love
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."
 4. Paul's charge in **Verse 2** is to bear one another's burdens – that is the burden of sin – the fleshly lusts that continually assault us – burdens of temptation, inconsistency, anger, lust, etc.
1 Peter 2:11 NAS - "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."
 5. While the context is sin there are many other burdens that weaken us – fear & anxiety, sorrow & grief, family problems, physical ailments
Note: The law of Christ is no different from the Law of God. It is foolish to presume that Jesus would have a different law (**see 4:4**)

III. It demands great caution - "*each one* looking to yourself"

- A. We must always examine our own heart and motives
1. This is no place for pride or self-righteousness
Galatians 5:26 NAU - "Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another."
 2. We must look into our own heart. We are sometimes guilty of the very sins we condemn in others.
Romans 2:1 NAU - "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things."
Galatians 6:3 NAU - "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."
- B. We must understand the great danger that is always before us
1. We have to understand the strength of our own flesh in getting its way
1 Corinthians 10:12 NAS - "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."
 2. Are you immune to impurity of heart, of anger and dissension, of envy and jealousy? Are you immune to covetousness and greed?
Colossians 3:5-6 NAS - "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,"
 3. And we are always in danger of falling victim to Satan's temptations
"so that you too will not be tempted."
1 Peter 5:8 NAS - "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

4. Paul admonished the Church of Corinth to forgive a repentant brother so that they would not fall prey to the schemes of Satan
2 Corinthians 2:7-11 NAU - "so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him*, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him. ⁹ For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. ¹⁰ But one whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ, ¹¹ so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes."
5. His schemes are always a danger to us
1 Thessalonians 3:5 NAU - "For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain."
6. Many churches have been destroyed through the schemes of Satan with people completely unaware that Satan is using them
Ephesians 6:11-12 NAS - "Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*."
7. We are always being tempted to sin – to commit high treason against our King whom Satan hates.
Matthew 6:9-13 NAS - "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. ¹⁰ 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ 'Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. *For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen* "
 Could be referring to the "evil one."

Conclusion:

1. As we minister to a brother who has fallen prey to the temptations of Satan and the power of their flesh we must never forget that it could easily be us.
2. We must be careful to guard our own hearts.
 We must reach out to one another in love.
 Our goal is that all of us might grow up unto greater degrees of Christ-likeness with the Holy Spirit as our guide.