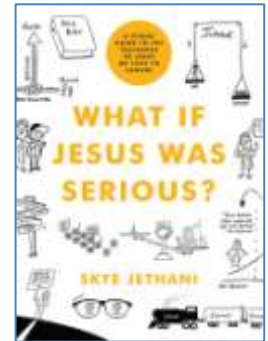




**Galatians 6:1-18**  
**Finding Freedom: Galatians**  
**Don't Grow Weary of Doing Good**

**Rev. Brian North**  
**March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**Palm Sunday**

This morning we are wrapping up our series in Galatians. Before we dive in, I want to let you know that next Sunday we start a **new series** called, “What If Jesus Was Serious?” It will be a series going through the Sermon on the Mount, which contains some of Jesus’ most challenging teachings. The title of the series and the outline for the trajectory of the series is based on a book of the same title, by a guy named Skye Jethani. I want to say two things here about this. **First, the way this book is structured it makes for a perfect daily devotional reading.** There are 9 chapters and every chapter is subdivided into a handful of two-page sections which can each be easily read in just a few minutes. Also, there are over 70 cute and really helpful pictures in the book. When was the last time you read a book with pictures for yourself? So, if for no other reason: get yourself a copy for the entertaining graphics. But the book will challenge you, because the Sermon on the Mount is challenging.



**Second: This is a great book to buy multiple copies of and give away. And I hope you will do that.** Whether that’s friends who don’t know Jesus, or someone who has wandered away, or somebody who’s unsure about what they believe, or maybe people who are believers but not connected to a church. It’s perfect for anyone like that because although the book is written for Christians, it is done so with people who don’t know Jesus in mind. And here’s the thing, even though this series starts next Sunday, we won’t get into the stuff that connects to the book until the following week. So, you’ve got a little bit of time to figure out who you might give one to, and order some books from your favorite online bookseller.

But, since next week is Easter, and I believe in this book and in this series, here’s what I want to do: **I will personally buy a copy for the first 10 guests who you all bring to church next Sunday.** (Is that ok, Gwen? 😊) The only qualifier on this offer is this: It can’t be someone who’s already got faith in Jesus and is connected to a church. If you bring a friend who either *doesn’t* know Jesus or is needs a new church family – if you bring someone

like that to church either in person or online I will buy a copy of the book for them, up to the first 10. If you're here with your friend, it's easy – just chat with me next Sunday; if your friend attends Easter Sunday online, then shoot me an email after church to let me know.

That's how much I believe in this book, this series, our church, and Jesus. So: **Be praying about who to invite to church next week for the start of this series, and then invite them all.** By the way, if there are *more* than 10 books needed – and I hope there are – then I'll figure out a way to get more books. I want to buy 10 copies of this book. In fact, I'll be disappointed if I don't get to. You don't want to disappoint your pastor, do you? ☺ Ok... don't do it for me. Do it for Jesus, for your own faith, and especially for the people you invite, because Jesus meant what he said, and Jesus changes lives.

With that look ahead...let's dive into today's passage. These are the closing 18 verses of Galatians...They come on the heels of the fruit of the Spirit which we looked at last week, and we saw how that work of the Spirit in our life is a battle with our fleshly and worldly desires. So out of that we come to today's passage, God's word through Paul to the Galatian churches nearly 2,000 years ago, and now to us. **Galatians 6:1-18**

**In the first few verses here Paul is going back and forth between the responsibilities of the individual and of the group (the church).** We all (individually) need help from others (the group) in life at times, whether that's getting through a pandemic, a difficult season of work, staying morally and ethically pure, staying on track with school work if you're a student, making a significant decision in life...there are lots of times and facets of life where we need people around us to help us. But we also don't go through life like slackers (that's the individual) and expect others (the group) to do our work for us. That's the gist of the first few verses. "Carry one another's burdens," (that's the group) Paul writes in verse 2, but also "each one should carry their own load" (that's the individual) as he says writes in verse 5.

**In particular, Paul talks about "restoring" others "gently."** We want to restore others who have fallen into sin, or *we* want to be restored if *we've* messed up, and this restoration is done gently. In other words, with grace and

dignity for the one being restored. Restoration means to be brought back or put back together again; brought back to original condition. **Ultimately, this is what Jesus does on the cross.** Through his death, we are brought back into the right and original relationship with our Creator as God intended.

Often when we speak of the cross we talk about “reconciliation” – being reconciled to our heavenly Father through Jesus’ death. But “restoration” works as well. Reconciliation is a restored relationship. This is the work Jesus does on the cross.

And when *we* restore *others*...when we help them get out of the grips of sin, and bear their burdens with them...**When we restore others, we are loving them and helping them to experience the restoration that Jesus brings.** This is what it means to fulfill “the law of Christ” as Paul puts it in verse 2. It’s not “the law” as in the Jewish religious laws Paul has been trying to pry them away from. Rather, it’s the law of love – serving others in humility, loving our neighbor as ourselves, letting our faith express itself in love. Those are all phrases we’ve heard the last couple weeks in Paul’s letter, and he’s giving practical examples here of what that means in these first verses.

Now: **There are some cautions here as well.** In verse 1 he cautions that when helping others we want to be careful not to be sucked into the temptation ourselves. We also don’t want to build ourselves up and think we’re more than we actually are and therefore deceive ourselves, as he writes in verse 3. That’s a pride that we want to avoid; it’s self-deception and ignorance to our weaknesses. But he also writes in verse 4 we *can* take pride in ourselves – not in a judgmental way toward others – but in an honest and reflective kind of way as we look at how we live out our faith in Jesus.

**This seems contradictory: Don’t think too highly of yourself, but you can have pride.** Which is it? Well, it’s really two different things. One is a pride in our works. It’s what Paul has been railing against throughout most of this letter. That’s a selfish pride, a pride that leads to self-deception, even. It’s a pride that thinks we are good enough for God or that we could never fall to temptation as he writes in verse 1. The second pride is rooted in Jesus at its core, with an honest assessment of how we’ve lived out our faith. Not

compared to others, but compared to Jesus – which will always keep us humble. Paul expands on this more in verses 12-15 when he returns to condemning works righteousness, particularly circumcision. For instance in verses 13 and 14 he writes, **“Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:13-14)**. So, there’s boasting...there’s pride...but it’s rooted in Jesus, and not in the flesh.

We’ve talked about works righteousness ad nauseum in this series, right? And specifically, circumcision; we’ve come across it several times. Don’t blame me, blame the Apostle Paul. Or blame the Galatians for getting into the works righteousness stuff that necessitated Paul writing them. So, I’m not going to speak to this anymore because we’ve heard enough...except for a story I came across this week that sums it all up well. “A priest, a minister, and a rabbi wanted to see who’s best at his job. So they each go into the woods, find a bear, and attempt to convert it. Later they get together. The priest begins: “When I found the bear, I read to him from the Catechism and sprinkled him with holy water. He confessed faith in Jesus and next week is his First Communion.”

“I found a bear by the stream,” says the minister, “and preached God’s holy word. The bear put his faith in Jesus and he let me baptize him.”

They both look down at the rabbi, who is lying on a gurney in a full body cast. “Looking back,” said the rabbi, “maybe I shouldn’t have started with the circumcision.”<sup>1</sup> Exactly! Works righteousness leads to eternal death; Trying to be good enough for God doesn’t work. How could you ever know if you’ve done enough good stuff, or eliminated enough bad stuff? But the cross of Christ *is* enough, and faith in Jesus leads to abundant life and life eternal. So, our pride and our boasting are in Jesus Christ.

So if works are bad, does this mean we do nothing but “have faith” and just sit **(Picture)**



in a lounge chair on the lido deck of the cruise ship of life, sipping a froofy drink with an umbrella in it while Jesus steers us into eternity? Is this a picture of the Christian life? It's certainly a picture of vacation...and we all need one after Covid. But is it a metaphor of the Christian life if works are so bad? Here's what Paul has to say about that. **“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).** “Doing good” (sounds like bad grammar, but “good” is a noun here) is connected to our faith expressing itself in love, serving others in humility, and bearing the fruit of the spirit.

“Let us not become weary in doing good...do not give up.” Our faith *leads* us to do good – and we don't want to get tired of that or give up on it. As I thought about this verse, I had this question come to mind: **When do we tend to become weary of “doing good?”** It seems to me we're more likely to grow weary when we've been “doing good” a long time...when we think we're near the finish line. That's just sort of a truth about life in general. Other factors weigh in, of course: Like how much resistance there's been to your doing good, or how much support you've had, or how much success you've had, or how many setbacks and failures you've experienced.

But often, when we think we're almost done doing good and almost to the finish line, some people will ease up, **like in this video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMY8q23akCI>. See? An early start to a celebration – holding the ball out in one hand, slowing down – and it cost them a touchdown. And it was a turnover to Dallas, who got the ball on their 20 yard line. The lost points nearly cost Seattle that game; the Seahawks defense had to keep Dallas out of the end zone at the end of the game to preserve the victory. We don't want to weary of doing good; we want to push through to the end.

You know, on that first Palm Sunday as Jesus was coming into town: it sort of feels like he's crossing a finish line...like he's nearing the end. But there's no early celebration by Jesus. He's being cheered, the palm branches are waving, people are laying the branches and their coats on the ground in front of him. They're crying out “Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!” It feels like

it's time to kind of coast on in to the end. In fact, for the crowds, I don't think there can be any doubt that that was the case.

**But the hardest work was still to come.** The finish line was not there, and there's still work for Jesus to do. Jesus has to keep discipling the disciples. He has a Passover meal to celebrate and give new meaning to; he's got feet to wash, a traitor to love, some public teaching to do, a denier to keep an eye on, some praying to do, blood to sweat, a mob to quell, a hot-headed disciple with a knife to settle down, a sham trial to go through...a crucifixion to suffer...all of that is good stuff to do...and it's all *before* the finish line, his final breath. (The resurrection, btw, is the after-race party!)

There's a lot of "good" that Jesus did in the last week of his life. In fact, you can make a *really* good case that the most important "good" Jesus ever did besides the cross, was that Passover meal; where Jesus took the bread and the wine and said, "This is my body broken for you...this is my blood shed for you." **That was maybe the most important thing he did, and he saved that for the last week.** Jesus never wearied of doing good. He didn't give up, even when the finish line was in sight.

And all of the "doing good" he did was about building up his disciples...getting them ready to carry the baton that he was handing off to them. He's entrusting them with the gospel message, because once he's resurrected, they will be the ones to lead this movement, to birth the church. He had to let go of that baton and let them run with it. But if he had grown weary of doing good as he rode into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, he wouldn't have completed the mission.

Similarly, in his closing words, Paul is encouraging the Galatian Christians to keep going strong. Stay strong in your faith and trust in Jesus, not a bunch of religious works. Don't grow weary of doing good. Keep expressing your faith in love. Keep engaging in the war inside and don't give into the flesh. Serve people in humility.

**Like Jesus riding into town, like the churches in Galatia: we need to make sure we're not growing weary of doing good, as well.** This might be

true for you in your own personal journey of faith...maybe you even *have* grown weary. Maybe, as Jesus says, you need to cast your burdens on him – whether that’s a sin or something else. We’re all weary of covid and “doing good” in the midst of it (wearing masks, sanitizing everything, etc.). It has been a burdensome year, no doubt about it. Maybe your spiritual condition is not real good, or you’ve got doubts or questions. Bring them here. Jesus can handle it all. Bring it to him. Let him strengthen and encourage you. So that’s the “individual” like Paul addresses earlier. How about the “group”?

**Maybe as a church we are wearying of doing good.** Some of you have been elders, deacons, choir member, Sunday school teachers, ministry team members, and more for many years. You’ve supported the ministry of the church with your time and your talent and your tithe for decades. Praise God for all the good that people have done here at Rose Hill! Maybe for you, the finish line is in sight. Maybe it’s closer than you’d like to admit. Even for me, in my late 40’s, I know the finish line is probably closer than the starting line. But for those who are even closer, now is not the time to grow weary of doing good. Now is not the time to give up. Like Jesus coming in to Jerusalem, the finish line has not yet been crossed. And like Jesus, maybe some of the most important work is still to be done, in handing off the baton to those who will run the race after you, and your work is supporting and encouraging those who run the race, and joining in with them as they lead.

For those of you who are new to Rose Hill – which doesn’t mean just the last 2-3 years...more like 8-10...and especially if you’re of an age that the finish line is still likely a way off: **The opportunity is here for you to have a significant impact on the future of this church by “doing good.”** By taking the baton that’s being handed off, stepping into leadership roles, serving in ministries, teaching, discipling, mentoring, being engaged in the community...inviting people to experience the friendship and fellowship that exists here and ultimately, inviting people to know Jesus. That’s the good that can be done as the baton is handed off to you.

**So as this letter of Galatians draws to a close, let’s all remember that, like Jesus coming in to Jerusalem: we’re still in the race. It’s not over.** Let’s keep doing good, because Jesus is good, because the cross is still at

work in our lives, because there are people to reach, neighbors to love, disciples to build, fruit to bear. And there's a sweet after-race party we want to invite as many people to experience as possible. So, there is still good to do. Let's not grow weary of it, as we all work together on God's team. And may Paul's last few words of this letter encourage us and strengthen us to keep doing good, when he writes: **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen” (Galatians 6:18).** Let's Pray...Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.readersdigest.ca/culture/70-funniest-jokes-readers-digest/>