

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 13 4Q 2011

The Gospel and the Church

SABBATH

Read the entire day starting with first paragraph, “Some potato farmers...” thoughts?

The state the farmers learned an important of the law of life, what legislation voted to enact this law?

What happens when you break such a law? Does the government have to have a court investigation, prosecution, sentencing and infliction of punishment?

Are there any lessons here regarding God’s law and sin?

Would any harm be done if we taught that a farmer who planted small potatoes would incur the wrath of God and be punished by having a poor harvest?

Does that ever happen in Christianity?

Turn to Thursday’s lesson, read Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 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. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:7-10

What do you hear? Is the message from Paul of sewing and reaping, a law of life? Enacted or natural?

And then the first two paragraphs, “In Galatians...”

Does it sound just like what happens to the farmer who plants small potatoes, that destruction comes from the natural result of being out of harmony with God’s law of life?

What message is suggested by, “Paul’s point is that people may ignore God or even flout His commandments, but they cannot outwit God. He is the ultimate judge, and in the end they will have to pay the price for their actions.”

Does this sound like the natural results of planting small potatoes, or more like, God will punish you by giving you a small harvest?

Do we do harm when we present such concepts?

What harm comes from such ideas? What do young people do if they are presented with such ideas?

Does it ever cause people to reject God altogether?

Do we have a responsibility as Christians to present a better message?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “While Paul...” thoughts?

I personally don’t like the use of “mistakes” in this setting; “mistakes” to me connotes things like planting a tree too close to the house, making an error in your checkbook, dialing the wrong phone number.

Is there a difference between making a math mistake in your checkbook, which results in an overdrawn account and purposely writing a check knowing there are insufficient funds because you are trying to defraud someone? Would you call both of these a mistake?

In heaven, in a sinless world, can there be mistakes without sin?

- Can a sinless being hit a wrong note on a musical instrument?
- Can a sinless being, when stretching their mind to contemplate some aspect of quantum physics generate a false hypothesis and make a calculation error?
- Can a sinless being plant a shrub in a place they later determine isn't ideal?
- Was it a mistake for Eve to wander alone in the Garden? Did she already commit sin when she did?

Are mistakes and violations of God's law always the same?

Read second paragraph, "To benefit from..." thoughts?

What is the point Paul is trying to make? Christians don't look at fellow Christians through the lens of suspicion, accusation, or criticism, but see them in the best possible light, always believing the best intents of those who have accepted Christ, and with that mindset are "shocked" or "surprised" if they find a Christian in sin. This is not a support for church witch-hunts or investigations to uncover sin in person's lives.

But also, the converted person, may have weaknesses that they are not aware of, which may present in certain situations without expectation. And this is shocking to the person. "I never thought I would do such a thing..."

When this happens what is the proper response?

Read third paragraph, "The likelihood..." thoughts?

Can anyone give examples of unintentional sin and deliberate defiant sin? Is one type of sin less damaging than another?

If a person slips off a ten-story roof or purposely jumps, does it make a difference? What difference?

What is defiant sin? Would it not simply be cherished sin, the selfishness, ego, lust, addiction for which the person clings and has no desire to be free of? Is it not the sin the person justifies, even argues isn't sin at all?

I have never met a person yet, who had an affair, that didn't know it was wrong at the time they were engaging in it. Does that mean it was defiant sin? Was it merely a mistake, "Oh my, I thought you were my spouse!"

Or, is it, a weakness, a vulnerability in them, that in a certain situation became manifest? Is it the sinful act that is the problem, or the defect of character that was already in the person, but didn't manifest until the act that was the real problem?

Example, - Peter and his denial of Christ.

- Prior to the denial, what was Peter's assessment of himself?
- When Christ told him that he would betray Christ, what was Peter's response?
- Did Peter have some defect in character that he was unaware of?
- What happened when that defect manifested in behavior – when Peter denied his Lord? It opened Peter's eyes to his true condition and he wept bitterly and was, at that point, converted.

Was Peter's sin a mistake, or a defiant sin?

- How many times did Peter deny his Lord?
- Did the Lord warn Peter ahead of time?
- Did he have time to think about it after his first denial and did he yet deny again?
- Or was Peter's denial evidence of a defect in heart that Peter was unaware of, that the act revealed to Peter?

What does this mean regarding how we see ourselves and others?

Should we not see everyone through the lens of our true condition? In what condition were we borne?

“Born in sin, conceived in iniquity.” Ps 51:5

Who chose this? Did anyone, since Adam, choose to be born a sinner?

Can a person make a choice to avoid this condition?

- All people are borne, wired with fear, and the drive to survive primary.
- This drive to survive, if unchecked leads us to act how?
- Selfishly, and selfishness is the opposite of what?
- Love, and love is the law of life.

We are borne, not by our choice, in a terminal condition of selfishness, this is why Jesus said we must be reborn. Which means what? We must have a change in the motives of the heart. Love must be planted into the heart.

This rebirth only happens to those who are brought to a realization that there is something wrong with themselves they cannot fix. Peter’s denial brought Peter to that point.

So what is defiant sin? It is an act, that one has awareness is wrong, or a heart that doesn’t want to be healed, regardless of the behavior? The behavior is secondary, the heart is primary.

And what should be our attitude toward each other when we discover an area in which a person is struggling with the infection of sin?

Read last paragraph, “The proper response...” thoughts?

Has it been your experience that the church is a place where the restoring response is predominant, where the likelihood of gossip, punishment, disfellowship, condemnation is remote?

The lesson asks at the bottom of Tuesday's lesson, "What keeps you from seeking help- pride, shame, lack of trust, a sense of self-sufficiency?"

Could it be fear of how the church will treat you?

Why is the church, so often a place where we crucify each other, rather than build each other up in love?

Could it be the "natural" result, the automatic outgrowth, of worshipping a judgmental, punishing, wrathful God? If we plant seeds in the mind of a wrathful God, a judge who inspects, finds fault, and punishes, might this not result in us experiencing the fruit of such practices in our own lives?

What would be the remedy for such problems in the church?

Would it not be the truth about God – who is, Himself, being judged, and who gave Himself for us?

How many of you would feel comfortable seeking out a member of the class to be an accountability partner for you regarding your porn addiction? Why not?

If someone came to you from the class and told you they were struggling with a drug addiction, porn addiction, or some other problem, how would you respond?

MONDAY

Read bottom paragraph, "One of the greatest..." thoughts?

Do you find it helpful to think of sin in "types"? Is there any danger to think of sin as types?

When we think of “certain types of sin,”

- Does it suggest sin is behavioral?
- Does this concept contribute to certain spiritual pride? “I’ve never used alcohol, drugs, tobacco.” “Well, I’ve never eaten meat.” “Well, I’ve never eaten cheese.”
- Does it suggest some “sins” are worse than other sins?
- Does it obscure, in any way, the reality that sin is a condition of the heart that manifests in many ways?

What about the danger of believing we are immune to theological error?

I love this quote by one of the founders of our church. Do you think this is a healthy and reasonable attitude to have?

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {CW 35.2}

Is this reasonable? I strive to remember I am finite, no matter what I currently know and understand, there is always more to know and understand. I never want to “arrive” at truth, but to daily advance and grow in truth.

TUESDAY

Burden Bearing

What comes to mind when you consider the idea of bearing one another’s burdens?

What is the purpose of bearing one another’s burdens?

- Is it to remove the burden?
- Is it to relieve them of responsibility?
- Is it to help the person?
- What does it mean to help?
 - Help them feel better?
 - Make them happy?
 - Give them what they are asking for?
 - Or, is genuine helping, when we help in their development into Christlikeness?
 - And what would that mean in regard to burden bearing?

Are there any dangers to bearing one another's burdens?

Can we, by bearing one another's burdens, do harm?

If a parent carries a child and never sets them down, because they don't want to see the child injured when the child stumbles and falls as he/she learns to walk. Will carrying the child and never putting the child down help or injure the child?

Does this analogy have any application beyond childhood?

Do we ever carry burdens for people who are capable of carrying their own burdens? If we do this, do we help or injure?

I had a patient in renal failure....

This week I had a patient whose brother has a drug problem, the brother lives in the deceased parents home, he won't get a job, he doesn't pay any bills, the sister takes all his "burdens" pays his bills, tries to get him a job, won't hold him accountable.

If the sister loves him, what does she need to do?

Do we help people, who are capable of carrying their own weight, by giving handouts? By fulfilling their duties for them?

What happens inside a person who doesn't fulfill their own responsibilities, carry their own burdens, when they are capable of doing so?

I saw a another patient on Thursday, distraught and overwhelmed, because a sister with chronic illness calls her all the time to get the patient to do for her, cook, clean, pay bills, run errands, do laundry. And my patient was overwhelmed.

- We spoke of healthy boundaries, of not doing for a person that is capable of doing for themselves.
- We explored the principle of “if you don't use it you lose it.” And if we do for others, that which they can reasonably do for themselves, we may cripple them or contribute to further disability.
- She cried and asked, “But she is my sister, and my sister in Christ aren't I supposed to serve her?”
- How would you answer her?

So, while there is danger in carrying another's burdens. Are there clearly times and places where, in love, it is our duty and privilege to carry another's burden?

- How can we tell when it is time to step in and carry a burden for another, and when it is time to call the person to carry their own burden?

Let's Look at WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul's use of the phrase...” thoughts?

What is your understanding of what the lesson means by the term, “moral law”? Is it the 10 commandments?

What do you think of the logic and explanation of the “law of Christ” and the “moral law”?

So, what is the law of Christ? Is it the law of love?

And the 10 Commandments are an expression of the law of love, specifically adapted for humans in sin – for loving purposes. Can the law of love be annulled? Why or why not?

How would you describe the law of love?

How would you apply the law of love in relationship to others and their burdens?

Why is it okay for a mother to brush the teeth of their 18 month old, but not okay for the same mother to brush the teeth of her 18 year old?

Love seeks to build up and bless others, to help others develop their full potential, which means we don't habitually do for others that which they are capable of doing for themselves.

In the physical world strength increases as we exercise or stress our muscles against burdens or weights. No other person can exercise our muscles for us, if someone else lifts the weight they get the strength. Likewise, when it comes to character no one else can lift life's individual responsibilities for you and you get the strengthening of character. No, if someone else lifts your burdens, that you are responsible for and capable of fulfilling, they get stronger and you get weaker.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Spirit of God..." thoughts?

What is being described? Is there a law in evidence? What law? Is this an imposed law, or part of God's design?

What does this indicate in regard to the final end of sin and sinners?

Read second paragraph, "All should..." thoughts?

What is the agency by which the soul is destroyed? Is God the destroyer?

Why do so many put God in the role of destroying the soul?

What is the consequence to understanding that sin destroys the soul and God heals? How does such an understanding impact our decision making and relationship with God?

What happens if we wrongly conclude God is the destroyer? What impact does that have?