

## Sabbath School Lesson #13 – The Gospel and the Church – 16-22 September 2017

**C**hrist who went about doing good, may do good in you. Paul says, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). Read Galatians 6:1-10 for this week’s study.

The Law in the Gospel – The Galatians epistle deals largely with the law. In fact, it deals with nothing else; for the real law of God, the law of liberty, is the life of Christ, “who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil” (Acts 10:38). The law is righteousness, and righteousness is life. Disobedience to the law is death. “All have sinned,” and are therefore under the curse of the law; but “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” He received, so to speak, all the broken, ragged edges of the law in Himself, in order that through the creative power of His life, the law might come to us in its perfection, for the purpose for which it was designed, for it “was ordained to life” (Romans 7:10). Out of Christ, the law is a terror, a yoke of bondage, a ministration of death, because out of Him it is not kept; in Christ it is “not grievous,” but is peace and life, because in Him we are made to walk in the good works which God Himself has wrought for us.

The Law of Peace – “Great peace have they which love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them” (Psalms 119:165). “O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea” (Isaiah 98:18). “The law is spiritual,” and “to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 7:14; 8:6). Those who through the Gospel keep the law are kept in perfect peace, because it is in the Gospel of peace that the righteousness of God – the law – is revealed (Romans 1:16-17). Such ones are not “desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.” “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” “He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” It is only where men, by departing from the Gospel of Christ, transgress the law, that they bite and devour one another, and are consumed of one another. The fruit of the Spirit, against which there is no law, because it is the perfection of the law, is “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Galatians was written for the purpose of restoring this Spirit in its readers. How perfectly in harmony with the whole Epistle, are the opening words of the sixth chapter!

Burden-Bearing – It can well be said that there is much in this portion of Scripture, as well as in others, which no one as yet understands, especially in verses 2 and 5, which, seem to be directly contrary to each other. One says that we should bear one another’s burdens, and the other says that every one shall bear his own burden. But we can find abundance of instruction in what is evident. Each one must have the Spirit of Christ, which is that of burden-bearing. He devoted His life to the service of others. But His own burdens He carried to God. He did not ask others to carry them for Him. Even so it should be with us. If every one in the house of God, to say nothing of the world, acted according to this plan, how easy it would be to get on! There would really be no burdens for any one to bear. Each one thoughtful only of others, studying their burdens, that he might help them, would find his own burdens carried in turn by others. The only burden that any one would then carry would be Christ’s burden, which He calls us to take, because it is light. Let us learn of Christ, who bore the burden of the world, and asked none to share it with Him; yet He found it easy and light. When we try to unload our burdens on others, we are always in trouble, always heavy-laden; but when we are wholly devoted to bearing the burdens of others, we find them light.

Communicating Good Things – “Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” There can be no doubt but that this refers primarily to temporal support. “The labourer is worthy of his hire.” If a man gives himself wholly to the ministry of the Word, it is evident that the things necessary for his sustenance must come from those who are taught. But this by no means exhausts the meaning of the injunction. The one who is taught in the Word must communicate to the teacher “in all good things.” Mutual help is the burden of this chapter. “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” Even the teacher who is supported by those who are taught, is to assist others pecuniarily. Christ and the apostles, who had nothing of their own – for Christ was the poorest of the poor, and the disciples had left all to follow Him – nevertheless distributed to the poor out of their little store (see John 13:29). As the teachers contribute not only the Word but temporal support as well, so those who are taught in the Word should not confine their liberality merely to temporal things. It is a mistake to think that ministers of the Gospel never need spiritual refreshment.

Sowing and Reaping – “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” A simple statement of fact that cannot be made plainer by any amount of talk. The harvest, which is the end of the world, will reveal what the sowing has been, whether wheat or tares. “He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hosea 10:12). “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool,” and equally foolish is he who trusts in other men, as is seen from the next verse: “Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies; because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of mighty men.” “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm,” whether it be his own flesh or that of some other man. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is” (Jeremiah 17:5, 7). Let us sow in Spirit.

Faint Not – “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good” (Ecclesiastes 11:6). This is the thing that is taught in verse 9. We cannot tell how much we shall reap, nor from which of the seed that we sow. Some may fall by the wayside, and be snatched away before it has time to take root, and other may fall on stony ground, where it will wither, and still other may fall among thorns, and be choked; but one thing is certain, and that is that we shall reap. Notice the statement in Ecclesiastes: We do not know whether the morning sowing or the evening sowing will prosper, or whether both shall alike be good. There is no possibility that both can be bad. One or the other alone may prosper, or else both may be good. Is not that encouragement enough for us not to be weary in well-doing? The ground may seem poor, and the season may not be favorable, so that the prospect for a crop may be most unpromising, and we may be tempted to think that all our labour is wasted. Not so; “in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Make No Difference – “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” In this we see that the apostle speaks of temporal help, for it needs no special exhortation to preach the Word to those who are not of the household of faith; they are the ones to whom it is specially to be preached; but there is a natural tendency – *natural*, I say, not spiritual – to limit charities to those who are called ‘deserving.’ We hear much about ‘the worthy poor.’ But we are all unworthy of the least of God’s blessings, yet He showers them upon us continually. “If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Luke 6:33-35). The most of Christ’s ministry on earth was among those who cared nothing for Him personally. In some instances they would not even take the favours bestowed; but that made no difference with Him. He gave just as freely of what He had to give. Learn of Him, so you may “fulfil the law of Christ.”

Seek the Opportunity – Note especially the beginning of the tenth verse. “As we *have therefore opportunity*,” let us do good unto all men. Doing good to others is to be considered a privilege to be enjoyed, and not an irksome duty to be discharged. Men do not speak of disagreeable things as opportunities. No one says that he had an opportunity to injure himself, or that he had an opportunity to lose some money. On the contrary, a man will speak of an opportunity to make some money, or to escape from some threatened danger. It is thus that we are to consider doing good to the needy. But opportunities are always sought for. Men are always on the lookout for an opportunity to get gain. So the apostle teaches us that we should be seeking opportunities to help some one. This Christ did. He “went about doing good.” He traveled about the country on foot, a tramp, if you please, but a glorious one. He was searching opportunities to do some good, and He found them. He did good, “for God was with Him.” His name is Immanuel, which means, “God with us.” Now, as He is with us all the days, even to the end of the world, so God is with us, doing good to us, that we also may do good. “We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” To this end, “receive ye the Holy Ghost.”