

July 03, 2016
Sermon for The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Galatians 6:1-10, 14-18

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Galatians 6:1–10 (ESV)

¹ Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load. ⁶ Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ 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. ⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:14–18 (ESV)

¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷ From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

The Church Services are over. The organist is busy putting away music. The altar guild is attending to the Communion ware. The counters are going about their duties and the church begins to get closed up.

I've heard of a congregation where things sound differently at the end of the service. Everything is quiet and then suddenly, the sound of young voices fills the nave. Little heads are bouncing up and down as they race between the pews. Their goal is to collect as many bulletins as possible and present them as a prize to their father, an usher.

They do this for the joy of it. It is not work. It is not a burden. They do this knowing they'll receive an approving smile from their father. It's a golden opportunity to show their love to the one they call "Dad." The smiling faces and the arms extended upward with hands full of used bulletins tell the story. There's no secret here as to why they did the thing they did.

What about us?

Why Do We Do the Things We Do?

Do we do the things we do because we feel some sort of burden, or do we do them out of joy for someone?

Do we do the things we do as a burden?

Our text describes one of the things we do as Christians: we are commanded to bear one another's burdens (vv 1–2).

Members of the Body of Christ have burdens. Whether it is because of troubles in their family or because of their personal problems, brothers and sisters in Christ fall into sin. Struggling against sin can be a huge burden of guilt. Whether the alcoholic is struggling not to take another drink or whether the clinically depressed person is struggling to make it out of bed

for another day. People struggle with their own different burdens.

Fellow Christians struggle with other burdens too. They are in need of support and encouragement over troubles at home, a lost job, an illness.

We are to restore these fellow believers in “a spirit of gentleness” (v 1; Phil 4:5; Col 3:12). That means forgiving them of sins. Not holding their past actions against them just because they have made mistakes in the past.

We are to stand by them in those times of suffering. We acknowledge the burden, whether it is brought on by their own actions or whether it is through no fault of their own, we stand by them and try to help as best we can.

Obviously, bearing one another’s burdens is a very good thing! It’s “the Christian thing to do.” *It’s what we do.*

But why do we do it?

Do we bear one another’s burdens because we think it’s what we have to do as a good Christian or *to be* a good Christian? That is, do we see bearing one another’s burdens as one big burden *to us*?

Do we do it because we think of it as a required fulfilling of the Law? (v 2). We don’t do it because we want to, but because we feel like we have to.

Do we do it because we think it ensures we’ll reap a rich harvest of payback? (vv 6–10). You know what I mean. If we help someone bear their burden, then they will owe us. Or maybe because we think it will make us look good, or raise our reputation. It might do all of those things, but that’s not why we should do it.

Or maybe do we do it because carrying others’ burdens makes us feel like we’re the strong ones. We don’t have problems (temptations, family troubles, unemployment, health issues) like they do.

If that's why we bear one another's burdens, then what we do is not only for the wrong reason, but also it receives a stern warning in our Text (vv 1b, 3–5).

Okay, so we still agree that bearing one another's burdens is the Christian thing to do. We all know it's what we should do. When we're living out our Christian life, it's just what we do. But we want to do it for the right reason. What is the right reason?

Do we do the things we do for someone?

We know we should do what we do for someone else, don't we? We should bear another's burdens not for our benefit but for that of the other person.

We are to forgive our neighbor because we wish her to be released from guilt.

We are to listen, to comfort, to counsel because we want him to live in joy and peace of mind.

That is, our works for others are not to lead us to sinful pride but to humble service (Eph 4:2; 1 Pet 3:8). Not for our benefit but for them.

But the fact is the only way we can do what we do *for someone else* is *because of Someone Else*.

By nature, we care only about ourselves, account-ing for ourselves, keeping the Law. Thinking about how good we are; like we are really something.

Feeling pretty proud of the way we bear our own load, pull my own weight, proud of ourselves because we don't need anybody else's help.

We really do want to earn ourselves a reward—or avoid punishment—by fulfilling what I think must be that “law of Christ.”

But that Someone Else, Jesus Christ, has freed us from thinking about ourselves (v 14a). That really has been Paul's point all the way through Galatians, and now it reaches its climax.

We are by nature slaves to sin and the Law, and trying to keep it, to beat our sin by whatever good things we try to do—even caring for our fellow believers—is hopeless.

But Christ has fulfilled the Law for us so that now we don't have to worry—or even think—about ourselves. We aren't trying to earn our salvation, it was bought by Christ on the cross, so we can focus on the cross of Christ. The cross was considered a place of defeat (Is 52:13–53:12; Heb 12:2), but Jesus turned the cross into a place of victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil (Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15: 54–57; Gal 2:20).

We do what we do for someone else (our fellow believers) because Someone Else (Jesus Christ) has done what he did for us.

In Christ, we are a new creation (vv 14–16).

The old Adam is drowned in our Baptism, and a new man arises (Rom 6:4; Eph 4:22; Titus 3:5).

As a new creation, we are renewed, redeemed, restored (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 3:27).

We are led by the Spirit; the world has been crucified to us (v 14; 1 Cor 2:2; Phil 3:7–8).

We embrace the things of Christ—live a Spirit-led life of loving, bearing burdens, as Jesus has loved us (Jn 13:34–35; Rom 12:10; 2 Cor 13:11).

We cannot depend on ourselves to do good for others. Our sinful nature leads us into temptation, and sin will rule the day. But we do what we do because of Someone, because of what Christ has done for us in love. In love and empowered by the Spirit, we are crucified to the world and made alive to Christ. In a spirit of gentleness, we restore our brothers and sisters in Christ, bearing their burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Sermon Outline

Why Do We Do the Things We Do?

(Galatians 6:1-10, 14-18)

- I. Do we do the things we do as a burden?
- II. Do we do the things we do for someone else?
- III. Do we do the things we do *because of* someone else?