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Sermon Notes

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## **The Christian Family Watches Over One Another in Love**

### **Galatians 6:1-6**

War-time story of a man who ran in “no-man’s land” and rescued an injured comrade and, picking him up, carried him back to safety.

War-time story of the Bataan Death March.. fellow sufferers who refused to let weak soldiers fall out and be murdered

Eye surgery: Dr. Carlson’s skill at removing my cataracts... gently and skillfully caring for me when I was becoming increasingly blind

LOOK AROUND YOU!!! We are part of a magnificent Christian family here at FBC... it is a delightful and committed family... it is a family under constant attack by vicious enemies... it is a family that must commit itself to this one pledge we hear constantly in our Church Covenant:

“We will watch over one another in brotherly love.”

#### **I. The Christian Family Restores Those Caught In Sin (vs. 1)**

***Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.***

##### **A. An Expected Emergency in the Church**

1. Someone is “caught in a sin”
2. Greek: captured, seized, like a prisoner of war... surprised, like a traveler seized by a bunch of highway robbers
3. BUT it’s a SIN, so the person is not an innocent victim
4. It’s time for the church to be mobilized! The world doesn’t care about this at all, unless it’s a crime... then society will sic the police on ‘em
5. But here, it’s a sin issue:

- a. Perhaps the adulterous fling has been exposed
  - b. Perhaps the internet pornography user has been revealed
  - c. Perhaps the gossip has finally gone too far
  - d. Perhaps the bitterly critical wife has disrespected her husband
  - e. Perhaps the harsh husband has been exposed in public
  - f. Perhaps the one cheating on his taxes has been caught by an IRS audit
  - g. Perhaps the college student has been caught plagiarizing a term paper
  - h. SOMEONE HAS BEEN CAUGHT IN A SIN!!!
  - i. It's time for the church to do what it alone can do: reach out in love and restore the sinner
6. The centerpiece of this passage is this: THE RESTORATION OF SINNERS to spiritual health by humble, gentle brothers and sisters
7. It is part of a healthy church family depicted here powerfully
8. Galatian legalism overwhelmed by GRACE... the grace of the gospel
- a. Context: Judaizers preaching a false gospel of faith + works
  - b. Legalism always flows from and increases spiritual PRIDE
  - c. It results in an attitude of: "Here's the standard... now it's up to YOU to meet it. We all do! What's wrong with you??"

***Matthew 23:4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.***

- d. Paul hinted at the divisiveness and internal warfare such legalism produces

***Galatians 5:15 if you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.***

- e. The remedy to legalism: the gospel of Christ, including the gift of the Holy Spirit
- f. The Spirit-filled life in the church... an infinitely superior way to live in community with each other

***Galatians 5:25-26 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.***

g. PRIDE results in a self-destructive church... people who are conceited... who provoke each other by spiritual competitiveness, or who envy one another rather than working together to conquer our mutual enemy: SIN

## B. “Band of Brothers” at War Together

### 1. Famous speech... Shakespeare’s *Henry V*:

The St. Crispin's Day speech:

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile

Stephen Ambrose wrote a book about the camaraderie that grows between soldiers who fight side by side in fierce battle...

So it must be in the Christian church!

Sense of tremendous dependence we have on one another

### 2. Each Christian is assaulted daily by three overpowering enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil

a. Enemy #1: The devil: immeasurably powerful, implacably hostile, indescribably evil... a vicious tyrant, seeking our very lives... probably the most powerful being God ever created... incredibly subtle and devious, masquerading as an angel of light—lying, twisting the truth, dangling temptations, accusing us constantly of sin

i) Daniel saw a mighty angel who came to bring him a message from God

ii) This angel was immense and brilliant, so terrifying in its glory that Daniel was knocked to the ground, breathless, unable to speak, barely able to think

iii) BUT this mighty angel could not get past a spiritual adversary known as the “Prince of Persia”... perhaps the devil, maybe just one of Satan’s many powerful henchmen, called “powers and principalities”

iv) So... how powerful is Satan? How terrifying if we had to face him alone!!

v) Jesus prayed with deep earnestness that we be protected from him

***John 17:15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.***

vi) The devil... a ROARING LION, prowling around, seeking someone to DEVOUR!!!

b. Enemy #2: The world... Satan's alluring masterpiece... the kingdoms of the world with all their enticing splendor... offering pleasures and powers and possessions, experiences, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches... alluring, enticing people to sin, sin, sin... like the Sirens of Odysseus, who sang an alluring song to entice sailors to dash their ships on the rocks, so the world plays a dance every day to allure people with these:

***1 John 2:16 ... the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life***

i) In our time, it's the pleasures of sexual sin—the enticing call of internet pornography; it's the pleasures of the stomach—the constant call to live for food; it's the pleasures of the eye—entertainment, movies, theme parks, vacations, resorts; the pleasures of luxury—the best clothes, automobiles, hotels, houses and real estate, leather, gold, silver, silk, black glass, crystal... the THINGS OF THIS WORLD; it's the allure of a lucrative career, with a high paycheck, commanding power, and overpowering responsibilities... a lucrative career that can give you the world on a platter... THE WORLD, a deadly enemy to your soul

c. Enemy #3: the FLESH... the internal lusts that Satan and the world seek to connect with; the relentless ego, pride, appetites, yearning for satisfaction... if the soul is like a WALLED FORTRESS, and if Satan and the world are allies besieging your soul, then the FLESH is the enemy within that gets up in the middle of the night and unlatches the gate to let the enemy in... it YEARNs to have sin dominate the soul

3. These three enemies are TOO STRONG for us... and they are relentless!!! We can never expect a single reprieve from their constant attack

4. So... EVERY SINGLE CHRISTIAN IS AT WAR ALL THE TIME!!

***Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup> because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***

5. If we fight alone, we will certainly lose! But God has adopted each spiritual orphan and settled each in the family of God; very practically, He has settled us in LOCAL CHURCHES who come together to help each other fight

C. The Command: Restore the Sinning Brother

1. This emergency is inevitable... the power of the flesh is so strong, and Satan and the world so relentless that eventually, some of our number will be caught in sin

2. Paul's plain command: a loving Christian family **MUST RESTORE THE SINNING BROTHER or SISTER**
3. "Restore": like the setting of a bone or joint that has popped out of place...
  - a. Imagine a dislocated shoulder... immensely painful to put back into place
  - b. The dislocated bone **MUST** be restored for the body to be healthy
  - c. So it is if one of our number is caught in a sin... he or she **MUST BE RESTORED** to spiritual health... but the process will be **PAINFUL**

D. Who Should Do This? "You who are **SPIRITUAL**"

1. Following immediately after Galatians 5, we understand this to mean "You who are controlled by the Spirit"
2. Especially vital is that those who are restoring a sinning brother or sister be characterized by the fruit of the Spirit

***Galatians 5:22-23 the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control.***

HOW SWEET AND POWERFUL would such a person be in restoring a sinning brother or sister!

3. Those who are "spiritual" understand the sinning brother or sister with proper perspective... they see the person from God's perspective and from the perspective of eternity... the sin is great, but Christ's blood is greater
4. Those who are "spiritual" see the invisible enemies and their power: the world, the flesh and the devil
5. Those who are "spiritual" have the maturity and wisdom to speak wisdom into the life of the wandering brother or sister
6. Elders are particularly called on to do this as **SHEPHERDS** of the flock
7. But it's not only elders!!! All of us are called on to do this kind of loving work
8. Think of our church covenant: "**We will watch over one another in brotherly love.**" This is the direct scriptural support for that command
9. We are not going to let a brother or sister just drift away into sin! We will **FIGHT** the true enemies to bring that person back, to restore them!!

E. Further Commands:

***Galatians 6:1 restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.***

1. Two additional commands: GENTLENESS and HUMILITY

2. Gentleness:

***“...in a spirit of gentleness.”***

Perhaps a strong focus on the HOLY SPIRIT... a prayer to the Spirit that the Lord may make you as gentle as Jesus

***Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."***

- a. the restoring of the bone back in place will be painful enough... there is no way to confront a sinning brother or sister without causing SOME PAIN... but the spiritual physician must be careful not to cause any more pain than absolutely necessary
  - b. Jesus likened it to removing something from someone's eye
  - c. The eye is by far the most sensitive part of the body... a greater density of nerve endings than anywhere else of the surface of the body
  - d. So we MUST have help removing sin from our lives... but it must be done GENTLY
3. Also Paul says those who are spiritual must guard their own hearts lest they also be tempted
- a. The word “also” implies that you might be caught in the SAME SIN... so there MUST be humility
  - b. You must be aware that you are every bit as susceptible to that same sin as is this other person
  - c. This HUMILITY and WATCHFULNESS is essential; it changes the tone of the encounter!!!
  - d. Just like what Jesus said:

***Matthew 7:3-5 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."***

- e. The removing of the plank is a powerful self-awareness of sin in our own lives!! You should be able to see far more of your own sins as those of others
- f. If you remove this PLANK of self-righteousness, you will SEE CLEARLY to remove the speck from your brother's eye
- g. Other possible sins:
  - i) Anger: self-righteous anger at the sinning brother or sister: "I can't BELIEVE you would do this!! How could you?!!!"
  - ii) Pride: as we mentioned... maybe you wouldn't fall into the exact same sin; and this might make you feel superior to the other person

#### F. FBC: Are You Willing to Do This??

1. This is vital to the holiness and life of our church together
2. We MUST do this for one another!!
3. The rest of the passage will illuminate this duty more clearly
4. But you've already gotten the central idea of the text in verse 1
5. Commit yourself to this process!! [More applications at the end]

## II. The Christian Family Humbly Shares Burdens (vs. 2-3)

***Galatians 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.***

#### A. Direct Context: Restoring the Sinning Brother or Sister

1. When you realize the issue, you understand the spiritual danger the wandering brother or sister is in... you immediately are struck with a feeling of BURDEN
2. It feels HEAVY to have to go to that person and restore them
3. You would much rather do nothing, let it GO!
4. It is a BURDEN to care about the spiritual welfare of our brothers and sisters... to pray for them, to confront them if needed, to restore them with gentleness and humility
5. It is EASIER to walk on by the other side, like the Priest and Levite in the Parable of the Good Samaritan... to stay out of it and NOT GET INVOLVED

6. But it is directly contrary to the Law of Christ... a Law of Love

#### B. The Law of Christ

1. Paul says if we carry each other's burdens, we will in that way be  
FULFILLING THE LAW OF CHRIST
2. Amazing phrase! Throughout the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul has been railing against justification by Law... the Law of Moses
3. Here he speaks of something new: the "Law of Christ"
4. He writes the same in Corinthians

***1 Corinthians 9:21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.***

5. Christ's word is pervasive in our lives... we must OBEY Him... He is the King, the commander of our lives
6. Obedience to the Law of Christ does not save our souls... it proves our souls have been saved already!! We obey BECAUSE we have been justified
7. What is the "Law of Christ"? I think it is the Law of Self-sacrificial Love

***John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."***

Especially the footwashing, and all its powerful symbolism:

***John 13:12-15 "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. <sup>13</sup> "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.***

8. As we are active in restoring sinning brothers and sisters with gentleness and humility, we will be bearing each other's burdens, washing each other's dirty feet, and caring for each other's souls! We will thus be fulfilling the Law of Christ!!

#### C. Many Ways to Carry Each Other's Burdens

1. The most natural understanding of this image is in the restoring of sinning brothers and sisters to spiritual health



2. However, there are many burdens we feel in life... and this command could extend to all of them
3. Any trial that any brother or sister faces is a BURDEN to them
  - a. A health trial: the burden of a chronic disease, even a life-threatening one
  - b. A financial trial: perhaps unemployment or underemployment
  - c. A family trial: perhaps a struggling marriage or a difficult parenting situation
  - d. A relational trial: difficulties at work or with a neighbor
  - e. Various other trials we face
4. We fulfill the Law of Christ when we share in each other's burdens
  - a. Perhaps the situation calls for some financial generosity... some sharing in the payment of an outstanding bill
    - i) The DEACON'S BENEVOLENT fund is for that
    - ii) Consider the example of the early church

***Acts 2:44-45 All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.***

***Acts 4:34-35 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup> and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.***

- b. Perhaps the situation calls for some labor: an elderly couple, unable to do some basic maintenance to their house or some neglected yardwork because of their weakness... the young men of the church assemble together and get that work knocked off
  - c. Perhaps there is a young couple who needs some help with parenting... needs some insight into behavior issues with a five-year old or a teenager.. we BEAR EACH OTHER'S BURDENS when we care and get involved
5. The Greatest Way to Bear Each Other's Burdens: PRAYER
  - a. Consistent, knowledgeable prayer
  - b. Finding out what is going on and praying for it
  - c. Fasting, even, for the needs of others

- d. Destroying the SELFISHNESS of SIN by caring enough to pray
- e. Kneel every day with the church's phone list and say, "Lord, is there some burden I can bear now in prayer?"
- f. It may feel heavy...

***Romans 15:30 I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle [lit. "to agonize together with me] by praying to God for me.***

Especially bearing each other's burdens in the INTERNAL JOURNEY!!!! Helping each other to grow by praying for it daily:

<sup>ESV</sup> ***Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.***

- 6. Let each of us LIVE FOR OTHERS, especially within the membership of FBC... let us consider other's burdens as though they were our own!!

D. To Be Unwilling to Do All This is to Show Appalling Arrogance!

***Galatians 6:3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.***

- 1. This is a warning to those who think other Christians are a burden... other Christians are slowing him down... he's too good to have to get mucked up in the sins of other Christians
- 2. Such a person thinks he is something great, something special... he is puffed up and arrogant
- 3. Paul humbles him (and all of us) when he says "HE IS NOTHING!!!!"
- 4. Paul is not meaning to say that human beings are nothing in an absolute sense... he knows very well we are each created in the image of God
- 5. What he means is that the ARROGANT PERSON who is so impressed with his own righteousness that he's looking down on anyone who needs help has forgotten he is NOTHING in God's sight APART FROM CHRIST!!

***John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.***

- 6. The person who constantly meditates on the fact that he is nothing apart from Christ will be humble enough to help a weak brother or sister when needed

### III. The Christian Family Will Bear Its Own Load (vs. 4-5)

***Galatians 6:4-5 But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. <sup>5</sup> For each will have to bear his own load.***

#### A. Paul Continues with This Theme of How Each of Us Sees Ourselves

1. As we look honestly at our lives as Christians, we will see much that brings us joy and much that brings us grief
2. Our good works are all done by the power of the Spirit for the glory of Christ
3. We can take a share in the joy that we have been included in the awesome building of the Kingdom of Christ by any work we have done for the glory of God by faith out of humble love for others
4. When someone humbly bears someone else's load, and restores that person, they can "boast" in that in a very humble way:

***James 5:19-20 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, <sup>20</sup> remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.***

5. This is an incredibly GOOD WORK...
6. Someone who has been instrumental in bringing back a sinning brother or sister can go to bed that night with a sense of tremendous joy that God has used him to restore one of Christ's precious wandering sheep

#### B. Judgment Day Perspective

1. We will all stand alone
2. We will all give Christ an account for everything we've ever said or done... and we will be completely ALONE at that time in that accounting

***2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.***

3. We will all "bear our own load" of sin on judgment day
4. We will not be able to blame anyone else, and there will be no one else there to shoulder the responsibility with us

#### C. In a Lesser Sense, This Verse Also Speaks of How We Must Not Burden Others with Our Sin and Our Weakness

Ilus. Hiking... we all have backpacks... if someone sprains an ankle, two strong brothers will carry the person down the mountain trail... some others will shoulder the packs of the brothers who are carrying the invalid.

But suppose someone is whiner... a complainer... and wants frequent rests stops... and finally says, "Will one of you carry my pack?"

We must each carry our own loads...

1. The church should not be burdened with loads that people each have to bear
2. A prime example is the financial support of people who have families to care for them

***1 Timothy 5:16 If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.***

***1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.***

3. So also... we shouldn't burden the church with cares that we should have the strength to carry
  - a. Ever been around a gloomy person... one who just doesn't seem to be able to cope with life's struggles
  - b. "How are you?" you ask with some trepidation... because you are pretty confident you'll get the same gloomy answer you always get from this brother or sister
  - c. This gloomy person seems continually to be struggling with some ISSUE... and has forgotten that Christ has been raised from the dead
4. We all have burdens to bear... let's bear them with vigor!! Learn how to cast your burdens on the Lord in your prayer closets so you can get up vigorated and joyful, able to carry the burdens of others

***1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.***

5. Christians are under orders from the Lord:

***Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!***

6. Carry your load!!! Walk in the power of the Spirit... know you aren't in heaven yet! You will have aches, pains, struggles, job troubles, car repairs, ISSUES... no harm in asking for prayer; but there are some loads we were meant to bear ourselves

7. There is a beautiful blending here

***Galatians 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.***

***Galatians 6:5 each one should carry his own load.***

#### IV. The Christian Family Shares All Good Things (vs. 6)

***Galatians 6:6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.***

- A. In Context: Verses 1-5 talk about a strong shepherding we do for one another, especially in restoring people who are sinning
- B. The Elders: Feed the Flock with Constant Sound Doctrine
- C. Simple Understanding: Support for Elders

***1 Corinthians 9:9 it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned?***

***1 Corinthians 9:13-14 Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? <sup>14</sup> In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.***

So... the teachers of the word are worthy of sharing in the material fruits of other's labor... perhaps someone works at a programming company, or someone else is a pharmaceutical research chemist, or someone is a builder... their labor produces MONEY, and they are able to buy "GOOD THINGS" with that money

So also the ones who are taught should give money to those who teach them

This is very clearly taught in the New Testament... it is essential to the full health of the church that some who are gifted in teaching should be freed up to spend their time preparing their lessons and sermons

#### D. Deeper Understanding: Equally Sharing (Feeding on) the Same Food

1. The elders are "feeding the flock" with the word of God... sound instruction
2. The flock must "share" all good things with them—meaning, embrace the same doctrine, sharing it alike
3. The Word of God is not optional... we must all grow to embrace ALL of it and feed on ALL of it

***Philippians 3:15 All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.***

***Philippians 4:9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.***

4. So... the entire church should SHARE THE SAME CONVICTIONS on doctrinal things so that we can live the same kind of Christian life together

## V. Applications

### A. The Greatest Issue: Wandering Into Sin and Having No Savior

1. The chapter is written for the church to look after its own
2. But what if you're not a Christian? Everyone wanders into sin... but do you have a Savior who will rescue you
3. The ultimate danger of sin is JUDGMENT FROM GOD...
4. Jesus Christ is the only Savior from that
5. Do you know Him???

### B. Long-Time Visitors: Join the Church!!

1. How can the elders shepherd you if you're not a member?
2. How can others watch over you in brotherly love if you will not agree to the covenant?
3. Do you not see the value to having a healthy community watch over your soul as you live your life?

### C. FBC Members: "We Will Watch Over One Another in Brotherly Love"

1. Are we doing that?
2. Are we caring enough to ask each other how things are really going?
3. Are we noticing when someone hasn't been to church in a while? Are we making that painful phone call to ask how things are going?
4. If we notice someone caught in a sin, are we obeying this command in verse 1?
5. Are we carrying each other's sin burdens by doing this kind of ministry?
6. Are we praying for one another? Lifting each other up as each struggles with sin?

7. Be willing to speak truth to each other in gentleness and love... be a true brother or sister to another church member
8. PRAY FOR EACH OTHER!! Pray for each other's growth in Christ! Carry each others' burdens in prayer
  - a. Get the church's phone directory and be diligent in praying for it
  - b. If you don't know people, ask about them and find out who each other is
  - c. Call each other and ask, "Are you carrying a burden that I can help shoulder in prayer?"

#### D. Elder Ministry

1. To the elders: you are primarily responsible for this ministry of restoration of wandering members

***Acts 20:28-29 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.***

- a. be faithful to shepherd the flock!
  - b. Be faithful to go after the wandering members
2. To FBC: pray for your elders in this ministry! Be grateful to have elders who are doing this for you!