

Text: Gal 6.7-8

Last week we just touched on Gal 6.7-8, with the promise of a return.

Today we return.

Last week we had a very specific application, this week we have a broader application.

Read Gal 6.1-10, text 7-8

You can see the context is largely about serving one another, bearing one another's burdens. Verse 6 of course has the specific application, bearing the pastor's burdens.

In our text, Paul lays out some foundational principles that support the three imperatives in the passage:

- Restore the fallen brother (v. 1)
- Support the stumbling brother (v. 2)
- Share with the leading brother (v. 6)

Why should you do this? Answer: vv. 7-8 (and all the way to 10, actually)

I. The principle of sowing and reaping

A. The principle is drawn from the harvest

1. You sow wheat, you get wheat
2. You sow barley, you get barley

"Each sower decides what his harvest will be."¹

B. The principle is found in many other passages

Job 4.8 "According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity
And those who sow trouble harvest it.

Pr 22.8 He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his
fury will perish.

¹ Donald K. Campbell, "Galatians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 610.

Hos 10.12 Sow with a view to righteousness, Reap in accordance with kindness; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD Until He comes to rain righteousness on you.

1 Cor 15.33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

2 Cor 9.6 ¶ Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

C. The bottom line for the calls to service (the three imperatives)

1. There may be no apparent immediate benefit in obeying the imperatives
2. Yet the principle of sowing and reaping suggests there is a harvest to come

However, our passage is a warning, and there is an implication: you are always sowing.

- You sow to the good when you serve according to the imperatives
- You sow to the bad when you refuse to serve according to the imperatives

II. When sowing = mocking

A. What it means to mock

1. "No man can snub (myktērizetai, lit., 'turn up the nose at') God..."²
2. The verb is found only here in the NT
3. In the OT, the verb translates the Heb. where the people "turned up the nose" to God's prophets
4. "to ridicule in a sneering and contemptuous way"³

² Campbell, 610.

³ Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996).

B. What it means to mock God

1. Clearly, there are mockers and deriders who directly rail against God
 - a. In the OT, Shimei mocked David as he fled from Jerusalem when his son Absalom rebelled.
 - b. Today, many mockers can be found in print, in media, who are always ready to take a verbal cudgel to God
2. In our context, however, Paul clearly means that disobedience to the imperatives is a mocking of God

“People can ‘mock’ God verbally but can also do so by ignoring his demands and living for themselves rather than for him.”⁴

C. The point of the warning

1. You can't win in the mocking game
2. Those who deride God and blaspheme his name will find that God has the last laugh

Ps 2.4-5 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.⁵ Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury...

3. If you are sowing disobedience to God, there is a consequence

III. Where sowing takes you

- A. The warning takes us to a repetition of the contrast between flesh and Spirit (as seen in Gal 5)
 1. There is a sowing to the flesh and a sowing to the Spirit
 2. Each has its own harvest

⁴ Grant R. Osborne, *Galatians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 205.

3. The addition of the principle of harvest adds some urgency to the instructions of Gal 5
 - a. In Gal 5, the view is that if you are walking by the Spirit, you have immediate peace and joy
 - 1) Flesh = chaos
 - 2) Faith/Spirit = love, joy, peace, etc.
 - b. Here we are reminded, there are days to come when the *harvest* of flesh or Spirit will come in

B. Contrasting sowing to the flesh vs. sowing to the Spirit

1. Sowing to the flesh is doing those things that please the flesh
 - a. Living for self
 - b. Seeking the best feeling for self in the present moment
 - c. It isn't pleasant or convenient to follow the imperatives God gives us, so the flesh will slack off from obedience
2. Sowing to the Spirit is doing those things that please the Spirit
 - a. When we see imperatives in the Bible, to that extent we know the will of God
 - b. For certain, living for others is something that pleases the Spirit (see our study last Sunday on the "one another" passages)

C. Contrasting the harvests

1. We might equate these harvests with eternal destiny
 - a. Corruption = eternal punishment; eternal life = heaven
 - b. There is a general sense in which this is true

You can apply this principle to the world at large: the unbelievers sow to the flesh and perish; the believers sow to the Spirit and live.

2. However, Paul is speaking to believers here, so is this what he means?
 - a. Corruption does not necessarily mean ultimate death

b. What about “eternal life”

- 1) There is of course that final reward for believers after this life

Jn 10.28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

- 2) But there is also a sense of an immediate gift of life right now

Jn 10.10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

- 3) The distinction is very clear in Lk 18.29-30

Lk 18.29-30 And He said to them, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,³⁰ who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.”

a) Note: “many times as much **at this time**”

b) Note: “in the age to come...”

3. Considering this, what is corruption for sowing to the flesh?

“One of the saddest aspects of our internet culture is that all of us can see, and often are attracted to, the lives of the ‘jet set.’ We can see the glamour, but the accompanying emptiness remains hidden from view.”⁵

- a. The emptiness of shallow living is a kind of living corruption
- b. The degradation of a life of self-indulgence is seen in many other consequences
 - 1) Broken homes
 - 2) Broken bodies

⁵ Osborne, 206.

3) Broken friendships

It is an endless, wearying cycle. God is not mocked.

4. On the other hand, what is the eternal life for those sowing to the Spirit?
 - a. Yes, it has an ultimate sense
 - b. But also the immediate, the joy of living this present life for God

Conclusion:

“Note the progression of the imagery related to the Holy Spirit in Galatians: We at conversion ‘receive the Spirit’ (3:2, 14) and then live a life in which we ‘walk by the Spirit’ (5:16) and are ‘led by the Spirit’ (v. 18). With this we are enabled to exhibit ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ (vv. 22–23) and ‘walk in step with the Spirit’ (v. 25). As a result we can please the Spirit and reap the eternal rewards of the Spirit-filled life (this verse).”⁶

- Receive the Spirit
- Walk by the Spirit
- Follow the Spirit
- Bear the fruit of the Spirit
- Walk in step with the Spirit

Reap the harvest of the spirit

⁶ Osborne, 207.