

Text: Gal 6.1

For tonight's service, we add another line to Constable's outline. I am not collapsing the outline for chapter 5 just yet, as I'd like to keep the content in our minds as we start chapter 6.

- I. Introduction 1:1–10
- II. Personal defense of Paul's gospel 1:11–2:21
- III. Theological affirmation of salvation by faith 3:1–4:31
 - A. Vindication of the doctrine ch. 3
 - B. Clarification of the doctrine ch. 4
- IV. Practical application to Christian living 5:1–6:10
 - A. Balance in the Christian life ch. 5
 - 1. Living without the Law 5:1–12
 - 2. Living without license 5: 13–15
 - 3. Living by the Holy Spirit 5:16–26
 - B. Responsibilities of the Christian life 6:1–10
 - 1. Toward sinning Christians 6:1¹

Tonight we cover the next point, isolated in one very familiar verse.

Gal 6.1 ¶ Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

Our title comes from the verse:

The Brother Overtaken in a Fault

We will get into the details of this verse in a moment, but first I want to give you a word from one of my commentaries:

“Now Paul shifts to the corporate side of the Christian life and looks at believers as part of a family with responsibilities to one another. The first verse stresses the negative side, restoring those who have fallen into sin. Verse 2 looks at the positive, helping those who have fallen on hard times. In verse 3 Paul addresses the opposite of those who bear other's people burdens, those whose concern is only for themselves.”²

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Galatians, Introduction, Outline.

² Grant R. Osborne, *Galatians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 197.

In other words, in chapter 5, the focus is on the individual and the decisions he needs to make in living out the Christian life.

Here in chapter 6, especially in the first ten verses, the focus is on Others – on the people in your congregation and how you relate to them. By “relate” we don’t simply mean, “get along.” The reality is that in a unified and maturing church body, we learn how *minister* to one another.

And by “minister” we mean “serve.” The church is a serving body, members thinking and caring for one another and trying to help each other, especially in difficult situations.

Thinking of others isn’t natural. Warren Wiersbe cites one of Charles Shultz’s *Peanuts* comic strip in his commentary on this verse:

“In the popular comic strip ‘Peanuts,’ Lucy asks Charlie Brown, ‘Why are we here on earth?’ He replies, ‘To make others happy.’ She ponders this for a moment and then asks, ‘Then why are the others here?’”³

Lucy doesn’t get it. Our study of the Bible is for us to get it.

In verse 1, the difficult situation is sin. A brother is “overtaken in a fault” (KJV), “caught in a trespass” (NAU). What can we do to help?

I. The situation: sin overtakes a brother, and everyone knows it

A. How the brother is caught in sin

1. We have an idiom, “caught red-handed,” meaning something like “caught in the act”
2. This word has a sense of anticipation in it
 - a. Mary came and anointed Jesus with ointment before the crucifixion

Mk 14.8 “She has done what she could; she has anointed My body **beforehand** for the burial.

- b. She acted before the act

³ Warren W Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), 721.

3. So here, it is a passive verb, the brother is caught by surprise, as if by the sin itself

B. Other images

1. A runner overtaken in a race

“The thought is that of someone running from sin but sin, being faster, overtakes and catches him.”⁴

2. A military takeover

“There may be a hint of a military takeover, as one is overtaken and entrapped by an opposing force.”⁵

C. The surprise of observers

1. Those on the outside are also surprised

2. They didn’t expect it, they didn’t anticipate it

II. The call for help: anyone, walking by the Spirit, can help

A. The call goes out generally to “you who are spiritual”

1. The thing to note first is that the call isn’t, “You pastors,” or “You leaders”

2. The call is general, but with one qualification

B. Who are the “spiritual”?

1. The word has the idea of “characteristic” – their characteristic is a connection to the Spirit

2. Any Christian has a relationship to the Holy Spirit, and is capable of ministry to some extent

3. In the context of Galatians 5, though, the obligation will fall most heavily on those walking by the Spirit

- We don’t walk by the Spirit for ourselves.
- We don’t worship for ourselves.

⁴ 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), 609.

⁵ Osborne, *Galatians: Verse by Verse*, 197–98.

- We aren't Christians for what we can get out of it.

Our religion must be full of love and care for one another.

C. What help should we offer?

1. Other uses of the word "restore"

- Mend torn nets
- Set fractured bones

2. The ministry is one of restoration

- That does not mean "justification"

Sometimes people are out of sorts with God and the church and sympathetic souls want to help them "heal," blaming others for "wounding" them.

- Restoration may mean painful confrontation

"If you have ever had a broken bone, you know how painful it is to have it set. The sinning believer is like a broken bone in the body, and he needs to be restored."⁶

3. The method, however, must be gentle

- Though someone may be in sin, and out of sorts with God and his people, and...
- Though it may be painful to bring about restoration...
- We must do all we can to restore with gentleness

Gentleness is a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit.

Gentleness is not leniency, but it is sensitivity to restore "with no hint of self-righteous superiority."⁷

III. The caution: we should remember sin can overtake us all

A. The temptation to misbehave in restoration

- To forget his own weakness

⁶ Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:721.

⁷ George, *Galatians*, 411.

2. To be dismissive of the weak brother he is restoring because of his own pride
3. To be imperious, demanding, legalistic

B. The temptation to resist restoration

1. Don't want to get involved
2. Afraid of the confrontation and controversy
3. More interested in "peace" (absence of conflict) than "shalom" (wholeness of the body)

Conclusion:

Our Christian life by faith is not meant as simply providing us with a free ride to heaven and no worries about others around us.

Rather, Christianity first impels us into fellowship with the Lord's people (that is, into a local church), and then leads us to sympathy with our brothers and sisters as we all try to live for God until the Lord comes.