

Galatians 6:1-5

1 My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. 4 All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. 5 For all must carry their own loads.

The Apostle Paul founded the church in Galatia and wrote this letter to them. There was a conflict there where one group put their trust in the law and another put their trust in Jesus. The Apostle Paul's perspective is that righteousness is fulfilled by the death Christ not the law. It is the action of Christ dying for us and our faith in Jesus that saves us. Righteous is achieved through Jesus and we naturally obey the law out of honor, love, appreciation, and respect.

Last week we had a lesson on forgiveness. Today's lesson is a close connection to forgiveness. It is a lesson on the compassion of helping those that are tempted and might need forgiveness. We are to help them develop their own spiritual fortitude.

We are to bear one another's burdens. From one Christian to another Christian we have a responsibility to help each other. This is mutual responsibility for all of us in the life of the church. Transgression is a moral weakness, a failure of self control in the face of temptation. Friends support those that are in need of support. Christians live by the Holy Spirit and are to be role models of biblical guidance and prayer. The Apostle Paul insists we have all received the Holy Spirit. This is a spirit of gentleness and calls for our own gentleness when one member is in a state of transgression. Those who live by the spirit restore others with an attitude of gentleness. Everyone is subject to some form of temptation. All believers endure difficulties of one form or another and we should all be willing to bear one another's burdens. You are a person of spiritual fortitude. Your strength comes from your faith. Since your faith is grounded in the Holy Spirit, then with the help of the Holy Spirit you are able to defeat temptation. A sin of pride comes in when you are able to successfully stand against temptation with spiritual fortitude. We have seen many cases when someone is judged and criticized in the life of the church. This can turn people away from religion to the point where they drop out of the life of church for good. However, we are all about Jesus. If we truly see the world as Jesus sees the world, we see the need for loving care. When we follow the rule of Jesus, there is no judging, no condemnation. We bear one another's burdens, help them, and encourage them when facing temptation. We are to be there for them when they are sad, depressed, and hurting. We are to work for the good of all.

I spent this past week on a spiritual retreat that focused on faith formation, pastoral care, and providing a safe place for sharing. It was an opportunity to enhance faith by looking deeper into who you are and getting in touch with your inner being and true self. Care givers need to understand their own drive, desire, and passion, in the face of daily challenges and stress, in order to enhance their skills of providing spiritual care. The challenge is to refrain from projecting our own opinions into the relationship. We are to strive to live according to our greatest authenticity between the inner self that only you know and the outer self that the world sees.

The Scripture is for all Christians. We are all called to different roles of ministry but one thing that we are all called for is the gentle restoration of another soul. Take care that you are not tempted. Through the formation of faith, people are able to develop spiritual fortitude that guards against temptation. This develops and strengthens with time. As you conquer one temptation, it becomes easier to conquer the next. The result of bearing one another's burdens is the fulfillment of the law of Christ. You are a Christian. This makes you a person of love and compassion like that of Jesus himself. You are to represent Jesus to the world. You are to be a pure, wholesome, and unselfish person of love. Faith formation requires that you do the inner soul searching, reflection, and analysis of how much care you actually extend to others. Your ability to resist temptation is a cause for pride. Your ability to help another resist temptation is a cause for pride. You cannot carry their burden for them but you can be there for them, help guide them to carry their own loads.

The Lessons from Jesus are all closely connected because they all deal with divine love, compassion, and forgiveness. It is the love of God that brings us Jesus and salvation. We are people of God's love. As a recipient of divine love, we express our thanks through devotion, obedience, and care for others through our words and actions toward divine love and care. We all have a variance between outer self and inner self and tend to fail at correlating positively our claim of being who we are. People that are detached from the life of the church have a problem being judged. They see a superficial church which comes from superficial religious people that force their opinions on others and do not accept others as they are. When people prefer to blame others instead of accepting them, the resulting activity is actually hate instead of love. Jesus is above all of that. What we learn from the Bible is that we too should be above all that. None of us are to judge. All of us have problems and none of us are 100% true to self. The church we are meant to be is the church Jesus said to be. The New testament church is to be united and loving. It is a cause for pride when you are able to resist temptation and bear one another's burdens in the persona of Jesus Christ.