

You Reap What You Sow
Galatians 6:7-10

July 29, 2018

7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. 8 If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. 9 So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. 10 So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

Today's Scripture is a good lesson on maintaining focus on what is important and not getting distracted. In verses 1-6 Paul sees the church as a family where each member is responsible for one another. You are called to restore the lost in the spirit of gentleness and guard yourselves against temptation. In the Scripture Paul provides proverbial wisdom. We will take a moment to look at each of these; do not be deceived, God is not mocked, and you reap what you sow. The first one, do not be deceived, is a bit difficult to follow because the nature of deception is that it is designed to trick you. Sometimes you find out when it is too late. Sometimes you think you are not being deceived when you are. Sometimes you are the last to know. Often it is embedded ideology that gets in the way of logic. The deceived fall away from God, lapse into sin, and are in denial.

The apostle Paul sees the Galatians as standing in danger of mocking God. To understand the meaning we need to consider the context within the sentence. The subject of mocking God lies between deception and consequences of action. It addresses transgression. It is easy to know the commandments. We know what we should not do. Whenever we do what we should not do it is a sin. When we break the commandments it is a sin. When we disobey the teachings of Jesus it is a sin. This is easy to grasp and understand. However, there is another degree of transgression that is not so easy to acknowledge and it is a trap; it is deceptive. It is when people believe God is OK with something when actually God is not. It is when people twist theology to suit the self instead of changing themselves to comply with the word. It is do not be deceived and God is not mocked together. The deceived twist theology to suit the self instead of changing the self to suit the word of God. This is not OK with God. The Scripture is a call to be true to God. It is a call for reformation - getting right with God.

Repeatedly I see people fall away from God. But we all live lives of hypocrisy. To put this in a contemporary perspective, I spent last week at the Swannanoa Gathering. It is a weeklong songwriter and guitar workshop that is located 7 miles from Christmount. In one particular class a songwriter had a problem with a song about the homeless of San Francisco. She was frustrated and the class was unable to grasp the extent of the problem. As I was explaining some of the detail and complex issues I mentioned that I am a pastor. When I did the dynamics of the classroom changed. When people know the pastor is present everything changes. They switch their songs to be evaluated, they change their behavior, if someone swears they look at you and apologize. The group censors itself and dilutes realism. Well, if you are true to your faith, you do not change due to the presence of the preacher. If you change your behavior due to the presence of the preacher you have already fallen away from God.

You reap what you sow is a proverb. It is one of my favorites. It has a profound meaning. The consequences of your action are proportional to your treatment of others. Bible lessons are based on the relationship between God and humanity and address the problem of humans transgressing from the will of God. We are to do good works for all. This means the world at large. We all belong to the family of God by virtue of gracious adaption. The church is a

community guided by the Spirit. It is the Spirit that provides the guidance. Life in the Spirit is a life lived in the community as it is guided by the Spirit. If we test our lives with the view of pleasing God then we maintain a life of integrity with God. It would eliminate the tendency to change in the presence of the preacher and defensive posturing. The standard that counts is God's standard. It is God that we are ultimately accountable to and there is no fooling God.

Every thought, word, and action, has the potential to bear productive fruit or destructive fruit. Every day you have an opportunity to impact the world for good or evil. So, do not be deceived, life will trick you and is full of temptation. You can deceive yourself and you can deceive others, but you cannot trick God. Keep sowing the fruits of the spirit for you reap whatever you sow.