
"Loving in the Holy Spirit"
(Galatians 6:1-6)
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Core Issue: Our understanding of the gospel and our relationship with the Spirit must impact our relationship with others. We are called to love our community by restoring them from sins, carrying their burdens, and doing life in the Word.

Opposing Value: We often fail to do this because we are self-centered, prideful, and busy. We don't want to inconvenience ourselves.

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon church. Hope you're all doing well. If you have your Bibles, please turn to Galatians 6:1-6. If you remember, I recently shared from chapter 5 on what it means to live in the Holy Spirit. If you missed it, I encourage you to listen to it online. But let me quickly summarize the main points because today's message will be an extension on one of the thoughts. I shared that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is not necessarily being zapped by this mysterious power from heaven, but rather it is to have a relationship with Him. **And we do this through *walking by the Spirit (saying no to our sins), being led by the Spirit (saying yes to Jesus), and bearing the fruit of the Spirit (witnessing God's work in our lives)***. Then my prayer is that this sermon has clarified a lot of misconceptions that you may have had about the Holy Spirit.

Now, another thing that I shared was how we can confirm if we are truly growing in relationship with Him. **First sign is that you find yourself desiring *more of Jesus and talking more about Jesus***. This is true because the role of the Holy Spirit is to magnify Jesus in our hearts. **Second, we can be sure that we're growing in relationship with the Holy Spirit when we grow in love for others**. This is an important truth to remember. The Bible clearly tells us that we know our church is filled with the Holy Spirit not by filling this place with as many people as possible, not by seeing more people singing and dancing passionately during worship, not by having more people speak in tongues, and not by having a preacher who's passionate and engaging (though of course all these things can be good indications). But this is what Paul says in Galatians 5:22, "*The fruit of the Spirit is love.*" In verse 13, he calls us to use our freedom that we have in Christ to "*serve one another humbly in love.*"

According to Paul, we know that we are filled with the Holy Spirit when we begin to sincerely love one another.

Then take a moment and look around you. This is your community. This is where you are called to live out that truth. As God fills you with the Holy Spirit, He is also calling you to love those around you right now. I know it seems like a daunting task – and it isn't going to be easy. But God is not calling us to love one another because it's easy but because it's right. It pleases Him. Our love for one another brings joy to our heavenly Father. I don't know about you, but that's exciting. **If this is true, then brothers and sisters, this is what we ought to pray for, aim for, work hard and put all of our efforts to establish this in our community.** How amazing would it be if all of us served one another humbly in love like the church in Acts 2 – to create a place where we are devoted to the Word, prayer, and fellowship; a place where we have everything in common; a place where people are joyfully selling their property and possessions to give to anyone who had need; a place where we can eat together and enjoy one another's company with glad and sincere hearts; a place where we can praise God through our love for each other? This is what I desire for our church – and I invite you to desire the same. So I want to take the rest of our time together to learn what it means to love one another in the Holy Spirit according to Paul.

Now, as I read this passage, one thing you'll notice is that it is very practical. Paul makes it clear and simple. **For some of you, this may be your first time hearing.** That's great. I pray that you'll now begin to obey and live this out in our community. **On the other hand, some of you may have already heard this.** That's great too. I pray that you'll take this moment to examine and evaluate yourself to see if these things are truly evident in your life. It's not enough for us to know; we must be moved to live it out. Let me read it.

¹ Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ⁵ for each one should carry their own load. ⁶ Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

In this passage, Paul gives us three practical ways of loving in the Holy Spirit:

- Restoring people from their sins (v.1)
- Carrying each other's burdens (v.2-5)
- Doing life together in the Word (v.6)

Please keep your Bibles open and follow along as I go through each point.

1) WE LOVE OTHERS BY RESTORING FROM THEIR SINS (V.1)

Let's take a look at verse 1: "*Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently.*" Paul begins with a situation where you see someone caught in a sin. What does this mean? Is he talking about where you happen to catch someone in the act of a sin, like stealing, lying, swearing, exploding with anger, or gossiping? Probably not. Instead, what he means is this: "**If you see someone entangled or ensnared by sin; if you see anyone burdened by their sin; if you see that sin is beginning to overcome someone;**" then, you should restore that person. In other words, when you see someone drowning deeper and deeper into sin, don't be ignorant and say, "It's none of my business;" don't judge them, condemn them, or gossip about them; but instead engage in their lives and help them and he makes it clear that this is our obligation as Christians. We see this because Paul says, "*You who live by the Spirit* [all of us who surrendered our lives to Jesus] should restore that person gently." If you're a Christian, we have the responsibility to keep each other accountable.

Now, *what does it mean to restore?* **The Greek word for "restore" means to mend, fix, or repair so that it goes back to its original condition.** This makes sense because sin breaks down our lives. We are all in need of this restoration. Then, *how do we do this practically?* Because we know that Jesus alone can forgive and repair us, our work becomes very simple. **All we need to do is to speak the truth in love as we point people to Christ.** That's it. That's how we restore someone. **And this always starts by helping them to see sin as sin.** This is important because many times, when we are accused of committing a sin, we respond by defending ourselves. "Well, it's not that bad. A lot of people do it too. Why are you so hard on me? Don't pretend like you're so holy; it's not like you've never sinned before." Isn't this true? We self-justify and excuse our actions all the time. So in one sense, this will be the toughest battle in this process. But after you've done this, **you want them to confess their sins and repent so that he or she will choose to walk in obedience.** It's not enough for them to say no to their sins; we must help them to cultivate a life with the Holy Spirit. In other words, **we are leading them to pursue holiness.**

The reality is that this is hard. No one wants to be in a place where we offend that person and break the relationship. We don't want to be the bad guy; and we certainly don't want to make things awkward. So, we choose to look away. We choose not to do anything about it – hoping that someone else will do it; hoping that this person will come to their senses. **Maybe this is happening right now in your life.** You can think of someone right now; your friend, your spouse, or your child who is engaging in a sin – having sex before marriage, gossiping, cheating on their taxes, being lazy, or getting drunk – but you chose to look the other way for whatever reason.

Brothers and sisters, can I tell you something important? **When we choose to be silent, we're saying to that person, "I don't love you. I really don't care about you."** Isn't this true? When we see a child in danger because he's playing too close to the fire, if we choose to do nothing about it, we're saying, "I don't really care what happens to that child." But if we love that child, we'll do everything in our power to *remove* the child from the danger, *teach* him not to be near fire again, and *be* with him so that he doesn't do it again. **This is what we're doing when we confront someone with their sins.** We're saying, "I care about you too much to see you drowning in sin. I'm going to do my best to *remove* you from this path, *teach* you about the danger of sin and beauty of Christ, and *be* with you so that you don't do this ever again." *Is there a possibility of offending that person?* Possibly, but we need more people who care about people's **holiness** more than their **feelings**.

But, at the same time, I'm not saying their feelings don't matter. That's why Paul tells us that we need to do this *gently*. The goal of our confrontation is not to expose them; it's not to bring guilt and shame; it's to lead them to repentance. And in order to achieve this, Paul tells us that we need to be gentle. Pastor Billy Graham defines gentleness as "**displaying a sensitive regard for others.**" Yes, we speak the truth to people because we care about **their holiness**; but we speak the truth *in love, in gentleness* because we care about **them**.

Now, this is important because of the warning Paul gives at the end of verse 1: "*But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.*" Paul is reminding us that none of us are immune to sin. We're not better than them just because we're confronting them with their sins. We too are capable of the same sin. **If we feel that we're somehow above this person, we will destroy that relationship, not restore.** So let me ask you a question. Do you have a sin that you know you couldn't be tempted of? "Oh yeah, I'm done with anger. I'm done with greed, lust, or laziness." Whenever I think about a few sins that I thought I overcame, I find myself being tempted all over again. Sure, we can and should make progress in our holiness, but we'll never be able to say (at least in this world), "I have completely eradicated this sin in my life." If this is true, then we must confront with gentleness, not a way to judge or lord over them, because the roles may be reversed any time – we might fall into that sin and this person will be the one who's confronting you in the future.

How did Jesus do this? In John 8, John tells us that the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery and just threw her where Jesus was teaching. They said to Him, "*Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now, what do you say?*" **This was obviously a trap to accuse Jesus.** They knew that if Jesus said, "Don't do what Moses said; let her go," then Jesus would be in violation of the Mosaic Law and will be subjected to condemnation by the Jews. On the other hand, if Jesus said, "Grab some stones and kill her," He will be condemned by the Romans because the authority to kill belonged only to the Roman officials.

You see, they thought that they had cornered Jesus. But listen to what Jesus says, "*Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.*" Then there was complete silence. And slowly, one by one, people began to go away because they knew no one was without sin. When Jesus saw that everyone had left, He said, "*Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?*" She said, "*No one.*" Then Jesus said, "***Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin.***" This is how we are to do it – restoring someone with gentleness – not destroying them but telling them to sin no more. This is how we love.

2) WE LOVE OTHERS BY CARRYING EACH OTHER'S BURDENS (V.2-5)

We see this in verse 2. If a Christian brother or sister is weighed down by some burden, Paul is saying, "Don't let them be crushed. Don't let them be destroyed. But go and take that weight off of them." Now, in order to do this, **we need to first go close to the burdened person.** In other words, **we need to get to know them and listen to them.** Isn't this true? How can we carry someone's burden when we don't even know what's burdening them? It's always easy for us to say, "I'll pray for you," but we have no idea what to pray for. I guess we can generally pray for them but I think we can always *better* carry their burdens by asking them, "How can I pray for you?" And of course actually praying for them – not just say this to sound like you care. We need to be intentional in getting involved with their lives.

Secondly, it means that we need to be ready to sacrifice by investing our time, energy, and money. You can't help someone unless you're ready to be burdened as well. Pastor Tim Keller gives a great metaphor to explain this idea. He says, "If somebody is struggling with a 100-pound load and they can't get it, if you come to help them, how do you help them? **You can only help them by taking one end and putting half of the weight on you.** You're not carrying all 100 pounds yourself. It's not all on you but it's not all on the other person too. With two people, you're each carrying 50 pounds. With four people, you're each carrying 25 pounds." In other words, **you can never help somebody without some of that person's burden falling on you.**

Then why in the world would anyone do this? Why would we inconvenience ourselves by doing all these things?" Paul tells us why. In verse 2, Paul says, "*In this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*" What is the law of Christ? Paul says in Galatians 5:14: "*For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*" **The law of Christ is the command to love your neighbor as yourself.** So what Paul is saying is this: **when we carry each other's burdens, we get to obey Jesus and follow in His steps.** We get to imitate Him. In Philippians 2, we see what Jesus did for our sake. Jesus not only inconvenienced Himself by leaving everything behind, but "*He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant and humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross.*" This is why we can carry other's burdens – simply because Jesus carried our burdens. **We get to be like Him in our love. Then this is no longer burdensome; rather it becomes our joyful privilege.** We get to love others by serving them. "Oh, you don't know how you're going to pay your bills? How can we help? How can we serve? Oh, you're sick? How can we help? How can we serve? Oh, you're struggling with sin? How can I encourage you? How can I keep you accountable?" I believe that our church is doing this already but there are still more opportunities. Last week, Deacon Ricardo just announced about the respite ministry starting up to help the families and individuals with special needs. Now that you know, you can never say you didn't know of the opportunities to serve humbly in love. So let us go and obey.

Now, let's go to verse 3. Here, **Paul reminds us that we won't be able to carry each other's burdens unless we have a gospel-based view of ourselves.** He says, "*If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.*" Here, Paul is not saying that we're literally nothing as if we have no value or worth. That's not true at all – we are called the children of God. **But we must remember that we were "nothing" when we realize who we were: rebels against God who deserved nothing but His just wrath. But now, we have purpose, value, and worth because Jesus became nothing for us.** When we realize this, how can we compare ourselves with anyone, and think that we're better than them? You just can't come to that conclusion if you correctly understand the gospel.

Now, verses 4 and 5 seem very confusing – it almost sounds blasphemous and contradicting. He says in verse 4, "*Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else for each one should carry their own load.*" Didn't Paul just tell us to carry each other's burdens? Why is he telling us to carry our own load? Also how can we pride in ourselves? Shouldn't we pride and boast in God alone? You're absolutely right. And that's not what Paul is saying here. Let me explain. The word "burden" and "load" are two different Greek words; the former means a heavy weight while the latter means something light – like your backpack. Paul uses "burden" to talk about heavy things of life; but he uses "load" to talk about our responsibilities, duties, and callings. So what Paul is saying is this: "Help one another when life hits them hard; but no one can carry your responsibilities that God has given to you. This is yours to bear." I hope this makes sense.

If this is true, the rest is made clear. What Paul is saying is this: **if you want to see how you're doing in your calling and responsibilities, don't do it by looking at what others have done, but by comparing it to the standard of God.** Often we try to assess how we're doing by looking at other people. "Oh, I'm serving in 3 different ministries and she's only serving in one. I'm obviously doing better than her." Or "My task is obviously more important than his. It's because I'm more mature." Do you see how we evaluate ourselves by comparing ourselves to other people? Paul's saying, "Stop feeding your pride by comparing yourself with others. Don't measure your holiness by those of others; measure them, test them, by the laws of Christ. Pride or boast in God who's working in your life." Only then we'll prevent ourselves from thinking like verse 3 – that we're something when we're not. How can we, when we compare ourselves to God who is perfect in holiness? How can we ever think that we're better than God? Then this will keep us humble. This will enable us to carry each other's burdens. C. S. Lewis talks about pride in his book, *Mere Christianity*. He says, **"Real pride gets no pleasure out of having something. Pride gets pleasure by having more of it than the next person. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking, there would be nothing to be proud about."** When we have a gospel view of who we are, we'll intentionally say no to our pride but naturally desire to love others by carrying their burdens, because this is what Christ has done for us.

3) WE LOVE OTHERS BY DOING LIFE TOGETHER IN THE WORD (V.6)

We find this in verse 6, *"Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor."* Now, this verse doesn't seem to fit the context. It just sounds too random. And many people struggled to make sense of the message. So one common way of reading this was to say that Paul was exhorting the church to pay their pastors fairly and generously. But I personally believe that it has a greater and richer meaning behind it. In this verse, **Paul talks about two groups of people – those who receive instruction in the Word and the instructors.** Now, think with me; if Paul was to equate instructors with pastors only, then he could've used many other words like shepherds, elders, or overseers to be more precise – but he didn't. **Then Paul must have been referring to anyone who is instructing someone with the Word of God.** For example, it could be your LG leaders, Discipleship class leaders, mentors, parents, deacons, elders, pastors, or an older brother or sister in Christ. **And these two groups (those who receive and those who teach) are called to share all good things.** The word "share" in Greek (*koinoneo*) refers to an intimate fellowship between Christians. If this is true, then loving in the Holy Spirit not only means we are to restore them from their sins and carry their burdens, but it also means **we are to do life together as brothers and sisters in the Word of God.**

The implication of this verse is this: **we're all involved in a building process.** We pick them up when they fall into sin. We carry them when life gets hard. But we are now building them up to be strong. And we do this with the Word of God. So confront people about their sins *with the Word*. Encourage someone burdened *with the Word*. Pray for them *with the Word*. **This is how we best love one another because only the Word brings life and light to our lives.**

Then how can we as a community and a body of Christ not devote ourselves to the Word of God in all that we do? Pastor Alistair Begg says this: "Suppose a group of men came together to play soccer on the field. Everyone was ready to play then it suddenly dawned on them – they forgot the ball. Then someone yelled, 'Forget the ball, let's get on with the game.' If we are trying to do life together as a community of Christ without the Bible, we are just like these men trying to play soccer without the ball." **We are foolish to think that we can be a community of God yet neglect the Bible in our lives. The Bible is essential to our community – it must be at the center of all that we do.** Then we need to make intentional effort to **read** the Bible together. Don't neglect on your Bible reading plan. If you think you're too behind (like in Genesis), then just start from where we are today (2 Kings). Don't kill yourself trying to catch up. I give you that permission. But we also need to **study** the Bible together, **memorize** the Bible together, and **speak** the Word to one another. And you can do this at home in your family worship or with your friends, or your small groups. We must be intentional on doing life together in the Word.

APPLICATION

For application, I don't have anything specific because the passage itself was very practical. But I do want to say one thing: **continue to reflect, understand, and experience the gospel daily.** It's because **what we know often determines how we act.** This is what we saw in the churches of Galatia. The Jewish Christians really *believed* that the Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised in order to be accepted as God's family. And because of their distorted understanding of the gospel, they began to segregate themselves from these Gentile believers. Brothers and sisters, loving others is hard work. But as I shared in the beginning, we must pursue after this because it's right; because it pleases our heavenly Father. The gospel continues to tell us that Jesus loves us and now it's calling us to love one another. Now that you know, let us put it into practice.

That being said **let this be a good opportunity to examine your life and make every effort to do these things so that you'll love this community better.** How can we remain self-centered when our King and Savior was selfless in every way? **So I invite you to ask these questions:** Do you have the courage to lovingly and gently engage with those who are entangled in their sins? What's holding you back? Are you recognizing sin as sin in your own lives? Do you have the right heart to receive this kind of gentle rebuke from your brothers and sisters? Are you open to carry other's burdens even if it means that it inconveniences you? Is the Bible central to your life today?

Now, I know that some of you may have been hurt by the community – and you trust no one. But I pray that your walls will come down – and I plead with you to forgive. Let's make every effort to see this community transform because this is what Christ desires from you. Remember that this is what Christ did for you.

Lastly, for those of you who haven't given your life to Jesus, I invite you to know and experience the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus became nothing so that you may have life and life to the full. He did this for you because He loves you. Then my prayer for you is that you'll experience that love of Christ – and that you'll taste the same love through this community as well.

CONCLUSION

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit always impacts our relationship with others. We are now called to love one another by restoring others from their sins, carrying each other's burdens, and doing life together in the Word of God. Let us continue to keep in steps with the Holy Spirit individually but also as a community.

Let's pray.