

"Take Care Of One Another" • Galatians 6:1-5

I. INTRODUCTION

A. A Better Influence

1. Peppermint Patty is talking to Charlie Brown.
2. She says, "Guess what, Chuck. It's the first day of school, and I got sent to the principal's office. It was *your* fault, Chuck."
3. He said, "My fault? How could it be my fault? Why do you say everything is my fault?"
4. She said, "You're my friend, aren't you, Chuck? You should have been a better influence on me."
5. Once again, Charles Schultz has nailed a common trait of human nature
6. Somehow, we think that someone else is responsible for our errors
 - a. we blame our parents
 - b. we blame the environment
 - c. we blame our 8th grade gym teacher

B. A Better Way

1. Paul has some counsel for us this morning that we need to listen to
2. It's found in the opening verses of chapter 6
3. But before we begin reading, let me set the scene . . .
4. In chs 5 & 6, Paul is showing the Galatians how they are to *live out* their faith in Christ
 - a. the false teachers had taught them that they had to obey the law because they saw this as the only way to restrain sin
 - b. but Paul says the way to restrain sin is by walking in the Spirit, not the law
 - c. then he goes on to show what walking in the Spirit *looks* like
5. Walking in the Spirit means a life of love, and in practical terms, love means serving others
6. That's why in 5:13 he says,

You, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

7. The Judaizers had taught the importance of keeping the "law" while Paul's message was one of God's grace received through faith in Jesus
8. Paul now embraces the word "law" but in doing so, he redefines it
 - a. indeed, the Christian *is* under the "law"
 - b. but it's the law of Christ!
 - c. it's not a law that binds, it frees!
 - d. it's not a law of works, but faith
 - e. and it all flows from a single command - Love God and others!
 - f. Jesus had said,

{John 13:34} "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

9. In the opening verses of chapter 6, Paul shows how this new law of love will manifest itself toward other people
 - a. this morning, we will see what he says about how we are to deal with fellow believers who are sinning
 - b. and those who are burdened with some heavy trouble

II. TEXT

A. V. 1

{1} Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

1. The first word is a real insight into what Paul is saying here
 - a. "Brethren" - this speaks of family
 - b. and the action Paul calls us to here is a family kind of thing
 - c. this is a characteristic of family; they are *loyal* to each other
 - d. they may not always get along, but when one is in trouble, the other members of the family will do just about anything to help them
2. Paul paints the picture of someone who is running, trying to get away from something, but it outruns him and catches him
 - a. it's the cheetah that brings down the antelope, the lion that catches the zebra
 - b. neither the antelope nor the zebra want to be caught, they run their hardest
 - c. but the cheetah and the lion are swifter
3. All of us here this morning either now, or have been or will be overtaken in this way by some sin
4. Classically, it's been called a "besetting" sin
 - a. some trespass, some moral failure that keeps rearing it's ugly head
 - b. you hate it and want to be delivered, yet it seems to keep nailing you
 - c. and after a few times, you begin to get confused over what's going on
 - d. because while you know it's wrong and want to be free of it -
 - e. you find yourself still tempted and at times calculating how to do it
 - f. most confusing of all - you *hate* that you *like* it!
 - g. and when the struggle gets real fierce, you wonder if maybe you're crazy, schizophrenic?
5. For some people this kind of sin might be something really obvious, like the desire to get high, or commit immorality, or steal something
6. Then again, it might be more subtle; may be a problem with an out of control anger, an insane jealousy, or coveting
7. Whatever the manifestation, it's a struggle and one that seems to generally get the better of us
8. So Paul says, that we are to assist one another with these things
 - a. specifically, those who are walking in the Spirit, as he's described it in Chapter 5
 - b. these are to restore those caught up in sin
 - c. they do so with the kind of spirit he describes in vs. 22 & 23
 - 1) with love and joy - with peace
 - 2) being longsuffering, and kind

- 3) gentle, and using self-control
 - d. it's the spiritually mature who should have the ministry of restoration,
 - e. not the novice, whose inexperience in spiritual things may actually work against the person who is caught up in sin
9. The word "restore" was used in secular Greek of setting a broken bone
 - a. in the NT it's used of mending nets
 - b. it pictures the process of applying tender care to something to return it to full use
 10. In fact, notice how Paul characterizes the kind of care the spiritually mature are to render to those who are caught in sin - it's to be given in the spirit of gentleness
 11. In any church, in any group of believers, people are going to fall
 - a. and it stands to reason that the larger the group, the more will do so
 - b. knowing this, what are we to do with those who gook, who fall, who are caught by sin?
 12. You know what the church has *typically* done don't you?
 - a. they either ignore it and pretend nothing has happened
 - b. or they heap guilt and condemnation of those who sin and make life miserable for them
 13. But Paul says that the Community of Christ, the Family of God deal with sin another way
 - a. those who are spiritually sound and mature are to go to those who are caught up in sin -
 - b. and seek to restore them
 - c. which means a tender application of grace that is aimed at bringing them back into close fellowship with the Lord and the Body
 14. But you know what this requires don't you?
 - a. it requires that we set the environment so that grace and holiness are in perfect balance
 - b. it means that on one hand, there is enough grace that a person knows they can be open and honest about their failure without the fear they will be quickly booted out
 - c. on the other hand, that the showing of grace doesn't communicate to anyone that sin doesn't matter - it does; it's what put Jesus on the Cross
 - d. while we yearn for holiness, we realize we are not there yet
 - e. and while we don't give *permission* for people to fail, when they do, we love them and seek to see them restored
 15. If we are going to follow Paul's counsel here - it means that we need to be a place, be a group of people of committed loyal love
 - a. I will only confess my faults to you if I have the confidence of knowing that you are not going to then reject me
 - b. I have to know that from that point on you will not treat me like a second class Christian
 - c. that I have been forever marked with a scarlet "S" = SINNER!
 16. How many of us have read James words in chapter 5 - "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed" and ached to do so but just couldn't because you didn't know if it was safe?

17. How many of us are now or have been, caught in a sin and knew that if we could just talk to someone else about it, it would help, but didn't simply because it was too great a risk?
 18. There is tremendous freedom in confession because it takes our sin out of the darkness and brings it into the light of God's truth and grace
 19. The devil would love nothing more than to cultivate some little patch of private, secret sin in your life
 - a. the seeds of sin grow best in the dark
 - b. but left in the dark, they will eventually blossom into bitter fruit that will emerge into the light
 - c. you see, what the devil begins in secret, he always intends to eventually disclose so that he might destroy you and make you another public trophy of his power and control
 20. Don't let sin sit secret
 - a. men, take it to a brother who is spiritually mature and tell him your struggle
 - b. ladies, take it to a sister who is spiritually solid and ask for prayer
 21. And if you are the one to whom someone comes with a request for help, show grace and restore that hurting brother or sister with gentleness, considering yourself, lest in your attempt to help them, *you* get sucked in
 22. I heard of a pastor who had been a heroin addict in his life BC
 - a. after many years of solid ministry, a man came to him for counseling
 - b. it turns out the man had been coming to church for a while and the Lord had delivered him from heroin
 - c. in rather dramatic evidence of his deliverance, he pulled out a bag of heroin and threw it on the pastor's desk
 - d. they prayed, and the man left
 - e. but the pastor looked at the bag of heroin sitting on his desk, and the thought occurred to him to shoot up
 - f. he did, and found himself entrapped in addiction to heroin once again
 23. In the process of restoring an erring brother or sister, we might be tempted to visit some place that would challenge our *own* commitment to holiness
 - a. if you have a problem with lust
 - b. don't call me from the *Spearmint Rhino* and ask me to come pray with you
 - c. I will tell you to leave and go to Burger King - we can meet there
 24. You see, even the spiritually mature are tempted - we need to be wise!
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25. I want to say a little bit more about this because it goes right to the heart of what it means to be the Church
 - a. the greatest complaint you hear about Christians is that we are a bunch of hypocrites
 - b. and while that really isn't true, it does reflect something about the world's perception of the Church that needs to be addressed
 26. We've set the standard so high that we don't permit failure
 - a. if we're honest, we have to admit that generally, people in churches do not feel the freedom to be honest with one another because they are afraid if they really let others know about their struggles, they'd be an outcast
 - b. so they go to church each week, with their Sunday morning smile on

- c. a thin religious veneer painted over a hurting and hungry heart
 - d. over time, it' becomes just too hard to keep the front up, so they cash it in and give up
 - e. they stop going to church because they've discovered it's just an empty hour or two of pretend
 - f. they get tired of reciting the lines
27. Jesus wants us to be so much more!
- a. the love and grace He has shone us He wants us to show to one another
 - b. last week I stood up here and confessed something to you
 - c. the grace and love you showed me touched me in a way I cannot describe to you
 - d. thank you!
 - e. but don't let it end there! Don't show it just to me
 - f. love one another - not in word but in deed
 - g. expect that you will both share with someone else your struggles and expect for someone to share theirs with you
 - h. and when we do, show to one another the kind of love you showed to me

B. V. 2

{2} Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

1. The law of Christ is to love one another
2. And here Paul tells us one of the ways we love one another is by helping to shoulder one another's burdens
3. Next weekend, a large group from the church will head down to Maneadero, Mexico to work at the orphanage we support there
 - a. construction supplies and equipment will be taken down, as well as large quantities of food
 - b. when they first get there, they will unload their vehicles
 - c. as one person picks up something heavy, others who are standing there ready to help will assist them
 - d. it's just natural - they have gone down there to work; and unloading the cars and trucks comes first
 - e. no one will think twice about helping to carry the burdens of others
4. But if next weekend, when you come to church and find a large flatbed truck in the parking lot with a huge bronze statue in it
 - a. and you see one puny little guy trying to lift it
 - b. and he spies you and asks you to come help him lift it and carry it 400 yards down there to Rose Avenue
 - c. you will probably not have the same kind of readiness to help as those down in Mexico
5. You immediately think -
 - a. how much *effort* will this take?
 - b. how *long* will this take?
 - c. you'll compute a little formula: $H=ET^2$
Help = Effort times Time squared
 - d. and you'll probably end up pretending you're deaf and short sighted and

- neither saw him nor heard his request for help
6. Paul says here that loving one another means having a readiness of mind to help others carry the things that are weighing them down
 - a. the word for "burden" here speaks of a weight that crushes
 - b. it is simply too much for one person to carry alone
 7. While God will never press us beyond our capacity, He will permit things that require help for us to carry
 8. The reason why is that He wants us to learn that the Christian life is a *communal* life
 9. No one can go it alone - we grow together or we don't grow
 10. Either we travel in a company or we sit along the side of the road
 11. So the exhortation from Paul is that we help each other with the burdens and weights this life will inevitably bring us
 12. We cannot use the formula $H = ET^2$ when it comes to our relationship with one another
 13. I need you, and you need me if we are going to make it

C. Vs. 3-4

{3} For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

{4} But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

1. In v. 3, Paul is speaking specifically against that kind of spiritual Lone-Rangerism that grips the hearts of so many today
2. No one is above another in the body of Christ
3. And if anyone is to give or receive help, they have to put aside conceit!
4. The way to do that is to take an objective look at ourselves
 - a. we need to step back and be honest
 - b. and once we do, we see both the things that need to be changed,
 - c. as well as the changes God has already made
5. And this brings joy as we realize that God is good and will effect His change in His time
6. Our duty is to use the means of grace He has given

D. V. 5

{5} For each one shall bear his own load.

1. Putting v. 5 next to v. 2 seems to present us with a contradiction
2. Bear one another's burden vs. bear your own load
3. Paul uses 2 distinct and different words for "burden"
 - a. in v. 2, *burden* speaks of a weight that is too much for one to carry
 - b. in v. 5, the word *load* refers to something light
 - 1) it was used to describe the pack a soldier carried on his back
 - 2) it referred not just to the weight itself but to the contents that made up the weight
 - 3) the soldier's pack contained the necessities of life in the field

4. What Paul means in v. 5 is that there are some duties, some responsibilities that we have as believers that cannot be given to others
5. There are some elements of the spiritual life we cannot delegate
6. In fact, I think that Paul is specifically referring to what he has just written about
 - a. we cannot leave it to others to carry the burdens of the people around us
 - b. we cannot isolate ourselves and leave it for others to create an environment of grace and holiness
 - c. we cannot retreat to some kind of private Christian ghetto and live just to ourselves
7. It is part of our calling to follow Christ to love one another - and that means to serve one another in the hard work of restoration and burden bearing
8. While it is specifically the task of the spiritually mature to restore those caught in sin, EVERYONE can pray and do spiritual warfare on behalf of others
9. This is what it means to bear our own load
10. My load includes you - and your load includes me!

III. CONCLUSION

A. *The Sequoias*

1. The Sequoia trees of California tower as much as 300 feet above the ground.
2. Strangely, these giants have unusually shallow root systems that reach out in all directions to capture the greatest amount of surface moisture.
3. Seldom will you see a redwood standing alone because high winds would quickly uproot it.
4. That's why they grow in clusters.
5. Their intertwining roots provide support for one another against the storms.

B. *Support*

1. Support from one another is such a critical lesson, Jesus Himself modeled it
2. Support is what He wanted from Peter, James, and John in Gethsemane as he faced the Cross
3. But they disappointed Him!
4. If Jesus looked to human support in His crisis hour, how much more do Christians need one another when they suffer!
5. We read about the sleeping disciples and wonder how they could have failed the Lord?
6. But are we disappointing Him by our failure to come to the aid of those around us who are troubled?
7. Does not Jesus come to us in the needy we see every day
8. Jesus said that when we give a drink of water to one of His own, or visit someone in prison, we are doing it to Him
9. And when we neglect them, we are neglecting Him