



Sermon Notes from 7 July

The Better Way Forward (*Galatians 6*)

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Judaizers, or 'the circumcision party' (Ga. 2:12), were the first heretics in the Christian faith. They taught the Galatian Christians (who had little idea about Jewish laws and customs) that to become true holy Christians, they needed to be circumcised and keep to the rules of the Jewish law. Paul saw this as dangerous and toxic to the Christian faith. But if the Law cannot bring transformation, what can? In Galatians 6, Paul responds by saying that the Gospel promises – not superficial improvement – but radical transformation.

What does Radical Transformation look like? (3 Movements)

1) From Scaring to Bearing

v1a – A Judaizer's reaction towards a sinner would be to wield the Law (threatening, shaming, guilt-tripping) until they see remorse. On the other hand, Paul calls for those who are spiritual to intervene; with the goal to restore the person, in gentleness. To a person who has believed in what Jesus has done, it's not about scaring, but bearing (v2). The Law can only expose the messiness of sin and sinners and deal with it superficially. Scaring is not only superficial – it is unloving and lazy. It reduces a child of God to a mere set of obligations and sees bearing as troublesome and inconvenient.

In order for us to move away from scaring to bearing, we need to move:

2) From Besting to Testing

v3 – To Paul, the reason why someone would choose scaring over bearing is because that person has a puffed-up view of themselves (vanity). They would only ever do anything good to make themselves look good. Paul saw this foolish vanity in the Judaizers (v12a). Beneath it was cowardice (v12b) and hypocrisy (v13a) – all for their vanity (v13b). Besting is not only

vain – it is cowardly and hypocritical. Sometimes we may be sincere in doing good; but more often than not, we are trying to cover up our brokenness and insecurities. Doing good becomes besting. Paul knew this aspect of our sinful hearts and warned against it (v1b). Instead, he calls us to test our hearts (v4a).

These movements are unnatural for us, and we need to first make a fundamental one:

3) From Mocking to Marking

v4 – Paul calls for us to test our work so that our boast will be in ourselves. Instead of using other people to look good, we need to test and observe ourselves to find something truly worth boasting about. We also need to bear our own load (v5). In Greek, burden (v2) is *baros*, which means 'heavy load' (takes more than 1 person to carry) and load (v5) is *phortion*, which means 'travel pack' (manageable for an individual). Our phortion is a complete account of our lives to God who knows and sees all, but we mock Him by thinking otherwise (v7a). There will be consequences for our actions (v7b): sowing to the flesh yields corruption, but sowing to the Spirit yields eternal life (v8). Both legalism and licentiousness are foolish and mock God. It puts you in the ocean of His wrath toward sin. Mocking is not only foolish – it is the root of scaring and besting.

Unlike the legalistic and licentious people, Paul was rested (v17a). The source of his assurance were the marks of Jesus (v17b): Christ living in him (Ga. 2:20a), giving him new life (v15).

The longing to be safely in God is fulfilled through the gospel. If you are a new creation, you are in Christ (2 Co. 5:17)! You are in the safest place possible. Radical transformation is inevitable.