

Boast In This
(Galatians 5:22-6:18 December 9, 2018)



A few weeks ago Ben Shannon introduced us to one of the great social media phenomenons of our time – **#humblebrag**.

For those living under a social media rock – a humblebrag is where you couch your boasting in a way that feigns humility.

But what Ben failed to tell us is that unfortunately humblebragging is nothing new for Christians.

For many generations – we Christians garnered a well-earned reputation as grandmasters of the humblebrag.

The internet just greatly increased our opportunity to humblebrag.

Let me give you a few examples of the 'Christian' humblebrag.

Spent an hour in prayer this morning – feeling so blessed.

(Translation – just letting you know I prayed for an hour today – how did you do?)

Or

You know that awkward feeling when you realise you are the only one to turn up to the homegroup prayer meeting.

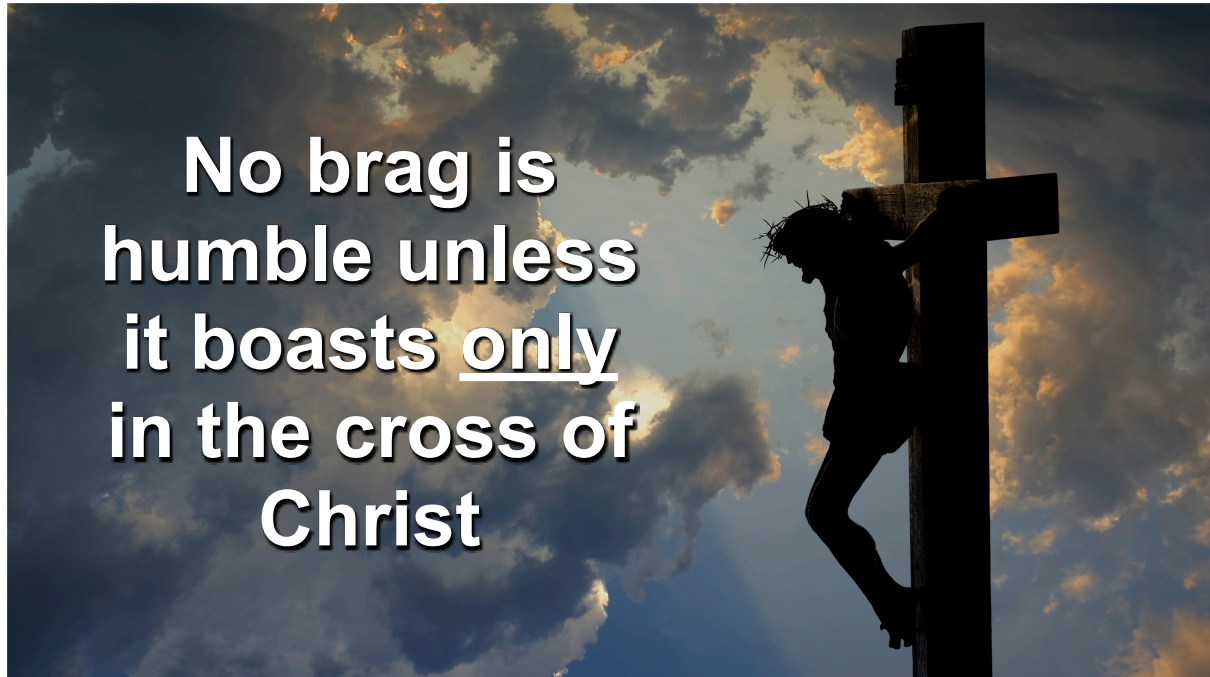
(Translation – I'm doing stuff for Jesus – what about you?)

Or

Struggling to fit in prayer, CrossFit, discipleship and meeting with the girls all in one morning. Can someone share how they do it?

(Translation – Christian Supermum!)

Look, I am the first to raise my hand as a long time humblebragger – but what our passage this morning – the conclusion to the book of Galatians – tells us is that:



No brag is humble unless it boasts only in the cross of Christ.

No brag is humble unless it boasts only in the cross of Christ.

Bragging, boasting in *anything* but the cross of Christ – implies we earned our blessing – we had a hand in becoming who we are – our works have earned us favour from God – we are something.

Paul says – not only is this false boasting – this is another gospel.

We have reached the end of the letter to the Galatians. We have seen that the point of this whole letter is clear.

There is – **No Other Gospel!**

The gospel Paul shared with them – faith alone – this is the **only** gospel – the only way of salvation and holiness – and anything else is accursed.

We are in Paul's *fifth* and final point:

The Outcome of Heresy – Unrighteousness not Righteousness **5:1-6:18**

This gospel of faith *and* works actually leads to unrighteousness – both now and eternally.

Last week we saw Paul's gospel said this:

If you think the Law – saves you and makes you holy before God – that is another gospel.

If you think the Law – sanctifies you and makes you holy in this life – that is another gospel.

It is the Holy Spirit working through faith alone that saves us and makes us holy.

But we want to change the gospel and insert us – our works – somewhere in here. We want something to boast in.

Paul will not allow that – but there is one ground for boasting.

We began our final section two weeks ago. In Galatians 5:1. Paul wrote:

For freedom Christ has set us free.

We saw that Paul argued that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus set us free from *two* things. We are:

Freed From The Penalty of Sin.

We call this **Salvation**.

And we are:

Freed From the Power of Sin

Free to live holy lives now.

We call this **Sanctification**.

Our love for God and the power of the Spirit do not cause us to abuse grace and sin – but cause us to love holiness.

It is this second point – **Freed From the Power of Sin** – that we finish this morning.

This passage divides up like this:

This morning we will look at the final two exhortations.

The Spirit working through faith makes us righteous now **5:22-6:6**

So do not submit to the yoke of present unrighteousness

6:7-18

Paul begins by saying:

It is the Spirit in us who crucifies our flesh – trust in that

5:22-25

Turn with me to Galatians 5:22:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Remember the context here.

In verse 17 Paul described the Christian as being at war – in constant conflict.

We have the flesh within us. At salvation the Spirit of God comes to live within us – but already living there is the flesh – man in his fallen weakness.

And so at salvation a battle began between the flesh and the Spirit.

This battle waxes and wanes. No one ever defeats the flesh in this life.

Every Christian feels the truth of this statement – but in some ways all men know something of the power of the flesh – the monster within.

This week I was next to a man who had a number of tattoos. I don't know about you – but like to stickybeak – I like to see what someone thinks is important enough to decide to write it on their body – *forever*.

Bible verses – maybe depending on the verse. Theology that has stood the test of time – like the 5 solas – possibly. Quotes – wow it better be good.

He had a quote.

I was trying to look casual as I was tilting my head to try and read it. It said this:

We stopped checking for monsters under our bed when we realised they were inside us.

It sounded familiar – so I Googled it. It was a line made famous by Heath Ledger's Joker in Batman – **but** Google also told me the quote actually originated with Charles Darwin.

The monster is inside us. Regardless of whether you are a psychopath, someone who denies the power of God or a Christian – the day comes when you realise there is a monster inside us.

The Bible calls this the flesh.

But for the Christian – there is also a powerful force for good – the Holy Spirit who comes to live in us – and so a battle is struck.

This is a powerful battle. We are drawn to sin and its pleasures – yet the Spirit tells us this is the way of death and the pleasures it promises are a lie.

But, in our own strength we just can't kill the flesh off. That will come but not in this life.

However, the Spirit is powerful and works within us now to battle the flesh – to oppose the works of the flesh and to produce fruit – good works.

Here in our passage – Paul tells us what the fruit that the Spirit produces looks like.

He begins with love – because in a sense all the other virtues flow from love.

Back in verse 14 Paul said:

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

Love is the pre-eminent virtue.

But as we saw the last couple of weeks – love for others only flows when we realise the love God has for us.

Knowing the incredible saving love of God actually drives us to do good works.

1 John 4:20 puts it this way:

If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar.

If you love God – you **will** love your neighbour.

And this love for others is expressed through fruits – virtues:

Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Notice a few things here.

After this list Paul says against *such things*. **Such things** implies this is not a defined closed ended list. These are not the only fruit of the Spirit.

This list are the type of virtues the Spirit produces.

Any selfless other-oriented fruits could be added to the list.

As well notice that fruit is singular not plural.

Why is this important?

Because if the Spirit of God is in you – it produces **all** of these fruits.

You can't say – I'm a joy and goodness kind of Christian – but I missed out on patience and self-control – but that's OK.

No. Some of the fruits will be more evident than others – but the Spirit produces all of them. You can't ignore some virtues and think that is OK.

Then Paul says – against such things there is no law.

There is no Law – no set of rules that can produce these virtues – this is Spirit work.

Verse 24:

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The Law can only show you the power of the flesh within you – it is only the Spirit who can actually work to crucify the flesh.

The Spirit causes us to hate the works of the flesh when once we loved them. He empowers us to fight them – and His weapons are mighty.

Now – this does not mean when you are saved you can totally crucify the flesh. The sense is if you belong to Christ – the Spirit within you is at work crucifying the flesh – the battle is proof of the presence of the Spirit and that you belong to Christ.

So if the Spirit is at work against the flesh – if you hate your sin – if you battle your sin – know that you belong to Christ – trust in that.

Then Paul moves show us that:

It is the Spirit in us who fulfils the Law of Christ – boast in that **5:26-6:6**

Notice chapter 6 verse 2 where Paul speaks about the Law of Christ.

What is the Law of Christ? In the context it must refer to what Paul said in Galatians 5:14:

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

The Law of Christ is fulfilled when we love God such that it is expressed in love for our neighbours.

If you want to keep the Law – love your neighbour through the power of the Spirit.

The context shows that the neighbours Paul has in mind are primarily our brothers and sisters in the gospel community that makes up their local church – but it extends to include everyone.

Now – it would be near impossible to give a list of examples of ways in which the Spirit of God works itself out in gospel communities.

But again, what Paul does is to give us some generic examples. He chooses two:

Bearing Burdens 5:26-6:5
Giving Generously 6:6

I think Paul chose these because these are two of the hardest things to do in the Christian life – so if they are present – you must have the Spirit.

First – *Bearing Burdens*.

Chapter 5 verse 26:

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

The flesh leads us to become conceited. This word is literally *empty of glory*.

When we are empty of the glory of God – what fills the vacuum – we become proud and boastful – and instead of loving we provoke and envy our brothers.

We find ways to pull them down.

We envy their lives, their spouses, their children, their houses.

But if the Spirit is in us He produces different fruit. Chapter 6:1-3:

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Instead of pulling them down – we build them up.

What does it mean if anyone is *caught* in any transgression?

Paul is not saying you are to become the morality police – staking out someone's home to catch them in some sin.

You are not to spy on them to make sure they are not having an affair – or ask their kids – so tell me what is Dad is really like at home – and when you find their transgression – crying out – “Busted! – but don't blame me Paul told me to catch you out!”

No the idea is – if anyone is *caught up* in a transgression – a work of the flesh – and it comes to be known by you – then you who are spiritual should restore them.

Who are those who are spiritual? Some see this as a way to wiggle out of this passage.

No! Don't read this as – I am speaking to you who are super-spiritual saints. Don't think this text only applies to Pastors and Elders – so praise the Lord I don't have to do this – I am off the hook.

Spiritual here means you who are bearing the fruit of the Spirit – and if you are a Christian – that is you.

Sorry you are well and truly **on** the hook.

Here is the idea.

In a gospel community – a church – every one of us has the flesh-Spirit battle going on.

Every one of us has times where the battle is not going so well – and times when it is going better.

When the battle is not going well – for a brother where the flesh seems to be doing too well – God has a plan to help.

That plan is – you!

Before I look at what Paul says you should do. Let me just comment on what we so often do.

I think Paul would be the first to say there is a fleshly way to handle seeing a brother or sister in sin that is wrong. You could:

- Ignore it.

I could not tell you how often this happens. You see a brother caught up in sin.

You think – man – I didn't want to know that. Surely others see this.

What a hassle to get involved. It might affect our friendship.

You tell yourself – actually Paul speaks to – you who are spiritual – well my week was not that spiritual – so this isn't for me.

You think – I haven't removed my own log.

Surely God will convict the brother to seek help.

Surely the Elders know – this is their job.

And you stay silent.

Not an option. Paul says – brother, sister – **you** restore them.

Don't wait till it all blows up and then say – I should have done something.

Nor should you:

- Just tell someone else.

This is also incredibly common. I don't want to be involved – but I know I can't totally ignore this.

I know, I will tell a homegroup leader, a pastor, an elder – or just casually drop the bomb in a prayer meeting at homegroup – then the burden is someone else's.

Phew – dodged that one.

Let me tell you – my burden is pretty full and I need some help.

Paul says – brothers, sisters – this one is yours.

If you know them – or if God revealed this problem to you – God wants **you** to be one of those who restore and bear their burden.

Many if not most of these struggles are such that the church leadership doesn't need to know – the struggling brother may not want us to know – but you can be the instrument in God's hands to help them.

There are people in this world where **you** are their primary help. You know them – they trust you. God put them in your life – they are **your** responsibility to restore.

Now if they don't listen – and if the problem is serious enough – take someone else – and then if they still don't listen – talk to a leader – this may have to turn into church discipline.

But hopefully they respond at the very first point. Most of the time when you do what Paul says and bear their burden – the issue disappears.

So what should you do?

What is the spiritual way to handle seeing a brother or sister caught up in transgressions? Three things:

First, restore them in a spirit of gentleness.

The word restore means to restore to usefulness. It is used in the gospels of mending ripped nets. It is used outside the Bible to speak of setting a broken bone.

God put you there to help this precious saint who is struggling with sin to be restored spiritually to the place where they can be useful again – to God, their family, the church.

The goal is to help them call on the resources of the Spirit to crucify the flesh.

But when you approach them – and I cannot stress this enough – do it **in gentleness**.

The spiritual fruit of gentleness.

When someone is struggling – they know it – they hope no one notices it – they are ashamed, embarrassed – the last thing they need is someone casually dropping the hammer on them – or judging them.

Jack man – seems to me your life is messed up. If I see it – then everyone knows it – your marriage is a shambles – you are so short-tempered – but praise God – I'm here to help.

You have to do it gently. Jack – I may be way off base here – tell me so – but I wonder if there are any areas of your life I can help you with? And man – you know me – I have my own mess to deal with – but if I can help – I'm here – I'm not going anywhere.

If you don't do it gently – I have six weeks of counselling to try and put that mess right.

Second, keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

You might be doing OK – but your flesh is never dead. Temptation is but a moment away.

This might be temptation to pride or to sin.

I think pride is the main idea Paul has in mind. Wow – I used to think I was a mess – but I'm nothing compared to Fred. Verses 3-5 make this the most probable idea Paul has in view.

But I think the principle includes vigilance against a temptation to sin.

Your flesh is weak so don't get too close to the sin they are dealing with – or your flesh will start whispering to you that this might bring you pleasure.

Let me say – men – if the one you realise is struggling is a woman – she is **not** your burden – she is your wife's or a female leader's burden.

Ladies – if the one you realise is struggling is a man – he is **not** your burden – he is your husband's or a male leader's burden.

Look, there is a place for couples ministering together – but be careful. Struggling saints are vulnerable and your flesh plus a vulnerable saint spells extreme danger.

I have seen good intentions blow up terribly here.

So, I think both temptation to pride and sin are dangers and may well be in view here.

Third, bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

I think Paul is totally generic in his command here on purpose.

What burdens am I to bear? Burdensome burdens!

Whatever the brother or sister is struggling with – that is the burden.

Sin, marriage, finances, depression, overwork, kids – the list goes on.

And it is not just big things – we can get all hung up on really minor things.

Even if you think it is stupid – it is their burden.

But bearing someone else's burdens is time and effort intense – it costs and we all have our own burdens.

However, Paul says – if the Spirit is in you – you want to do it.

The primary way you bear another's burdens is to encourage them to call on the power of the Spirit.

I have very rarely met someone struggling with sin and temptation who are having awesome times with the Lord.

So offer to meet with them to pray, to read the word, read a devotional book.

Talk with them about the goodness and glory of God and heaven.

If they are struggling with some area of trusting God – talk it through.

If they can't get to homegroup or men's group or grace groups – offer to babysit so they can go.

Don't let them wiggle off the hook – walk with them – do life with them – spoon-feed them till they can feed themselves.

Bearing burdens also needs to get practical.

Money, a financial plan, meals, doing their lawn, taking a single mum's kid to the footy, having a single guy over for a meal, holding them accountable, showing them love.

Be the hands of Christ showing love to a brother or sister.

Find the burden they are struggling with – sin, loneliness, money, dissatisfaction, marriage, kids, singleness – and ask God how you can be a blessing who bears that burden and points them to the joy of Christ.

Now, Paul does not directly address this – but I think it fair to say by implication there are fleshly and spiritual ways to handle it if **you** are the one struggling – caught up in

transgressions – and a brother or sister taps you on the shoulder and says – you seem to be struggling.

First, how does our flesh respond?

I have been approached a number of times. Unfortunately, I can tell you every fibre of my flesh wants to bite their head off.

Here is what I want to say:

Really? Buddy, I'm an Elder – 1 Timothy 5 says don't talk to me without two or three witnesses – where are they? So get out of here.

And of all the people to approach me it's you? You need to get the log out of your own eye – look at your own family man – it's a mess – your wife is a gossip – your kid games 24/7 and I'm not the only one who thinks he is headed to juvey – and you want to talk to me!

We need to find a way to suppress the flesh so that when someone approaches us – we do not do this. We do not:

- Respond in anger.

How dare you – you hypocrite. We are done man – and the end of this friendship was your doing – never forget that.

- Immediately deny it.

Wow you are so far off base man.

- Accuse back.

Look – we know everyone has junk in their lives. Everyone has mess, sin, failures. So, I don't care who it is – you and I – we see this stuff in others – and we file it away – just in case they ever turn on us – stuff that we can use to fire back.

Thanks for that – but while we are being honest with each other – I meant to point out that your mess is bigger than mine – here is what I noticed ... you might want to sit down.

- Deflect.

Don't go to two people you know have no spine – cowards who won't tell you a hard truth – and say – guess what – Max thinks I speak harshly to Simone – how crazy is that?

Then you go back to Max – dude – I asked **everyone** – no one sees it – everyone thinks you are having a little breakdown and seeing things – it is *you* who needs help.

So, how **should** a spiritual person respond?

- Thank them.

Thank you brother – I know it took a lot of courage to come to me.

This is really hard to do.

Then if you still think they are off base.

- Pray about it and seek wise counsel.

Find out if they saw something real that you don't see.

Maybe meet again and talk with them about what they saw – there is probably a few things you can learn.

But, if you know they are right – the moment they walked up you knew what they were going to say:

- Admit it. Share your struggle. Confess your sin. Ask them to help you – hold me accountable, pray with me, read with me, go with me to my spouse.

Ask them to walk through this journey with you.

- If they are not equipped to help and the struggle is serious – seek help.

Go to your homegroup shepherd, Grace Group Leader, Authentic Manhood leader, Youth leader.

If they can't deal with it – then go to a pastor or Elder.

We have these men and women as your first port of call – because I physically can't counsel all of you personally.

Counseling is a huge job so one thing we are doing is training our interns to help.

This means the next time you ask Luke or I to counsel you – we will ask you – can an intern sit in – and while you want to say – no way! – I hope many of you will say – I don't like it – but I understand the need to have them there – while I am a bit embarrassed, I trust them and I want them to be trained so they can learn to bear some of the burden of the flock.

Then having said this – Paul gives us the reality check we need before we approach someone concerning their sin.

Verses 3-5:

For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.

When you hear of a fellow saint falling into sin, trouble, problems – how do you respond?

I think we all say the right things.

I'm so sorry to hear that – I will pray for them.

But, I think often there is some relief and some totally unwarranted pride. Sometimes we do a little jig inside.

Wow – and I thought they had it all together – home-schooling royalty with eleven perfect Isaiah quoting children – and now he is separating from her and several of the kids leaving the faith – O shame.

I know they looked down on me but now *they* are not so perfect. My Christian schooled, iPad toting kids are not so rotten after all. I'm not the terrible derelict parent.

We compare, we judge, we distinguish – and in this we find a measure of pride and boasting.

We think we are something – but Paul says we are deceived.

If you want to compare – compare yourself to Christ.

We have nothing to boast in when we compare ourselves to others – what are we thinking?

The truth is we are all nothing.

If we could test our own works – we would find every single one of them fails to impress a holy God.

We are all failures before Him.

We can't say I'm a total failure – you are a total failure – but thank God you are bigger total failure than me.

We are all nothing.

That is what Paul has said so far in this letter. And because our works are nothing we expect Paul to say:

Then he has nothing to boast in.

Instead he says:

Then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.

We read this and ask – what possible reason could anyone find in themselves to boast in?

In fact down in verse 14 – Paul says he finds nothing to boast in except the cross of Christ.

I think what is going on is this. We are tempted to boast in our works especially in comparison to the failures of our neighbour's.

But the implication is – if you had anything to boast in it would be what you have done – not in what your neighbour did or didn't do – but when you understand the gospel you realise you have **nothing** to boast in.

Your best works are filthy rags. You are nothing. You have no reason to boast.

Verse 5 – you have to bear your own load. You have to be accountable before the Lord for your own junk, your own mess, your own deeds of the flesh.

Don't worry about someone else's failures – unless it is to help them – because you have your own to deal with.

When you understand this – you are nothing – then you are ready to approach a struggling brother or sister in gentleness – in humility.

You go and say – brother – I am a fellow sinner on this journey – I struggle – I fall – I mess up.

I have nothing to be proud of.

I am a spiritual cripple – but by the grace of God if I can help bear the burden of a fellow spiritual cripple – lean on me brother.

Here is what helped me – I think it might help you.

That is what Christian community spiritual fruit looks like.

It is hard – we don't want to do it – our pride gets in the way – we struggle with our own mess – but this is what the Spirit of God working in our midst looks like.

The second example of Christian community spiritual fruit Paul gives is:

Giving Generously 6:6

Galatians 6:6:

Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

The words here are financial words. The Spirit moves us to share our wealth with those who labour to teach us the truths of God.

The flock being taught spiritual truths should financially support those who teach them.

Now – our Treasurer Keith knew this verse was being taught today and emailed suggesting I pause here to take up an offering.

No he didn't.

In fact Paul specifically speaks against this type of persuasive giving.

There is fleshly giving – I give to impress God and earn reward. I give because of guilt or expectation or routine. But I give as little as I can and still earn my reward.

Then there is spiritual giving – cheerful, exuberant giving to see the work of the kingdom flourish.

Jesus spoke more about money than any other subject because if you want to see if you have spiritual fruit – look no further than what you do with your money.

The flesh says – give as little to the kingdom and as much to me.

The flesh says – the first thing in our budget to get squeezed is *not* a bigger mortgage, our daily latte, the new car – it is kingdom giving. That is discretionary.

The flesh says – no one knows what I give. I was guilted into giving some to Compassion – at least I can put the picture of the kid on my fridge for all to see – but that covers all my kingdom giving.

The flesh says – the top tax bracket guys in the church should do the heavy-lifting not me.

The flesh gives begrudgingly.

But, the Spirit says – give as much to the kingdom as you can.

The Spirit says – the last thing on our budget to get squeezed is giving to God.

The Spirit says – I know what I give. I do give some to Compassion, but I long to give more to the kingdom.

The Spirit says – move over top tax bracket guys let me join the heavy-lifting.

The Spirit gives cheerfully.

Jesus said – I will build My church. The Kingdom of God grows like a mustard seed. Brothers and sisters I hope you feel absolutely privileged to have the opportunity to give in order to see the kingdom come.

Brothers and sisters, if your budget – how you spend your money is such that you could not go to an Elder and say – here is every penny I earn and how I spend it –

what do you think? – If you would be embarrassed to do that – then maybe the flesh is winning in this area of your life.

If you give from Law or compulsion – I say keep it. Buy yourself a nice dinner – it will do you more good.

But, if you give from the Spirit within – if you give sacrificially and cheerfully to see the work of the kingdom advance – feel free to empty your account into ours – you are laying up treasure in heaven.

Paul adds this as a fruit of the Spirit in the church because giving generously to the kingdom is hard – the flesh will fight this tooth and nail.

But, it costs to train interns. It costs to support missionaries and pastors. It costs a truckload to plant churches.

The Spirit in you says – **bring it on** – I want in on this.

Now Paul comes to his final point.

So do not submit to the yoke of present unrighteousness **6:7-18**

This is a warning. If the fruit of the Spirit is not in you – if the work of the flesh seems unopposed – if your life is unrighteous – then you have wasted the opportunity for freedom – you do not belong to Christ.

First warning:

It is the Spirit in us who reaps eternal life – trust in that **6:7-10**

Galatians 6:7-8:

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Don't deceive yourself that you are saved – because God is not deceived – He is not mocked.

Even for we non-agricultural types can grasp this analogy.

If you sow wheat – you expect to reap wheat.

If you sow barley – you expect to reap barley.

Paul uses this to give a spiritual principle:

If you sow to the flesh – you reap the fruit of the flesh – which leads to eternal corruption.

If you sow to the Spirit – you reap the fruit of the Spirit – which leads to eternal life.

What is sowing to the flesh?

It is indulging the flesh. Feeding the flesh.

You feed the flesh on Netflix, the Internet, gaming, alcohol, sex.

Instead of crucifying the flesh – all of the works in 5:19-21 – you pamper it.

You gossip and say – I'm just sharing prayer requests – I'll share more.

You go to R rated movies and say – I am just building up resistance to temptation – I need more resistance training.

You cut back your giving and increase your luxury spending and say – I am only being a prudent steward.

You deceive yourself.

And this type of fruit says – there is no Holy Spirit present – only flesh – which means your destiny is eternal corruption.

What is sowing to the Spirit?

It is feeding the Spirit.

You sow to the Spirit through the Word, prayer, fellowship, accountability.

You long to crucify the flesh – all of the works in 5:19-21 – and you want to foster the fruit of the Spirit 5:22-23.

You see a brother struggling and say – how can I help?

You see a need and say – how can I give?

You see a sin and say – how can I cut it off?

And this type of fruit says – there is the Spirit of God within battling the flesh – which shows that your destiny is eternal life.

Verse 9:

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Doing good to others in the church is exhausting and very often thankless.

You give and get little appreciation. Much of it no one sees. It is hard enough to deal with your own problems.

You approach a brother for the tenth time – how are you doing – same old sin – and you think I'm tired of bearing your burden.

You help a family who again squander that financial help.

But the Spirit causes us to persevere and not weary of producing good works.

Then in due season – death or the return of Jesus – we know we will reap eternal life – because the fact we did not give up shows the Spirit was in us.

Brothers and sisters – be warned – you can fake it for a long time.

Judas walked with Jesus for years. Demas served shoulder to shoulder with the Apostle Paul. And both gave up – turned to the world and the flesh.

I have seen saints walk away in their 80s after serving for decades.

So, keep going to the end – keep sowing to the Spirit until your last breath or the last trump sounds.

Verse 10:

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

We are to love all men – but as Christians – we have a particular duty to love – bear burdens and support the household of faith – our fellow Christians.

If you do this – then the Spirit is in you – you are saved – trust in this.

Finally,

It is the Spirit in us who points to the cross – boast in that **6:11-18**

Galatians 6:11:

See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

Paul had an amanuensis – a secretary – but here he took the quill – and he himself wrote in large letters.

He did these things to say – **pay attention** – this is important.

Verses 12-13:

It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the

cross of Christ. For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

These Judaisers who waltzed into Galatia with their false gospel of faith plus Law – telling you to be circumcised as a sign that you are under the Law – they did this because the gospel of the cross is offensive.

Jews are offended because the One on the cross is cursed.

Gentiles think it is foolish to think that Jesus was God and would die for you.

But no one thinks working hard and keeping the Law is offensive. No one persecutes them. So to have an easier life they downplayed the cross and up-played Law.

But they did not keep the Law – because they could not.

We can't keep our own law.

Don Carson tells of hearing a woman talk who works with Ivy league girls. These are the young women in the top universities in America – so hard to get into – Harvard, Princeton, Yale.

She said these girls all seem to have their own code – their own Law. Here it is:

1. Get straight A's.
2. Don't let anyone tell you what to do.
3. Always look hot.

These are some of the most accomplished women on the planet – but she found they constantly felt they were failures – because they could not keep their own Law.

They got straight A's in high school – now they were in a different league – other brilliant students and someone has to get Bs and Cs.

There are always people who tell you what to do – professors, employers, government.

And no one can look hot all the time.

So the most gifted, beautiful women around always felt like failures.

If we can't keep our own Law – there is no way can we keep God's Law – any part – at any time.

Despite their big talk – Paul knows these Judaisers did not keep the Law – but they still commanded the Galatians to keep it in order that they might boast in their flesh.

The sense seems to be that in some way they are lining up flesh trophies – the foreskins that were cut off – and boasting in that.

Look how many Galatians believed us over Paul.

We must be right – look how many have submitted to circumcision.

But Paul says – if you want to boast – boast in this – verses 14-15:

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

These verses sum up the entire book of Galatians.

The only thing anyone should boast in is the cross of Christ.

He kept the Law – He pleased God – He saved us – boast in that – boast in Christ.

Circumcision – keeping the Law – can't save.

The world, the flesh, the law – they are crucified to me and I to them. They cannot save me.

Only the cross can make me a new creation.

Verse 16:

And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

The blessings of God – peace and mercy – that is for those who keep this truth – salvation is by faith alone based on the cross alone. Those that keep this are the Israel of God – Jew and Gentile – they are the true people of God – children of Abraham.

Verse 17:

From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

They might have circumcision to boast in – Paul has the marks of persecution on his body – marks which point to the cross.

Verse 18:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Grace – salvation as a gift of God – not works – may this be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

And thus Galatians ends.

Galatians is an awesome book – but a humbling book.

It removes **every** ground of boasting – bar one – the cross of Christ.

Salvation is **all** of Christ.

Good works are **all** of Christ.

Faith **alone** links us to Christ.

So don't boast in yourself, your works, your legacy.

Boast in Christ – **alone**.

If you boast in Christ and the cross – it will preserve your theology, your gospel, your good works. It will keep you persevering to the end. It will assure you of your salvation.

So, if you boast in Christ alone – **then** you understand Galatians.

Boast In This (Galatians 5:22-6:18 December 9, 2018)

Main Point: No brag is humble unless it boasts only in the cross of Christ.

General Questions:

1. What are the things we tend to boast in? Why do these oppose the gospel?
2. Describe the battle between the flesh and the Spirit?
3. What are the ways not to approach a brother struggling with transgressions?
4. What are the ways to approach a brother struggling with transgressions?
5. How should you not respond if someone approaches you about a struggle in your life?
6. How should you respond if someone approaches you about a struggle in your life?
7. Why is it so hard to approach someone about their sin? Why is this so important?
8. Why is money such a difficult area?
9. How should a Christian give?
10. How do you sow to the flesh and to the Spirit?
11. How does this help you know if you are saved?
12. How can we not grow weary of doing good works?
13. How do we make sure we only boast in the cross?

Application Questions:

1. Is there someone you can help by bearing their burdens?
2. Do you need to approach someone about your burdens?
3. Are you happy with your budget and how you use the stewardship of your resources?
4. How can we deceive ourselves regarding salvation?

5. What makes you boast in the cross?