

Good Deeds and the Transformed Life

Reading: Galatians 6:10.

Shortly after World War II came to a close, Europe began picking up the pieces.

Many cities had been ravaged by war and were in ruins.

Perhaps the saddest sight of all was that of little orphaned children starving in the streets of those war-torn cities.

In London early one chilly morning, an American soldier was making his way back to the barracks. As he turned the corner in his jeep, he spotted a little lad with his nose pressed to the window of a pastry shop.

Inside, the cook was kneading dough for a fresh batch of doughnuts.

The hungry boy stared in silence, watching every move.

The soldier pulled his jeep to the curb, stopped, got out, and walked quietly over to where the little fellow was standing.

Through the steamed-up window, he could see the mouth-watering morsels being pulled from the oven, piping hot.

The boy salivated and released a slight groan as he watched the cook place them onto the glass-enclosed counter ever so carefully.

The soldier's heart went out to the nameless orphan as he stood beside him.

"Son ... would you like some of those?" He asked the lad.

The boy was startled, "Oh, yeah... I would!" the lad replied.

The American stepped inside and bought a dozen, put them in a bag, and walked back to where the lad was standing in the foggy cold of the London morning.

The soldier smiled, held out the bag, and said simply: "Here you are."

As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat.

He looked back and heard the child ask quietly: "Mister... Are you God?"

The question, "Mister... Are you God?", brings this story into focus as an illustration of what I'd like us to walk away with today that;

God is Glorified when Christians who are Rich in Good Deeds Show Compassion and the Gospel to Others.

Today is the launch of a partnership between GBC Holland Park and Compassion Australia. Part of our commission as Christians is see the Gospel reach the ends of the earth. One way that is to happen is to partner with people. Through Compassion, Grace Bible Churches are looking to reach into the Philippines, a nation on the door step of our country.

We're looking to partner with like-minded churches in the Philippines, to reach out to children, to those in need. It's a two-pronged approach, providing resources for the local churches to minister to the kids, in their physical and educational needs, but ALSO the need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There's a role for us as well through letter writing, and in the future, potential visits to see the work there.

Well, what does God's word, the Bible, tell us about the why and how of this sort of ministry? We'll be looking at a few scriptures today.

Today I'd like us to see this:

God is Glorified when Christians who are Rich in Good Deeds Show Compassion and the Gospel to Others.

**Good Deeds Flow out of a Life Transformed by the Gospel.
Good Deeds Reflect the Character of God and Glorifies Him.**

1. Good Deeds flow out of a Life Transformed by the Gospel.

All kinds of people do good deeds. What makes the good deeds that a does Christian different? This point looks at where these good deeds come from – what the source of these good deed are for the Christian.

Look with me at, Galatians 6:10.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10. ESV

The first words in the verse are “So Then”, in some translations it’s “Therefore”.

The “So then” or the “Therefore”, draw us to look back to what’s already been written before the – So then ...

A reminder then about the book of Galatians, and what’s going on. This book addresses a problem that had come up between Jewish and non-Jewish Christians. Basically, the question that was being tossed round was this, that to follow Jesus, to be a Christian that pleases God, you must trust in the death of Jesus Christ AND you must also obey the law that’d been given to Moses. In other words, to be in favour with God it’s grace PLUS works of the law.

Well, Paul in this letter says NO! Paul points out that we’re saved, we’re made right with God through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and not by adding on anything else. In other words, to be in favour with God, it is grace plus nothing. This is what Paul writes in verse 16 of Galatians chapter 2;

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. Galatians 2:16. NIV.

So, we’re made right with God, we’re justified with God purely through faith in Jesus Christ. This is because it’s through the death of Christ that we’re made right with God, and nothing that we can do can improve the situation, nothing we can do can make it any better, it’s all of Jesus.

However, out of this faith in with Christ, there’s a change, there’s an evidence of faith, called fruit of the Spirit. The last two chapters of this letter to the Galatians, describe what a life that’s been transformed by the Gospel looks like. The life of someone who’s heart has been reached by the Gospel, and as a result has been filled with the Holy Spirit. Well, it’s that life that starts to bear fruit of the Spirit.

An apple tree produces apples because it's part of its DNA. So then, someone who has been saved, someone who has been transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and has the Spirit within, they then start to produce the fruit of the Spirit. They start to produce fruit like the list of fruits listed in Ch 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; Gal 5:22-23b. ESV

This changed life, starts to increasingly show marks of God's character shining through our lives, as we are bit by bit, are further transformed by the Gospel as we grow in the knowledge of God. There's more love, more joy, more kindness, more gentleness, more self-control. Gone is the life of the flesh and its habitual practices of the list of the flesh in Ch 5:19-21. This transformed character starts to show. What did your life look like before Christ? Maybe your life was characterised by huge outbursts of anger, now there's more self-control. Where hate dominated, now there's a love for others; where the party life was the only thing, now there's a desire to serve and love God and His people. Instead of jealousy of what others have, there's a contentment in what you have, rather a longing for what you don't have.

Through the gospel, the lives of believers in Jesus Christ's death are transformed. Gone is the continual practice of our old flesh nature. We've been transformed into a new nature, through faith in Christ. We've been sealed with the Holy Spirit. With that comes a transformed nature, with that comes a desire to please God. We can try to do it ourselves, but that's going to end in disappointment and failure because our essential nature wouldn't have changed, we'd be still dominated by the flesh nature, the result at some stage will be disappointment.

Genuine change comes as a result of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit working within us. As we are changed, as we are transformed, the way that we act, the way that we behave and live changes too.

We've seen the source of our good deeds as a Christian, that it is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This leads us to our second point;

2. Good Deeds Reflect the Character of God and Glorifies Him.

In this point we explore what these good deeds look like, and what our motivation is to be.

Look with me again at our verse in Galatians 6

So then, as we have opportunity, **let us do good** to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10. ESV

What does it mean to "do good"?

So, what's in mind here is good in a general sense. Well thanks Luke, that's as clear as mud! What do you really mean by that? Well it encompasses all good deeds, good works, whatever is for the good, for the betterment, for the advantage of others.

What good deeds look like?

Spiritually: This might be helping someone in their spiritual walk with God, in their struggle with a particular sin, and your walking alongside them in this struggle [Galatians 6:1]. It might be bearing each other's burdens, helping each other through pain and difficulties that life brings [Galatians 6:2]. It could be praying with and for someone. It may be sharing the Gospel with a friend, a family member. These things are great. But it does go further.

Physically: Addressing physical need is good too. Jesus displayed this. He had compassion on people and this was seen in what He did, He healed people, He fed people as well. [Matthew 14:13-21]. We need to have compassion on the least of our brothers and sisters in Christ in their need. Feeding the hungry, drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the destitute, visiting the sick and those in prison, because we do it as to the Lord Jesus. [Matthew 25:31-46]

In NT times, the wealthy Christians, provided funds for community projects¹. These guys provided funds beyond the scope of most people in the church. These funds included supplying grain in times of need through diverting supply ships to the city. But also involved community works like erecting public buildings and other utilities. In this they not only provided a benefit to other Christians, but also to the wider community they were part of. [1 Peter 2:11-17; Romans 13:1-5; Jeremiah 29:4-7]. In doing this not only did the community benefit from it, but God's name was honoured.

Now I'm not sure how many here of us are in the position to do these sorts of things today here in Australia. However, through partnership with Compassion, contributing to providing a toilet block in third world countries can make a huge difference to the society and welfare of the people there.

We've seen what good deeds are, and what they look like. There are 4 characteristics I'd like us to note about good deeds.

1. When are good deeds to be done?

What else does Galatians 6:10 tell us? **As we have opportunity.** A transformed life will be naturally flowing with good deeds Every time we get the chance, whenever we can, we should be looking to take the opportunity to do good to others. There's not a turning on and off like a pre-set timer; On Sunday morning and off for the rest of the week. Is that the way it is to be? Well, no, it's our entire lives that provide the opportunity and privilege to serve, to do good to others. Irrespective of the season of life that we're in. Whenever the opportunity arises, if it is in our capacity to do so, we should be willing.

2. Who good deeds are for?

Note the next thing it's **to all people, whoever the person is.**

Our good deeds are not to be limited to people we like or are like us.

It doesn't matter who it is be it the awkward family member, neighbour, work mate, foreigner, someone from a different state or country, even people with different religious beliefs, they all should be on our list of people to help. It's to be ALL people, our neighbour. [Matthew 22:36-40].

¹ Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Carlisle, Cumbria: Eerdmans ; Paternoster Press, 1994).

But particularly, **especially to those who belong to the family of believers**, fellow Christians they're to be the ones we need to do good for, even if they are the awkward ones. It's the brother and sister in Christ without daily food and clothes. It's the widow without family to help. It's the orphan. [James 1:17; 2:14-17; 1 Timothy 5:3-16]. But it is also other churches. We see examples of churches supporting each other when in need, even giving generously even though they themselves were in extreme poverty [2 Corinthians 8:1-7]

Are we in extreme poverty here in Australia? Generally, no. There are cases, however, the reality is we ARE ALL wealthy. We may not be compared to others in this country. But compared to others on this planet, we are VERY wealthy. In Australia, we are in the top few percent of the world's most wealthy people.

We can still grizzle, though can't we? Do we think it harsh if I DON'T have the latest flat screen TV that my neighbour does, or I can't afford to go on the sort of holidays that I want, or send my kids off to that private school, or the internet is running slower than I'd like? First world problems... Here in Oz, the bar, our expectations are high in regard to wealth and standard of living.

I need to remember this;

if we have food and clothing, to be will be content with that. 1 Timothy 6:8. NIV

I'm challenged by the quote from the great Reformer Martin Luther. He once wrote that "there are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, the conversion of the mind, and the conversion of the purse". Of these three, it may well be that we find the conversion of the purse to be the most difficult. Charles Spurgeon also wrote this, "With some (Christians) the last part of their nature that ever gets sanctified is their pockets."

3. Our good deeds are to be marked with generosity:

What does the Bible have to say about this? Look with me in 1 Timothy 6, it says these words.

¹⁷As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. 1 Timothy 6:17-19. ESV

Earlier in this book of 1st Timothy, there's a warning that wealth can be a trap for the believer, in that it can take them away from Christ. [1 Timothy 6:9]. But the writer goes onto point out that HAVING money is NOT evil, but the LOVE of money IS [1 Timothy 6:10]. Here in verse 17, it is pointed out that our hope should be in God and not in our wealth or possessions, because it can be quickly gone. We're not to be arrogant, because we're to remember that it's God who has blessed us and has provided us with everything.

Look with me at verse 18,

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share. 1 Timothy 6:18. ESV.

Here in this verse is a call to those who are rich in material wealth are encouraged to be rich in good works. Good deeds, that flow out of a genuine faith in the God who gives. The God who is calling us to be generous and ready to richly share what He has richly provided. In doing this we reflect the character of a God who richly gave. We reflect the character of God who is kind to all [Luke 6:35-36; Matthew 5:43-45].

4. Our Good deeds are to glorify God:

In doing good deeds we glorify God.

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:16b. NIV

Good deeds that flow out of a life that's been transformed by the gospel, glorify God. Many people do good works in the world today. People are involved in helping in the community, giving money, donating time and talent to various people and various charities. What's the difference with Christians? What is the difference as people of God doing the same thing? Not only is it the source, but it is also the motivation, the reason that we're to be doing it. As people who've submitted their lives to Christ, we should not be doing it for OUR ego, OUR honour, to make me LOOK good, or to be highly thought of. NO, the motivation is so that God's name be honoured. So that HIS name be glorified, so that the news of the gospel will extend to everyone, that HIS kingdom be advanced.

The good deeds we do can be a conduit, a pipeline to enable to gospel to reach and touch lives is made possible. It's in the good works, a picture of a kind and generous God can be seen. Like our opening illustration, when the lad got the bag of donuts, what did he think? "Are you God?"

For us, may we be an illustration of God to those in need around us, may we be this to those we may sponsor and partner with through Compassion in the Philippines. It's our prayer that as help is given to address the physical needs, that through this conduit, through this connection, that the message of Jesus Christ will find fertile ground.

May we be Christians who are rich in good deeds, bringing compassion and the gospel to others, to the glory of God.

Good Deeds and the Transformed Life
(Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19 18th February 2018)

Main Point: **God is Glorified when Christians who are Rich in Good Deeds Show Compassion and the Gospel to Others.**

Please select a few relevant questions from each section and ensure that most of the time is focussed on application.

General Questions:

1. What is the "Therefore"[Or the "So then"], there for in Galatians 6:10?
2. What is the connection between Galatians 2:16 and Galatians 6:10?
3. Is this important in relation to good deeds? Why or why not?
4. What do good deeds look like?
5. How were these seen in New Testament times, in in what way are they seen today?
6. In what way does good deeds show God's character?

Application Questions:

1. What should be the root of our good deeds? Why is this so important?
2. Who in the network of people that we have contact with do we find the most difficult to show good deeds to? Why? Is this something that we can change? If so how? If not, why not?
3. How can good deeds be shown today in modern Australia?
4. Would you agree with the quotes from Martin Luther and Charles Spurgeon?

"There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, the conversion of the mind, and the conversion of the purse" Martin Luther

"With some (Christians) the last part of their nature that ever gets sanctified is their pockets."
Charles Spurgeon.

Is this a fair assessment of where we are as Australian Christians in 2018?

What things do we complain about? Do they really matter?

What is the motivation of my good deeds?

5. Reflect on how and when you came to Christ. Was there a person or event that led to you hearing about the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Would you class this as a good deed?
6. When do we do good deeds, at every opportunity or only when it is convenient?
7. How can we do better as a church at showing good deeds towards each other?
8. How can we do better as a church at showing good deeds towards our community?
9. How can we do better as an individual in showing good deeds towards family, neighbours, work colleagues, others? Is there anyone to pray for in this way?