

Cornerstone Purpose Statement- Grow Together (Accountability)

Galatians 6:1-5

Introduction

We are in a series that outlines the purpose statement of Cornerstone. We exist to Love God, Grow Together, and Serve Others. We are in the second week of the Grow Together part of the series. Last week was our first week and we got to spend time together as the body of Christ during our church picnic and it was an incredible time of fellowship. Today we are going to be looking in the book of Galatians 6:1-5 to see another aspect of what it means to grow together and we are going to be talking about the importance of accountability and bearing each other's burdens.

I grew up not too far from here. My dad was a Pastor and he was my hero. That being said my dad was not perfect. The atmosphere in my home began to change when I turned 12 and suddenly things began to unravel. At a young age I knew that things were not going to end well and it was only a matter of time before everything would fall apart. The weight of ministry began to take its toll on my father and ultimately my family, it took almost 10 years, a decade, for everything to come to head. 10 years of living in constant fear that at some point life as I knew it would come to an end. That's a long time! Finally, when things reached their boiling point, my dad walked away from the church and left my family. It happened in what seemed like overnight, it came as a shock to everybody, everybody except my family. We had been waiting for this moment for a long time. I remember in the wake of the fall out the terrible things that were said about my family by the people that my family had spent over 15 years giving our lives to.

Why is it that sometimes church doesn't feel like a safe place to get help? Why is it that in what should be a place of healing, church, sometimes the most harm is done? Why are there so many people sitting in the seats of church fighting for their lives and nobody knows? How can we create a church that allows us to grow together through even the most difficult of circumstances? In Paul's letter to the church in Galatia he gives us some helpful pointers in carrying each other's burden. Let's read together Galatians 6:1-5...

Bear One Another's Burdens

"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. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load."

As we begin considering how to create a church that is a safe place for those struggling. I think it's helpful for us to look at what took place in the church of Galatia so that we can avoid some of the same pitfalls. As we read through this letter, we immediately get a sense of Paul's forcefulness. It's clear that he's not playing games and he is determined to set things straight.

There was a group of individuals called the Judaizers who infiltrated the church and started adding requirements to the gospel as a way of measuring one's faith.

Like the Galatians freedom actually becomes unsettling for us. We feel as though we need some sort of moral guideline. We are afraid of it becoming a free for all, but we forget that freedom in Christ is not a license to sin but an opportunity to love. It's an opportunity to love those who are living in sin as opposed to having some sort of impossible standard for them to meet before they come to Christ. Now that we understand a little more about what is taking place and we see how we can relate, let's take a close look at this passage so that we can become a church who grows together through accountability.

Main Point

I want to be clear from the beginning. The main point of this passage is to...*"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."* There is no other point. It's how we go about bearing each other's burdens that is important, but let's keep the main thing the main thing. In order for us to be a church who grows together it's our job to bear each other's burdens.

4 Exercises to bearing burdens.

Exercise number one: Walk by the Spirit

"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."

When Paul says that, "if anyone is caught in transgression." He is not talking about someone who is willfully choosing to live in sin. He is talking about a believer who has fallen into sin and has become trapped. I also want to be clear, when Paul says, "You who are spiritual," he is not talking about a certain group of believers. Paul is talking about all believers, each of us is spiritual.

We are instructed then to bear each other's burdens in a spirit of gentleness. This is directly connected to the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control."* I would go as far to say that walking by the Spirit is not some mystical out of body experience, but practically speaking it is allowing your faith in God to produce these fruits at times in your life when your flesh would respond differently. That is what it means to walk in the spirit.

So, if you plan on being a burden bearer, which you are required to do by scripture, then you need to be aware, the message of warning is directed not to the one who has fallen, but to those who aim to help the one who has fallen. Often the key to successful accountability is not solely dependent upon the person being held accountable, but the humility of the one who the person is accountable too. When Paul warns us to keep watch on ourselves, lest we too be tempted. He is not talking about sin as though it is contagious. Rather than grieve over another's sin, we sometimes find joy realizing we have a leg up on someone. This is called pride and is often the biggest struggle in the church. Pride will inhibit burden bearing as the prideful

are most often to conceited to bend low to carry other's burdens. That is why Paul explains that we need to exercise our ability to walk in spirit and for the Spirit of God to produce the fruit of gentleness in our lives.

Exercise number two: Fulfill the Law of Christ

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

This is for all of my fellow rule followers out there! It's interesting that Paul would use this language, but it's likely that he is getting at something. The church in Galatia was so focused on the law and fulfilling the law that Paul invokes the same language to make a point. This is actually a term, *the law of Christ*, that we don't see anywhere else in scripture, the idea is there, but Paul brings it together to make a point. By bearing each other's burdens we are fulfilling the law of Christ. If it's important to us that we feel like we have some sort of rules to follow. Then we should focus our energy on fulfilling Christ's law, which is love.

Matthew 22:34-40 ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

So, there you have it. The Law of Christ is the Law of love. Let us be reminded of Jesus the ultimate burden bearer. We see all throughout scripture this truth.

Mark 10:45- *"Came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many."*

1 Peter 2:24- *"bore our sins in his body on the tree"*

Isaiah 53:4-6- *"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."*

By looking to Christ, we are reminded of our own sin and shame that he bore and we ourselves are encouraged to become burden bearers like him. By doing this we are exercising our freedom in Christ and fulfilling the Law of Christ.

Exercise number 3: Self-Assessment

"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."

This next exercise is critical in order to become better burden bearers. We must not be self-deceived. If we are not careful the sin of pride can flatter us, convincing ourselves that we are something we are not. That we are less sinful than we really are, and more faithful, and more

gracious then we really are. We must get into the habit of assessing ourselves regularly so as not to deceive ourselves. Kent Hughes says, “Self-conceit is fatal for burden bearing because it turns us into judges rather than burden bearers.”

Psalm 139:23-24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

In addition to proper self-assessment we need to be cautious of comparing ourselves to others. We can’t help ourselves, if you ask me that’s the only reason social media was invented! So that we can compare our lives to everyone else and we do it while were bored. We are never satisfied with how our lives are going so we compare our lives, for better or worse, with lives of everyone else. We spend more time observing other’s lives then we do actually living our own. However, it’s our lives that we are ultimately accountable for and we need to get into the habit of testing our own work. We do this by comparing our lives to the “Law of Christ.” Our ability to love others and help carry other’s burdens. That is the only standard by which we should measure our effectiveness.

1 Corinthians 4:1-5 “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.⁵ Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God”

When we stop comparing our lives to the lives of others it allows us to move beyond ourselves and it frees us to bear one another’s burdens.

Exercise number 4: Keep the end in mind

“For each will have to bear his own load”

This is a critical step in bearing the burdens of others. At first it may sound contradictory. Paul just got done saying to bear each other’s burdens and now he is saying to bear our own load. What’s the deal here? Here’s the reality, someday each of us will stand before the God of the universe and while we may not have to fear judgment that leads to condemnation, we will certainly have to watch our life’s work pass through the fire. Some of our actions will be burnt up as wood hay and stubble and some will pass through as precious metals and jewels. All of our motives for why we did what we did will be judged by God and there will be nobody standing by our side in that moment, it will just be you and him. That should be enough to frighten any of us to action. Yes, we are to bear each other’s burdens, but at the end of the day we all have our own load to carry and only we will stand before God and give an account for the way we lived our lives.

It's not hard to think highly of ourselves when we compare ourselves to others, but standing before an all Holy God, that's a different story.

We ought to get into the habit of thinking about that day that we will stand before God. Believe it or not this is an incredible help to us in bearing others burdens.

Romans 14:10-12- “¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess^[a] to God.”

¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

It's our job as believers to serve each other now in love, because that is the measure by which we will be judged when we stand before God.

Conclusion

When did the church become an unsafe place? We want to become a church where it's alright not to be alright. A place where we bear each other's burdens because we know that each of us will stand before God. Let's exercise our ability to bear others burdens by walking in the spirit, fulfilling the law of Christ, testing ourselves, and keeping the end in mind.