

Galatians: Free in Christ

# Sowing & Reaping

Galatians 6:6-10

What you do matters. Paul is coming to the end of his letter and takes time to explain that we reap what we sow. We easily forget this because the fruit of the Spirit doesn't include pomp and circumstance, so what difference does it make? The same difference that planting makes when it comes to harvest time. Biblical wisdom sees the connection between seed and crop, and therefore we want to plant good seed in sure hope of what's to come.

## Share All Good Things

The one taught the word should share all good things with the teacher (v1). This is not the "pay up!" fundraising section of Paul's letter. He took no wages for his ministry, so he can't be accused of greed, nor is he negotiating for pastors who are paid (2 Cor. 11:7-9). Elsewhere he argues for paid clergy, just as Moses said, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain" (Deut. 25:4; 1 Cor. 9:9ff). But here the scope is bigger; he desires the health of the body of Christ. The word for "share" is the verb form of *koinonia*, what we call "fellowship" and "communion". Paul lays out a pattern of a man called to the ministry of word who is supported by his people. Sometimes this isn't possible and ministers should be willing to do what Paul did for the church and the gospel, but normally the church should support him. You want your doctor well educated and up on his boards, and the same goes for doctors of souls. He should be worthy of it, producing like an ox, sowing the seed of the word, and part of that is measured in how people give in all things. In other words, it's a two-way street. The minister sows (and gives), and the people give and sow.

## God is Not Mocked

As someone said, "Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny." God built the world where ideas and actions produce something. We are deceived to think they don't, that in this instance my indulgence of sin won't matter (v7). This is the adult version of the kid who thinks that because he covers his eyes other people can't see him. Functional atheism pretends that if others don't know, it won't amount to anything (cf. Num. 32:23). God promised Noah that He would not curse or destroy the earth again, and seedtime and harvest would continue upon the earth (Gen. 8:22). This is a wonderful and terrible pattern whereby something small goes in the ground and comes out much bigger and very different, according to its kind. Paul uses a striking word for mocking meaning to sneer or turn the nose up (v7). To rebel against Him is to invite the consequences, just as to love Him is to welcome His blessings (Hos. 8:7; Job 4:8; Lk. 6:38). Sow to the flesh, and reap corruption; sow to the Spirit for the joy of everlasting life (v8). In keeping with everything Paul has said in this letter, this is not a way to earn salvation but a way to walk in it, a way to farm in it. God

NOTES:

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gives “eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality” (Rom. 2:7). Pseudo-Calvinism pits the means of godliness against the end, which is eternal life. But faith-alone that justifies recognizes the Godness of God and His way of blessing. We sow to the flesh when we tolerate and indulge selfishness, anger, sexual immorality, grudges, self-pity and so on. We sow the Spirit when we worship, receive His Word, and abound in love toward our neighbor (cf. 5:22-23).

## Reaping in Due Season

Doing good is hard work and false teachers don't make it any easier. We don't do good for goodness' sake, but for God's sake and He blesses with eternal life (v9). We actually possess that eternal life now (1 Jn. 5:13) just as we reap the Spirit now, though there's more to come. We should distinguish between productive exhaustion and burn out. Being tired at the end of a day or a season is different than growing weary as Paul describes (v9). One is satisfying and intentional with a view to the future harvest, and the other is discontented and hopeless from chasing sin (cf. v5). It's the difference between doing good for God or for yourself. We have wait on Him for the harvest rather than give up. Paul makes it easy for us. You don't have to find a foreign field to take up this work. He says to do good as we have opportunity, and especially to the household of faith (v10). Plant in your backyard and wait on God for a bumper crop.