

Restoring the Fallen

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[0 : 00] Well, please turn your Bibles to Galatians chapter 6. This morning our attention will be directed to verses 1 through 5. Last week we considered what it means to walk by the Spirit from Galatians 5, 16 through 26.

And in verse 16 of chapter 5, the Apostle Paul tells us, But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

And then he goes on to tell us that in the Christian life there's a war between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit.

And what we see is that even though we are called to walk by the Spirit so that we do not fulfill the lust of the flesh, the Apostle Paul makes us aware of the reality that in the Christian life, even though believers are called to walk by the Spirit so that they do not fulfill the lust of the flesh, believers still sin.

And that's the reality that he brings before us. And not just the Apostle Paul, that is the witness of Scripture. But Paul notices something more than that.

[1 : 25] He recognizes a reality beyond just the fact that even though we are called to walk by the Spirit, we sin. Paul recognizes that sometimes believers find themselves in situations or patterns of sin for which they need the help of others to get out of.

And this morning, the passage that we have come to in Paul's letter to the Galatians addresses this reality.

So before I pray, let's read Galatians chapter 6, verses 1 through 5. Please follow along as I read. I'm reading from the English Standard Version.

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. Fear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

[2 : 43] 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. Let's pray together. Father, we're so grateful this morning that we are able to gather in this place.

We're grateful, Lord, for the privilege of having your word in our own language. We thank you, Lord, that you did not just give us your word in verbal form, but you gave us your word in written form.

We can hold it. We can read it. We can hear it being read. And Father, I pray that you would use your word for the profit of our souls this morning and for the building of this local church.

I ask, Lord, that you would superintend the words of my mouth and even the meditations of my heart. May they all be acceptable in your sight. Oh, Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

[4 : 11] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Just imagine if the Apostle Paul had neglected to give us verses 1 through 5 of Galatians chapter 6.

Just imagine that this letter of Galatians and really the rest of Scripture were written in such a way that they communicated to us that those of us who belong to Christ will never find ourselves entrapped in sin, tripped up by sin, overtaken by sin.

And yet, that is the reality that we sometimes experience in our own lives or we observe in the lives of others. Thank God that's not the case.

God, in Scripture and in this passage in particular, prepares us for this reality. And in these five verses that we just read, the Apostle Paul communicates the reality that despite the call to walk by the Spirit, believers sometimes fall into sin and they are in need of restoration.

Despite the call to walk by the Spirit, sometimes we fall into sin. we are overtaken by sin. So much so that it is not enough to be left by ourselves.

[5 : 44] We need others to come alongside and help to restore us. But really, when we consider these words that we've just read, what is being communicated to us is more than the fact that we fall into sin and we sometimes need restoration.

what is being communicated to us is God's care for us as we live in community. The reality is whether we are on the receiving side or the giving side of restoration, it is an expression of God's care for us.

And this important truth must not be missed as we consider these verses. We are called to restore the fallen.

And this is a very delicate process. It is a very delicate call that we have been given to be involved in restoring those who fall into sin.

And so the Apostle Paul gives us some very sobering words and to ignore these words would prove harmful both to those who are in sin and those of us who are called to restore them.

[7 : 06] In our remaining time this morning, I want to consider two key activities that the Apostle Paul addresses in these five verses. And the first one is restoring others.

It's the first activity that he addresses restoring others. Paul says we should restore others gently. Again, the Apostle Paul has already called us to walk by the Spirit but he recognizes the reality of sin and he recognizes the reality that sometimes we are entrapped by sin.

So what he says to us again in verse 1, brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

The New International Version says it this way, brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. Exactly what does it mean to be caught in a transgression or a sin?

Again, the Apostle Paul is not saying if anyone sins. sins. He's able to speak clear enough to say that but he doesn't just say if anyone sins, we need to get someone to restore him.

[8 : 23] And we can think about that practically in our own lives. We sin in an ongoing way. And Paul is not implying that every single time we sin, we need someone to come and restore us, help us to be restored when we sin.

And that's not what he is addressing. Passages like 1 John 1.9 help us with those regular sins that we commit in an ongoing way.

It tells us that we confess those sins that God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. So Paul doesn't have those sins in view.

What Paul has in view though is a believer who is in a situation of sin or a pattern of sin that is so engulfing, that is so entrenched that he or she needs help, help from others to get out of it.

He's speaking about the believer who has been overcome, who has been tripped up, who has been entrapped in sin and just can't get out on his or her own and he or she needs others to come alongside to help.

[9 : 43] I really struggled to try to grasp exactly what Paul was communicating when he refers to in any transgression and all of the commentaries that I looked at, the few that I looked at, they seemed to just really pass it by.

So I thought I would try to illustrate it. So let me try to illustrate it this way. Just imagine that you're driving down the street and you see a friend, somebody you know, and they're on the side of the road with their car.

The car's obviously stopped and the person is standing outside with his or her cell phone and you slow down and say, hey, is everything okay?

Say, yeah, the car just stopped but my mechanic is on the way and my wife is going to come and get me anyway so I'm good. Normally, we would continue on our way because we know they're okay, they have a cell phone and we think they're going to be all right.

But imagine another scene where you see a friend and that friend is on the side of the road, the car is parked, the hood is up and that friend is sitting down instead of having a cell phone in his hand, has his head in his hand and sitting on the ground.

[11 : 00] I can almost guarantee that we're not going to slow down in our car and say, hey, is everything okay? We're going to pull to the side and we're going to go to them and we're going to say, hey, is everything okay?

Because that's not a normal sight. See, we regularly would see a person on the side of the road because a car cut off or because something happened, but when we see a person sitting in utter frustration and despair, we realize that's something more than the ordinary.

I think what Paul is getting at when he talks about being caught in a transgression is the latter scenario where we see a person who has become entrenched in a sinful situation, a person who just doesn't seem to be able to make his or her way out of it.

Paul is saying, if anyone is caught in a transgression, then you who are spiritual should restore that person.

So Paul tells us, first of all, who should be doing the restoring. He gives this qualification about being spiritual because those who are engaged in this process of trying to help a brother or sister who is in a sinful set of circumstances or in a sinful situation needs to be led by the Spirit.

[12:34] Needs to have the fruit that we have talked about earlier in Galatians 5. Those need to be evident in that person's life. The person needs to be spiritual. And here, I think what Paul is getting at is he's really getting at spiritual maturity.

I think he has spiritual maturity in view here that we are mature, that the fruit of the Spirit is being born in our lives. And he says, so you who are spiritual, you are to restore the person who has been caught in a transgression.

Now, I know one of the first things that could happen when you have an instruction like this, that you who are spiritual, you say, well, I'm not spiritual. And one of the reasons we try to exempt ourselves is because the task is not an easy one.

When we observe a brother or sister who is in a sinful set of circumstances for which they need help, it's easy for us to say, well, I don't think I can handle that.

Somebody else needs to do that. And we exempt ourselves from it. I think at minimum, every single one of us should desire to serve our brother and sister in this particular way when they are in need of spiritual help.

[13:55] At a minimum, it doesn't matter whether you came to Christ last week or you've been serving the Lord for most of your living days, the desire in all of our hearts, the impulse in all of our hearts should be, I desire to help.

I desire to reach out and help to restore that person. That needs to be our natural impulse. Now Paul goes on and he says, you're to restore this person.

And the word that Paul uses in the original language, in the Greek language, the word that Paul uses for restore is a word that means building a wall. It also is used to talk about mending a net, mending a fishing net.

And what we can see immediately is that it really is a patient process. Building a wall is a patient process because if you aren't patient to build that wall, the wall is either not going to be sound or it's not going to be straight.

If you're not patient to mend a net, those broken areas of the net, if you don't mend them patiently and carefully, then you do it carelessly.

[15:11] and when you bring the net into the sea to bring fish, it's going to break in those areas where you did not take your time to actually mend it.

And what we should see right away is that this process of restoration is more of a marathon than a sprint. It's a long process. It takes time, it takes care.

We are required to be patient. It's quite interesting that Paul actually addresses a very significant and weighty area, but he does it in five verses.

He doesn't give a whole lot of detail. And so a natural question would be, what does restoring look like? What does that mean? What does it mean to restore a person who has been caught in sin, who has been overcome in sin, who is entrenched in sin?

what does it mean to restore that person? Well, first of all, the foundational part of restoration is to be restored in a right relationship with God and with others.

[16:25] And it doesn't mean necessarily that there was some division and some separation, some altercation with other people, although sometimes that's the case.

what it means is that when we sin, though our relationship with God is not broken, though our relationship with others is not broken, our fellowship is.

Our fellowship is affected. And this is what John addresses in 1 John, in those opening verses, about how our fellowship is affected when we sin.

So the first part of restoration has to do with restoring that person back into fellowship with the Lord and fellowship with brothers and sisters. Because when a person, when a believer is entrapped in sin, engulfed in sin, and not getting out of that situation with sin, it affects their fellowship. Even though we can be physically present with one another, we don't enjoy the fellowship that we should enjoy because of the reality of that sinful situation.

[17 : 40] So at a minimum, it means to be restored in our relationship with the Lord and in our fellowship with the Lord and with others. But one of the realities, though, of sin and falling into sin is that sometimes there are some aspects of restoration that we desire that just aren't possible.

There are some losses that take place when a person falls into sin that just are collateral damage that you are not able to address and you're not able to recover from.

For example, when a church leader fails morally, when a church leader falls into sin, though he is to be afforded the same care in being restored in his relationship with the Lord, fellowshiping with the Lord and with those around him, brothers and sisters, it doesn't mean a restoration to that position. It doesn't mean a reinstatement into that position because scripture is very clear about the qualifications for the office of a pastor, an elder in a church.

And those qualifications are not just important to start, they are important to continue. And when they cease to be, then that person's ministry also ceases to be.

[19 : 11] Sometimes, and this has been a very painful thing for me to observe over the years that I've served in pastoral ministry, sometimes infidelity takes place in marriage.

And though the couple who has, the person who has been sinned against in that marriage would forgive the other spouse, I forgive you, forgiveness in and of itself does not require or mean that that person may not divorce you.

And sadly, that happens at times. And though God's best is not just to forgive, but that that marriage would be healed, sometimes for any number of reasons, that doesn't happen.

And even I would say sometimes, wisely, it doesn't happen. It's just one of the realities of what happens when we fall into sin.

We guarantee that we're going to be restored in fellowship, but we have no guarantee that we'll be restored back in position. Paul also tells us not just who should restore, but he tells us how we are to restore.

[20 : 28] And notice what he says. He says we're to do it in a spirit of gentleness. He says we're to be gentle. This means we need to be careful. Again, we see that image of building the wall or mending the net.

We have to do it gently. We have to do it carefully. And part of being careful as we seek to restore someone who has been overtaken by sin, someone who is caught in sin, is asking good questions. Not assuming that everything you see, you understand based on what you see. Or everything you've heard, you understand based on what you've heard. But it begins by asking good questions. Humbly asking questions. Not questions that are asked in such a way that they communicate that you know the answer that you're looking for, but they're humble questions, they're gentle questions, as you're seeking to come in and assist that person who you believe is in need of your help.

And when we talk about being gentle, we shouldn't overlook the fact that sometimes confrontation is needed. Sometimes when a person is caught in a sin, overcome by a particular sin, we have to go to them and we have to raise that issue with them.

[21 : 56] We need to confront them in that. But it doesn't mean that we can't be gentle. We can be firm, but we can also be gentle as well.

I remember some time ago, the wife of a friend, dear friend, came and shared with me that her husband was being unfaithful.

And if somebody else had told me that, I would never believe it. But she came and she told me that. My heart was broken. It was still hard to believe it. But I went. I went to him. Went to his job. And had that conversation with him.

And I had to confront him in that situation. And just imagine if, as hard as that was, if his wife had come to me, and because of how hard that was, I decided, well, I'm just going to pray for him and hope everything works out.

Or tell him, well, go talk to his pastor. How would she have viewed me as a friend and as a brother if I refused to try to do whatever I could to help in that situation?

[23 : 13] Sometimes this kind of confrontation is needed. Now, again, the Apostle Paul is more concerned, it seems, with giving us the principle of seeking to restore someone.

But he doesn't tell us the specifics of it. He doesn't go into a lot of detail about it. And so what we have to do is we have to draw from the broad witness of Scripture, the broad content of Scripture, as we seek to help someone.

And this is why I believe, again, this spiritual maturity is needed because we need to have an awareness of God's Word, a grasp of God's Word to some degree, to be able to bring it to bear in that person's situation.

And so I believe one of the key passages that we should familiarize ourselves with is Matthew 18, verses 15 through 20. Because what we have in this passage is we have some principles about how we deal with one another in sin.

And one of the first principles is this, is that we involve as few people as possible every step of the way. As few people as possible every step of the way.

[24 : 27] And I think we know the reality of it is that the more people who are aware of something, the more it is likely to unnecessarily spread and to be the source or the content for gossip.

So we see that it is this, starting with one person, maybe then two or three others. And then eventually that person isn't hearing, then you take it to the church, the Bible says.

And it also, in this passage, tells us what the goal of it is. The goal of it is to win our brother. The goal of it is to restore our brother.

And once that's done, then the goal of seeking to restore someone has been accomplished. For us not to get forward to go and talk with someone about, to gossip about, to unnecessarily share with others about.

We involve as few people as possible and we don't lose sight of the goal. The goal is to win our brother, to restore that person. I heard something the other day that was really meaningful to me.

[25 : 42] A pastor was talking about apologetics and he said, what is important when we have differences with people is that we don't seek to win the argument, but we seek to win the man, we seek to win the person.

And sometimes we can lose sight of that. And sometimes the people that we go to help, people who are trapped in sin, they're not the nicest people. Sometimes they will lash out at us.

Sometimes they will make accusations against us. Sometimes they will misconstrue what we are saying to them. And we mustn't get sidetracked into a debate. We must remember that our goal is actually to win them.

One of the most vivid examples, I'm going to skip that, skip that in the interest of time. The Apostle Paul alerts us to a reality that we will face in this activity of restoring others.

The very last sentence of verse 1, he says, keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Paul tells us there is an occupational hazard that all those who engage in the process of trying to help a brother or sister who is entrapped in sin will face.

[27 : 10] And that is the temptation with the very thing that we are helping that person with. It's an occupational hazard.

If we get involved in this way, there is this tendency that we ourselves can be tempted with the very same thing. And Paul isn't speaking to it in any particular detail, but really what is in view here is spiritual warfare.

Spiritual warfare is in view. Our own sinfulness is in view. But Paul is saying to us, be aware that when you go to help that brother or sister who is entrapped in sin, keep watch on yourself because you, yourself, can be tempted.

As we restore one another, we are to be aware of this particular reality. Paul goes on and he says, his second command to us is that we are to bear one another's burdens and as we do that, we will fulfill the law of Christ.

What Paul says here is quite interesting. And I think what he is really saying to us is we are to do more than just lecture a brother or sister who has fallen from a high seat of moral authority and moral superiority out of a sense of spiritual duty.

[28 : 47] He says, no, what you need to do is you need to get alongside that person and you need to bear their burden. You need to identify with their circumstances and if you do that, you will fulfill the law of Christ.

He's calling us to roll up our sleeves. He's calling us to get down with that person and help them to deal with and to carry the weight of that burden, the weight of those circumstances. of sin. Now clearly, what the Apostle Paul says when he says that we are to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ, we can see that broadly. But in this context, Paul is not using it in a broad way. He's speaking in this very specific way of dealing with this brother or this sister who has been entrapped in sin. He's calling us to engage it with our hearts and souls. He's calling us to come near to them. You know, here's the reality. When I bear another person's burden that I truly take on, it drives me to my knees.

[30 : 05] When I bear the burden of another person, when I truly take that on, I bear it.

It's not something that I just cast off and I can quickly forget and I won't remember them or think about them or check on them or pray for them. I would venture to say the same is true for you as well.

When we take on a burden of another person, while it may be wise to write it down, we don't necessarily need to write it on a piece of paper because it becomes written on our own souls. But Paul says to the Galatians, these Galatians who love to keep the law or were being enticed to keep the law of Moses, he says to them, you want to fulfill the law?

Here's how you fulfill the law. All these burdens in your midst, all of these different circumstances in your midst, bear one another's burdens and you will fulfill the law.

of Christ. Paul made a similar statement that we looked at back in Galatians 5.14 when he says, for the whole law is fulfilled in one word, you should love your neighbor as yourself.

[31 : 16] And both of these are sweeping summaries of the law. Both of them. Both of them take a whole, a large segment of scripture, the whole Old Testament in particular, the law and the prophets and say, he says, they're fulfilled in this one way because the law of Christ is not different from the law in general.

So, what is he saying to us when he says, bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ? what Paul is saying is that when we bear one another's burdens, we demonstrate love and love is the fulfillment of the law.

Remember, some weeks ago, we looked at Matthew 22 when Jesus was asked by this Pharisee, which is the greatest commandment? And the response that Jesus gave him is very insightful. Here's what Matthew records. But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

Teacher, which is the great commandment of the law? He said to him, you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

[32 : 49] And the second is like it, you should love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. Jesus says all the Old Testament scriptures depend on these commandments, these two commandments, love God, love your neighbor.

And that's what he means when he says the law and the prophets. He's talking about the whole Old Testament. So here what Paul is saying is if you bear one another's burdens, you fulfill the law of Christ.

So what's the point? What's the point that he's making? What's the point he's making? If you're a true believer, you love God. And the evidence that you love God as you love your neighbor as you love yourself.

That's the evidence that you love God when you love your neighbor as you love yourself. And Paul is saying when we bear one another's burdens, we give evidence that we truly love them.

And if we truly love them, we truly love God. Because remember, John says, John says, if you can't love your brother who you see, how can you love God who you don't see?

[34 : 07] So he worked it back and he said, if I see that you truly love your brother, then I know you truly love God. And Paul is saying something very similar here as well.

He's saying, if I see you truly bearing one another's burdens, showing that you love them, then you're fulfilled the whole law because you love God as well.

Because the whole law hinges on these two, love for God and love for your neighbor. And so when I asked this morning, how are we doing in terms of helping others who have fallen in sinful situations?

As a matter of fact, I want you to think of this in your own mind. Are you aware to what extent are you aware of a brother or a sister who is in some sinful circumstance or some pattern of sin that you've observed and for whatever reason you've not sought to reach out to to help them bear that burden to help to restore them to a right relationship with the Lord?

We need to think about that. And we need to think about this call that we have been given. So we're called to restore others gently and the second activity that Paul addresses in this passage is the activity of considering ourselves.

[35 : 46] Restoring others and second, considering ourselves. And what he says is we should consider ourselves humbly. Look at how he says that in verse three.

If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. brothers and sisters, it is very easy for us to think we are told when everyone around us falls.

And that's what the Apostle Paul is getting at in verse three. the reality is that whoever we are in and of ourselves, we are nothing.

And so Paul says if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But yet in the face of the sinful failures of others, we can think we are something.

And Paul says when we think like that, we are self-deceived. Why are we self-deceived?

[36 : 55] Because really in and of ourselves we are nothing. I mean the Apostle Paul would come to the conclusion where he says I know that there is no good thing in me. The man who we can credit most of our New Testament to would say I know that within me there is nothing good.

Nothing good dwells in me. Listen to how John Stott, deceased pastor and theologian put it talking about this verse.

He writes the truth is that we are not something, we are nothing. Is this an exaggeration?

Not when the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes to see ourselves as we are, rebels against God who made us in his image deserving nothing at his hand but destruction.

When we realize and remember this we shall not compare ourselves favorably with other people nor shall we decline to serve them or bear their burdens.

[38 : 06] burdens. See, sometimes when we don't want to bear another person's burdens it has to do with the superiority, an air that we have about ourselves.

Stott rightly points out that we only feel we are something when we forget the judgment that we justly deserve and then we start about comparing ourselves with others who have fallen in sin.

And so the Apostle Paul tells us in verse 4 don't do that. What he tells us in verse 4 is but let each one test his own work and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.

So we're not to compare ourselves to our neighbor who is in a less favorable circumstance because he has fallen into sin. He says instead we have to test our own work.

We have to evaluate ourselves. And the Apostle Paul knows all too well that with the help of the Holy Spirit in the light of God's word when we test our own work and our walk before the Lord there will be nothing that we will honestly boast about in and of ourselves.

[39 : 26] And the Apostle Paul gives us an example a little later on in this letter as he concludes it in verse 14. Look at what he says. He says 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.

That's why we should boast. Jeremiah tells us in Jeremiah 9 verses 23 and 24 he says thus says the Lord let not the wise man boast in his wisdom nor the mighty man boast in his might let not the rich man boast in his riches but let him who boasts boast in this that he understands and knows me that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love justice and righteousness in the earth for in these I delight declares the Lord.

Brothers and sisters our only true boast boast in the Christian life is that we who should have known judgment and wrath can say I know the Lord I know the Lord who practices steadfast love and justice and righteousness in the earth.

That is our only boast. That is our only true boast. Any boast about who we are and what we have done and what we have is a hollow boast. It is a deceptive boast.

It is the boast of a deceived man or woman. And so why does Paul tell us that we are to test our own work?

[41 : 05] Why does he tell us that? He tells us that we should test our own work because he has a day in view where we will all stand before the Lord and that's what he points to in verse 5 when he says for each will have to bear his own load.

For each will have to bear his own load. So comparing ourselves to others who have fallen instead of helping them is really futile, short-sighted, and short-lived.

Paul says we are all going to have to bear our own load. Now I know if you're tracking you may see that there seems to be a contradiction, at least on the face of it, between what Paul tells us in verse 2 and what he tells us in verse 5.

In verse 2 he tells us that we have to bear one another's burdens, and then in verse 5 he tells us that each of us is going to bear our own load. But what Paul does is he uses two very different words for burden and for load.

Two very different words. This first word that he uses in the original language is a word for a very heavy burden or a very heavy load.

[42 : 32] whereas the second word that he uses for load is like a man's pack, what we would call like a knapsack.

It's a small thing that's designed just for one person. Let's talk about two different things. See, the burden of sin that a person is entrapped in is a heavy load that one person cannot lift.

And sometimes it may not just be a single person coming along, side to help. It may be more than one person coming alongside to help. But this load that he is talking about is really our responsibility before God.

It is that accountability that each of us has to present ourselves before the Lord, which scripture tells us that we will give an account of ourselves, of our lives before the Lord.

Again, that's not an account of our sins. Jesus has accounted for our sins on the cross. And God is not unjust to require Jesus to pay for those sins and then when we stand before him to bring those sins up again.

[43 : 41] No, Jesus said it is paid in full. That's not the judgment that is in view for believers. The judgment that is in view for believers is a judgment of our works to determine the extent of our reward.

And truth be told, even those rewards are rewards of grace. because if God marked us to scale, we would get nothing for our best works of righteousness.

But here's how John Stott explains the difference between the burden and the load. He writes, so we are to bear one another's burdens, which are too heavy for a man to bear alone.

But there's one burden we cannot share. Indeed, do not need to because it is a pack light enough for every man to carry himself. And that is our responsibility to God on the day of judgment.

On that day, you cannot carry my pack and I cannot carry yours. Each man will have to bear his own load.

[44 : 52] And so once again, I think we must consider what is my attitude towards others who fall in sin?

How do I view them? Do I feel better about myself because they're in sin? Is my natural response to try to help or is it more to take the view that that's none of my business?

Do we make the effort to come alongside that brother and sister to bear that load, to bear that burden that they carry? What we see, we should see, I should say, is this is a call to duty and community.

And there are particular realities in our congregation that we understand that, for example, a person who is in the same care group with me will probably observe more about me and have the kind of relationship with me that they're more likely to once see my sin and be able to come alongside and try to help me.

Let's avail ourselves of those contacts and those relationships that we have to seek to help one another. Another one that we have for those of us who are married, the most natural partner and person in this journey that we have to help us when we fall into sin, into patterns of sin or circumstances of sin that are entrapping us.

[46 : 36] Our spouse is our best ally to come alongside and help us and to bring critique and to bring observations to us that can help us and we are unwise to reject it.

We are unwise to reject the care that comes to us through that spouse God has given to us. And one of the things I hope that we see is is that we all need to have an open heart and mind to the circumstance where we may find ourselves trapped in sin and a brother or a sister or a wife or a husband is being faithful to come to us in our sin to try to help us.

We need to recognize they're not doing that because they want to be nosy or because they want to be superior. No, they're doing it because they want to be faithful. They want to do what God's word says to do. And come and try to help us.

Again, the Apostle Paul didn't give us a whole lot of specifics, but you know, as I thought about this, we have in the Apostle Paul a great example how he handled the Galatian church.

and one of the things I would encourage you to do is to just maybe take some time and to go through this letter and see the way the Apostle Paul changes his tone about the Galatians and the things that he says to them.

[48 : 12] And what is very clear is that though he is troubled about them, the bottom line witness about his view of them is they are brothers and sisters in Christ.

In error, misguided in some ways, but he still sees them as brothers and sisters in Christ and what he has done for us is he has given us an example of how to gently restore while being firm.

He's done that for them. So he's a great example, but here's our greatest example. Our greatest example is the Lord himself. The Lord himself rescued hopeless sinners who were lost in sin, enjoying sin, running from God, having no desire for God, and he came to this earth.

He lived the life that we all were called to live but could not live. And then he died the death that we all deserved to die so that he would reconcile us to God.

He gave his life. And what we are called to do is not to give our lives because our lives have no redemptive purpose to lay them down in that way. But there are times we are called to lay down our way of life.

[49 : 28] I've said it already. This takes time. This takes sacrifice. And sometimes we do have to push aside things that we may be doing to reach out to a brother or sister who is in need of our help because they find themselves overtaken by sin, entrapped by sin.

And our Lord has given us a great example of how we are to reach out to those who are in need. God's And so my prayer for us this morning is that we will follow our Savior's selfless example of rescuing those in sin.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you this morning for your word. We thank you Lord for Galatians 6, 1 through 5 that teaches us that there are times when your children are entrapped in sin, when they are caught in transgression and they need the help of others to get them out and to restore them in right fellowship with you and those around them.

We ask that you speak to our hearts, Lord. You know our circle of relationships now and in the future. Would you help us to be faithful to this call?

[51 : 04] In Jesus' name. Amen. Let's stand together. Amen.