

LSB Galatians 5:25-6:6

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become those with vain glory, challenging one another, envying one another. 1 Brothers, even if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each of you looking to yourself, so that you too will not 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 each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. 5 For each one will bear his own load. 6 And the one who is instructed in the word is to share in all good things with the one who instructs him.

Sometimes we get a little glimpse of a local problem that Paul is addressing that we don't have complete knowledge of. So we try to read between the lines and surmise from the solution what the actual problem is that Paul is addressing in his letter.

It's like reverse engineering. We have the solution bits but what exactly was the problem that caused a particular solution.

Last week we considered the restoration of brothers who have fallen into different sins that beset them. And the paragraph holds together very well until we get to verse 3 and then we ask ourselves, what had happened there at Galatia..

And it should be fairly obvious to us from what we know about the rest of the situation Paul addresses.

Because of false teachers introducing a false religion of works righteousness based in the ritualistic false religion of the Jewish pharisaical tradition, the church had devolved into a show of self-righteous religiosity.

The pharisees were self-righteous religion for show. Jesus rejected it.

Uber righteousness on the outside like a whitewashed fence. He said “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitened tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Religion for the sake of show. Competitive religion. Religion where the most outwardly showy person of whatever the made up rules are, wins. If you're monks living in caves, it's the most monkish monk who is the most deprived of all the deprived who is the rockstar.

It's a righteousness by self, devoid of God, regardless of what the rules are. It doesn't have to be jewish, although in their case, that's what had happened.

We watched a series about Rajneeshpuram in Antelope Oregon not far from where Tina lives in the Dalles. It's a picture of man made religion. You've got the main swami who's like god, and then the inner circle who are getting close to being him, and then all the devoted followers who are the sheep doing whatever he says.

Man made religion always follows a similar pattern. In 1885 Gilbert & Sullivan wrote a comedy called The Mikado which is a mocking of all of this self made importance. From Wikipedia;

Grand Poobah is a satirical term derived from the name of the haughty character Pooh-Bah in Gilbert and Sullivan's The Mikado (1885).[1] In this comic opera, Pooh-Bah holds numerous exalted offices, including "First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral ... Archbishop ... Lord Mayor" and "Lord High Everything Else".

The name has come to be used as a mocking title for someone self-important or locally high-ranking and who either exhibits an inflated self-regard or who has limited authority while taking impressive titles

All false religion ends up with a grand pooh bah and a whole bunch of chief's and self important lords of this and that. Listen to what Jesus says about the prideful self importance of self made religion in the sermon on the mount;

“Beware of doing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2

“Therefore, when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. 5 “And when you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

The judaizers had converted simple devotion to Jesus that Paul had brought to these churches into some form of false pharisaic judaism that was devoid of the Spirit and full of religious show.

With that context and Paul's restoration of the Galatians back to a pure simple Spirit filled walk in the Spirit, how do you deal with they guys who want to hold on to the fleshy showy false religion?

The first part of our paragraph is what restored simple religion of walking devotedly with Jesus looks like.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become those with vain glory, challenging one another, envying one another. 1 Brothers, even if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each of you looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

We hold each other up. Agape love that considers every other member as more important than ourselves is the rule. That's the "law of Christ". Selfless love that expects nothing in return.

Verse 26 is a picture of the false religion that Paul says to not become. Not be a part of. *26 Let us not become those with vain glory, challenging one another, envying one another.*

Self made religion is evident by pride, challenging each other's position in the false hierarchy, and envying people who are what you wish you could have in the false religion. All of that has to go.

Restoration back to a simple walk with Christ is necessary. We don't compete with each other for religious status in showy religion. We come along side each other and help carry each others burdens. That's the law of Christ.

So verse 3 becomes a wake up call for those who are having a hard time letting go of the self righteous showy religiosity that appeals to our fallen flesh. Verse 3 is a reality check ala Paul.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

I keep coming back to the series about the Rajeesh Puresh swami guy. Rajneeshees. The Bhagwan who had 27 Rolls Royce cars and a virtual harem of women and countless minions building everything for him.

The world looked at that guy and said, we're not too sure what he is, but he's obviously something. Right. Rolls Royce's and harems. People building a city for him to dwell in. People surrounding him and listening to every word that falls from his lips worshipfully.

This world says, he's a something. He's a big deal, right? Harem's and cars and cash and land and minions and worshippers. That's a really big

something, right?

In Paul's world, which is Christ's world, what is the measurement of something and the measurement of nothing. It's pretty simple, really. We can draw a conclusion roughly based on Romans 7:18

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:

How do I say this; Every human born into Adam's race with Adam as their federal head, and that's all of us, has no capacity to achieve anything of permanent value to the glory of our Creator.

And make no mistake, that's why He created us. We were created to glorify our Creator. To shine His glory back upon Him. But Adam's sin, passed on to us genetically, cancels any real lasting glory out. ***No good thing.*** That's our descriptive character. Nothing. In our fallen flesh we are empty. Nothing of value to God. At all.

That gives teeth to what Paul states in vs. 3 of chapter 6.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

False religion is designed by Satan to deceive us into thinking we are somethings, when actually we're empty. Valueless to God. Empty whitewashed tombs filled with dead mens bones.

Paul gives all of the self important self religious self righteous pooh bah's a reality check. If you think you're something when you're actually nothing, you're kidding yourself. This is your wake up call.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Very well then, where is actual value then. Who is it that actually possesses the something. The real something. Also simple.

Anything that Christ causes by His Spirit working together with you, that's the real something. Without His Spirit cojoining with us and in us, we're in Romans 7:18. In our flesh, no good thing. Period. But with His Spirit working in us and through us, we can be fruitful.

The world looked at Paul and saw exactly nothing. He's a lunatic. Traveling around, making tents, half starved most of the time, getting beat up and run out of town, most of the time, too hot or too cold because he's got no house, he's the world's picture of what not to do.

But in heaven's eternal weight of glory, he's got a pile of treasure that is eternal after this world is burnt up that will probably never be equaled. He was a complete and total failure by this world's standards and the most wealth laden person in eternity, maybe of all.

The world's something is God's nothing. And the world's nothing, caused by the Holy Spirit working in us, is God's something. Paul's words are dead simple. Get your value system synchronised with God's values.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

That Bhagwan with all the cars and riches and swooning young hippie girls and sex galore and worshippers . . . he's dead. Not only dead, but completely forgotten. He's in hell. Forever. He was a big deal in this world for a short time, and now he's in hell.

The only remembrance of him in this world is Wikipedia. A few paragraphs about something bizarre that happened for a few years. Forgotten. Some christian group with some money bought his city and turned it into a christian retreat. A camp for christian youth.

The only thing that has real value and that lasts for all eternity is when the Holy Spirit joins with our spirits and causes fruit that glorifies the Saviour

and lasts forever.

Paul understood what was something and what was nothing, and he lost his life on this earth in order to pile up mountains of glory for Jesus that he'll have a part of forever in glory with Jesus. That's something as opposed to nothing. Fruit for the glory of Jesus that lasts into eternity.

False religion is all about bagwhans building empires for their own glory and wealth in this realm. True religion is all about being a vessel that the Spirit can use to cause glory and eternal fruit for Jesus.

4 But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.

Is there such a thing as christian boasting. Maybe . . . Paul says; 1Cor 1

22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brothers, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may abolish the things that are, 29 so that no flesh may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."

We boast not about ourselves, but we boast about what our God as wrought. We boast in the greatness of our God, and the victory over this fallen world that is soon to come to pass, and that has already happened in

the individual lives of those who He has rescued out of this condemned world.

That's reason for boasting. Our God reigns. Our God rules. He is sovereign even in this fallen world where satan is the ruler, God ultimately is bringing everything together in His sovereign plan.

Paul has quite a discussion with the corinthians about just this same idea. It's a universal problem so we're not surprised that it turns up everywhere. But we can gain insight for our situation we're looking at in Galatia by what Paul says about the same problem that was also prominent in Corinth. Paul says, let's compare something and nothing, shall we;

Let a man consider us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found faithful. 3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court. In fact, I do not even examine myself. 4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted. But the one who examines me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and make manifest the motives of hearts. And then each one's praise will come to him from God. 6 Now these things, brothers, I have applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to go beyond what is written, so that no one of you will become puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

If anything is boast worthy, it didn't come from you. Right? What do you have to boast about that was caused by you. Nothing. In my flesh dwells no good thing, right. So if anything worthy of boasting has come, it didn't come from me, it was done through me by God.

God's Spirit working in me to glorify His Son. That's worth boasting about.

But if it did happen, I'm just the pipe that got His glory delivered to you. I'm only the mirror that reflected His glory from Him to you. What do I have that I did not receive. Absolutely nothing. So we boast about God glorifying Himself and humbly rejoice if He chooses to give us a small part in what He's accomplishing.

5 For each one will bear his own load.

People who like to claim that the Bible contradicts itself would look at this verse as opposed to verse 2 and say we've got some low hanging fruit right here. Especially in the King James version.

vs 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. vs 5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

Actually there were two different greek words used in the 2 ideas that the later translators were careful not to use the same english word for.

In vs. 2 the greek word is baro. The anglicised version is still very much in use. In my back yard I have a tool that I seem to use quite often. It's a wheelbarrow. It's got a wheel and two handles and a tray for baro. burden. weight. firewood or gravel or whatever else I can get to sit still to schlepp around in my wheelbarrow.

In civil engineering we have a borrow pit. Out where I worked for so long we had a small mount built up to get the cameras up out of the surface heat wave disturbance. The camera mounts. But near by almost every one was a depression where a tractor got the baro out of a pit to make the mount. That's a borrow pit. Same idea. A weight or a burden.

In a spiritual sense we are all carrying around burdens. Baggage. Right. We say so and so comes with a lot of baggage. We all have our share, and as christians we help each other with our baggage. Our baro. Our burdens. The weight of our unredeemed flesh we're stuck with until little by little we're changed more into His glory. Meanwhile we're carrying baggage

around, and our dear ones, our brothers come along side to help.

But in verse 5 the word is; phortion. The greek word also means burden, but it's like a ship's cargo. It can only be carried by the ship it's in. This is non-transferrable weight. Cargo.

We have some burdens we don't get to share. They're ours alone.

When it comes to the final day, when the judgement that all christians will face to see what remains and what is dross, we stand alone. That's what Paul is referring to with this different type of burden he names in verse 5.
5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

Paul is talking about the ultimate combined cargo of a total christian life on that day that we stand before the bema seat, the judgement seat of Christ. Here in 1 Cor. 3 is a full blown explanation of this burden we are building up as we walk each day with Jesus;

1 Cor. 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident, for the day will indicate it because it is revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Me and Pam just got a fancy new (to us 2016) Ford f150 pickup. Last year we bought a beautiful travel trailer. We hope for some good times in our autumn years, and by God's mercy and blessing, we have a real shot at that.

If the world stopped by and did an inventory of what we have, it would consist of spreadsheets of bits and pieces, odds and ends, our home, our

vehicles including some sweet antiques, a collection of rare 1910's camera portrait lenses, antique cameras, and other stuff. The sheets could be added up after an auctioneer left and the estate was turned into cold cash, and a final number could be arrived at. Total worth.

But according to Paul's letter to the Corinthians, everything the world counts in the asset columns is what Paul calls wood, hay, and stubble. It isn't sin to have it, and God graciously allows us to enjoy it, but for the sake of the Kingdom of God in eternity, the value of all of that stuff is zero. Dross. It all goes up in the flames of judgement.

Everything this world puts in the asset column is dross. What remains after the bonfire of wood hay and stubble is the gold, silver, and precious jewels of souls that have benefited from our ministries here that the Spirit graciously allowed us to be used by Him to help others.

I keep teasing my grandson Jonah. I tell him this thing is a pyramid and you're a layer below me and I need you to get busy adding to my reward. And he tells me he's planning on getting busy, but not for my account.

Obviously there are choices we make now that increase the gold, silver, precious stones we will enjoy for eternity. Paul chose wisely. *7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ* Ppn. 3:7,8

Martin Luther wrote these words some of you will recognize;
*Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His Kingdom is forever.*

This idea of choices for eternity as opposed to indulging ourselves now is shared with Timothy by Paul with several metaphors.

2 Tim. 2:3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. 5 And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

All of those metaphors have the common idea of disentangling yourself from the cares of this world so you can serve, run, harvest a bigger bonanza in eternity.

That is the cargo we bear into the next life. When that day comes and that fire happens and I'm looking around for someone else to blame . . . guess what?

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

The cargo of gold, silver, and precious stones, or as it were, wood, hay, and stubble that gets burnt up, is dependent on choices we make now.

6 And the one who is instructed in the word is to share in all good things with the one who instructs him.

Traditionally this is interpreted as; Pay the preacher. We won't spend much time here. You folks over pay me. But it is an important thing.

In their world, most folks worked full time in order to just feed and house their families. Nothing extra. If the preacher is honestly spending 8, 9, 10 hours each week studying God's word in order to have something to bring the sheep, his family could actually go hungry for whatever those 10 hours might have been worth.

Those hours spent in real work, preparing spiritual food for God's saints,

have actual value. Paul worked at night making tents, which was his trade. He didn't have a family to feed and he wanted his gospel to be available for free.

That was his choice and example. But most men have wives and families. You can't ask a mans family to go hungry one day a week so that he can spend that day preparing spiritual food for you. It was very real then, and it still is now, for a young man with a growing family.

In Israel, an entire tribe was set aside for priestly service. A tithe was required to maintain these mens livelihoods and families as they cared for the spiritual well being and worship of Israel.

That's gone. The tithe is not part of the moral law. It was part of Israel's civil law and ceremonial law. Ceremonial law was complete in Jesus death. Finished. And civil law died with the nation. We aren't under Israel's civil law. There is no requirement for christians to pay a 10% tithe.

But the principal of the benefactors caring for the sustenance of the men taking spiritual care of the sheep remains. If you're getting fed spiritual food, for goodness sake, feed the poor guy the value of his hours it took to feed you.

In fact Paul tells Timothy, some guys are worth double. 1 Tim 5:17

The elders who lead well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor at preaching the word and teaching.

The principal of bearing each others burdens carries over into bearing up your pastor so he can spend hours caring for the sheep, and the value of those hours will be compensated so his family doesn't go hungry.

Again, this is not about me, you folks over pay me. But that's the intent here. Carry each others burdens. And take care of your pastor and his family so he can be free to do his work.