Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Sowing and Reaping
Scripture: Galatians 6:7-10
Code: 1672

Let's look at Galatians 6. And we're talking about sowing and reaping or if we were to put it in modern terms what you sow is what you get. And you don't have to be much of a farmer to know that. We're looking at Galatians Chapter 6, verse 7, and I'd like to read verses 7-10. Galatians 6, "Be not deceived God is not mocked for whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in welldoing for in due season, we shall reap if we think now. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Now the universe is built on laws. Men of science throughout history have known that everything in our universe is under the reign of law. The entire world of physical science is dominated by laws. Whether you're talking about everything from astronomy and agronomy and biology and botany clear to the end of the alphabet and zoology, all of those areas of study are absolutely predictable, because the universe is built on absolute physical laws. Now we do not need the Bible to support that, but I think it is important that the Bible does support insofar as the Bible touches on science, it is always accurate. And one of the things that proves divine authorship is the absolute character of the Scripture in identifying scientific law and showing us that there are absolutes in creation.

It proves to me that the same being that made the universe so absolute in its physical law is the same being who wrote the Bible for when the Bible comments on this, it comments accurately centuries before scientists ever discovered it. James Dwight Dana of Yale University may be the most imminent geologist America ever produced addressed a graduating class at Yale University with these words. He said, "Young men as you face scientific problems, remember that I, an old man, who have known only science all my life say to you there is nothing truer in the universe than the scientific statements in the word of God."

In the sacred writings of the Hindus and the other religions of the world, you have very serious scientific mistakes, but not in the Bible. The Bible corroborates that there is law and order in the physical world. The Bible gives us interesting statements like in Job 26:7, it says, "He stretches out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth on nothing." A great statement considering it was written centuries before man ever dreamed that the world was suspended.

Other religious books say the earth is on the back of Atlasor elephants who produce earthquakes when the shake. Others say its on seven layers of sugar and syrup and honey and whatever else and so forth. Isaiah Chapter 40, verse 22 the Bible says, "He sits on the circle of the earth." Isaiah said the earth is a sphere. Men thought it was flat even in Columbus' day. In Job 38:14, the Bible says regarding the earth "That it is turned as clay to the seal." Indicating the earth rotates on an axis. The Bible when it talks about science is accurate. God is a scientific God. That is God is subject to laws. God is consistent with Himself.

And so there are physical laws in the universe and they do not need to be proven by the Bible, but they are verified in Scripture and that's good, because that tells me that whoever made the laws also wrote the Bible. Because when the Bible was written hadn't yet discovered those laws, but God knew them. And I think just as there are physical laws in the universe, man has to come to the realization that there are moral spiritual ones that are just as absolute. If you dive off a building, it doesn't matter what you believe about the law of gravity, it'll go into effect.

And there are moral laws that are just as absolute. They are inviolable laws. They are irrefutable laws. They aren't laws you can dicker with. They are absolute laws. And the same thing is true in a moral sense. If there is a God at all, and most people think there is, and He has built a world that is from the physical standpoint governed by absolute law, then you can believe that the moral world and the spiritual world will be governed by laws that are just as absolute or else he would a totally inconsistent being and that's impossible. For we see the absolute consistency of His character in the physical world alone.

Some people tell us, and it comes in a steady stream from the philosophers of the world, that there are no moral absolutes. And the same philosopher who has convinced himself that there are no moral absolutes is quite confident that if he drives his car 100 miles an hour into a brick wall there is a law that will have a great effect on him. They allow for laws to be absolute and inviolable in the physical realm, but not in the spiritual. That would make the creator totally inconsistent with Himself. There are laws. And God has governed the moral world and the spiritual world with just as much law and order and consistency as He has the physical world.

The universe is structured in every dimension on inviolable, inexorable law. Now in our passage we have one of those moral laws. There are laws of the physical world that all of us are familiar with. Here is one of the spiritual world. "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." That is a moral and spiritual law. It always works. It is never bypassed. It is never avoided. It is inexorable. It is inviolable. God is consistent with Himself.

Now in the book of Galatians the apostle Paul chooses this law to be applied to the Galatians. Now you'll recall that as we've studied, he's nearing the end of his letter. He has carefully completed his main thesis. The only thing left at this point really is to give a few words of final admonition. The

great bulk of what he wanted to say he has said. He has established in the first two chapters his apostolic authority. In the second two chapters, he reiterated the divine principle that salvation is by grace. And that's another inviolable spiritual law.

In the last two chapters he has shown that the Christian life is not bondage to a legal system, it is not fleshly self-effort, but it is freedom from the law and it is walking in the Spirit. So he has covered the major facts that he wanted to deal with. And in the passage, which we just studied last time in Chapter 6, he has given instructions to the strong Christians as to how they can restore those Christians who have fallen into the trap set by the false teachers and who have begun to believe that the Christian life is a matter of legalism, of keeping rituals and ceremonies.

Now, there's one other group that Paul's got in the back of his mind. He realizes after having said all that he has said, that there will be some who have fallen into this era and believe that the Christian life is a legalistic thing and they're falling on their face in sin. And there are some of those who want to get picked up and so he talks about them in Chapter 6:1-6 where he says now when that guy's ready and he wants to get up, you pick him up, hold him up, and build him up.

But he knows too that there will be some hard and belligerent ones who aren't yet convinced who are still hanging on to the forms of Judaism and who still in the back of their minds may be believing the Judaisers heresy that the Christian life is a matter of legalism, self-effort. In fact, there may be some unsaved people connected to the churches in Galatia who believe salvation is through circumcision, because that's what the Judaisers taught.

But whether they be unbelievers who are looking for a work salvation or Christians who have fallen into carnal effort, there are some that maybe aren't ready to be restored and so he wants to drive home the point to them that they'd better shape up, because the consequences of what they're doing are bad. And so he says in effect, be not deceived, God is not mocked. What you're doing now is going to reap for you a terrible consequence. If you keep sowing to the flesh, verse 8 says you're going to reap what? Corruption. And so his last kind of effort toward those people who haven't yet seen that he is telling the truth and are still hanging on to the Judaisers heresy is to warn them of the consequences of such behavior.

And usually a warning of consequences stands as strong motivation. And so he presents this law of God that is going to take effect in their lives if they don't change. If they keep on sowing to the flesh, they keep on living carnally, they keep on by self-effort trying to please God or if they're even unsaved and they're trying to gain salvation by works, they are sowing to the flesh and they're going to reap corruption. And so this is a warning.

Now as we look at this very brief text, we're going to see that this admonition, this law of God is presented in four basic ways through these four verses. The divine law is stated. The divine law is

explained. The divine law is fulfilled. And the divine law is applied. It is stated, explained, fulfilled, and applied. And really, that's a kind of a classic sermon in a sense. First of all, let's notice the divine law stated. Verse 7, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." Now there is a principle that nobody in his right mind denies.

This is not one of those passages where you have to do a lot of defending. It's a rather simple truth. Not even the average run of the mill, if there is such a thing, skeptic would deny this. But what a man sows he reaps. I supposed that some passages in Scripture need great proof. Now when you talk about the deity of Jesus Christ or you talk about the work of the Holy Spirit. It's not enough to just say it, you've got to support it. But this doesn't really need much support. Anything thinking man knows that what you sow, you reap.

Now in the context explicitly, Paul has exhorted the Galatians to make sure they continue to fellowship with good teachers. Verse 6, "Make sure that you continue to share with those who are the grace teachers." Share in all the spiritual goodies and don't fall back into the net and the snare of the false teachers. And here he says this is the reason why, you can't do it and get away with it. You can't live to the flesh and have any success, because what you sow is what you reap. Now he begins by saying be not deceived. Be not deceived. That's interesting because they already had been deceived.

What he's really saying is stop being deceived. Don't continue to be deceived. In Chapter 3, verse 1, "Oh foolish Galatians who has bewitched you?" They had already been deceived. The false teachers had moved in and sold them all the garbage about the fact that you had to get circumcised to get saved and then you had to keep the law of Moses to stay saved. And they were deceived. And so he says don't continue to be deceived. In fact, the word that's translated deceived it's the word planaoand it's primary meaning is not to be deceived, that's the secondary meaning. The primary meaning, which very closely allies to the other one, is to be led astray. Don't continue to be led astray. False teachers were leading them astray. They were led astray into a kind of life that was legalistic and they were trying by self-effort to earn God's favor. Be not deceived.

You say could a Christian be deceived? Isn't this talking about unbelievers? Now mark this, I say it at the beginning to clarify the point. I do not think that the principle in verse 7 is specifically applied to unbelievers or specifically applied to believers. I think it is a general principle that applies to anybody. Whatever a man sows, that he reaps is general. And in the passage, Paul is offering the general principle. Later on he will make the application to the believers. But the general principle is that there is going to be consequence to your behavior. And the consequence will match the behavior.

Now he says, don't continue to be deceived about God's laws. You can't get by. You know, some people say well, I may be wrong, but God will understand. Well, God may understand, but that isn't going to change the law. If you stand and beat your head against a stone wall, God may understand,

but you're going to get a headache if He does understand. You'd get the same headache if He didn't understand, because you are violating the law. And so if you apply this law at any point, it is going to be true. What you sow, you reap is true for anybody anytime, be he Christian or non-Christian. That's the inviolable law of God.

You say, you mean a Christian could be deceived into thinking he can behave himself like he wants to behave when, in fact, he's going to reap consequences? Sure we can be deceived to think that. You say well, who would ever deceive us? You know who? Get this, Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." You deceive yourself. Only it's called rationalizing.

So in the first place, it's easy to rationalize. Obadiah, don't turn to it, we haven't got time. Obadiah 3 and 4, listen, "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee." Pretty clear isn't it? "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee. Thou who dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, who saith in his heart, who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself like the eagle, though thou set thou nest among the stars from there will I bring thee down saith the Lord." That was a prophecy against Petra in the land of Edom. They dwelt way up in the caves. Who could ever conquer us? They were deceived by their own hearts.

1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." Yes, the first place, you can deceive yourself. You don't even need an outside source. Let me give you this one. Are you ready? "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves." You know how you deceive yourself? You go out and say oh that was a terrific Bible study and your behavior doesn't change. And you deceive yourself into thinking that because you know the facts you're really growing. You're really operating. You're really cranking it out as a Christian. You've deceived yourself.

You've sold yourself a bill of goods that information is all God's after and He's not. Yeah, you can deceive yourself. Let me tell you something else, false teachers can deceive you. You know, we pick up the pieces of baby Christians all the time who've been deceived by false teachers. Many false Christ it says in Matthew 24 are going to arrive leading all kinds of people astray in the tribulation time. And part of the end time prophecy says that men are going to be deceived again and again. False teachers are very busy deceiving us. And that's why it's so important for the church to teach the word of God.

There's nothing as tragic as Christians who've been Christians for any length of time who don't know anything because they're vulnerable to false doctrine. It sucks the very energy and strength from them. And so it is that the word of God says we can deceive ourselves and we can also be deceived by outside deceivers. But behind it all is that ugly character Satan and it says in Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was cast out that old serpent called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world." So folks let me tell you, when the Bible says be not deceived, it's hitting us right where

we are because we deceive ourselves, number one, and we do that so often and I think particularly the statement of James thinking that because we know a principle that satisfies it and it doesn't.

And then we can be deceived by false teachers. And then we can be deceived by Satan and his emissaries themselves. And you know something, and living in the day in which live we are open to more deception than anybody at any time. Did you know that? 2 Timothy 3:13, "Evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse deceiving and being deceived." That's part of the pattern of the end time. Don't be deceived. Don't be deceived into thinking that you could violate God's laws. You say, I'm a Christian. I'm under grace. God's not going to do anything to me. Listen, there is an inviolable law in the universe. You violate it Christian or not Christian and it's going to bring consequence.

He says this, don't be deceived. You say why? God is not mocked. God is not mocked. What does that mean? Fooled or outwitted. You can't fool God. You can't outwit him. The literal Greek means to turn up the nose at. To sneer at God thinking you can violate His law and get away with it. You know, and sometimes I've talked to young people who've gone crazy on grace, you know, and they think they're free to do anything. Man, I'm forgiven. I'm totally forgiven. Everything has been set aside. The cross accomplished everything. I'm free and breezy man. I can do what I please. I'm under grace. No, you can't.

You can do what you please, but you're going to pay the consequence. You cannot mock God. You can't sneer at God's laws. You can't ignore. And the word incidentally mocked also means ignore. And to sneer at seems very violent. To ignore seems rather indifferent. They both come from the same word. Ignoring God is the same as sneering at Him. How many times in your life have you said I shouldn't do this sin, but I'm going to do it anyway. I've done that. I know I shouldn't be doing this, but I'm going to do it anyway. You know what you've done, you've mocked God.

I always think about Hemingway when I think of this. Sad, sad, sad life. I shared this with you a long time ago how that there was an article and a series of articles in Playboy magazine, which was quoted in Eternity magazine, a wonderful Christian magazine where I read it. And believe me scouts honor, and in the article it made the statement that Hemingway had proven that you could do everything you wanted to do with no consequence. It said that. It said, in fact, "the old Victorian ideas of the Bible that the wages of sin is death," and that "what you sow you shall reap." It's all been proven to be a lie. Hemingway has done this and he's done that and he's done the other thing and it talked about his amorality and so forth and so on and it praised him to the skies. Ten years later to the very month that the article was written he put a bullet through his brain and killed himself.

Now you don't cheat the law. You don't cheat it. Oh he thought he could mock God. And you remember the Lord's prayer that He wrote. "Our nadawho are in nada, nadabe thy name." It's Spanish for nothing. You can't mock God. It doesn't work, because you violate a law. It's just like

jumping off a 20 story building. It'll go into effect. And any man who wants to live his life in violation of God's law is going to pay the consequences. You can't mock God and get away with it. "The wrath of God," says Romans 1:18, "is revealed against," how much ungodliness, "all ungodliness and all unrighteousness of men." There is no escape.

But men go on doing it. Sneering and mocking God. Jude said, "Beloved remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ how they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." Boy I'm telling you we're seeing a world of people just gleefully violating God's laws aren't we? I just think about what's called the sexual revolution and all of this talk about no longer you need to get married, you just live together. You do what you want. People living like animals, group sex, and on and on and on and on it goes and people living in absolute violation of all of God's laws and they expect to have happy endings.

They should all try to hold their breath at the bottom of the ocean for two days. You can't do it. Draw your attention to an illustration in Daniel Chapter 5, verse 22. Daniel 5:22, "And thou his son, O Belshazzar hast not humbled thine heart, thou thy knewest all this." He knew that true God ruled. But has lifted up thyself against the Lord of Heaven." In other words, he lived in violation of God's laws. "And they have brought the vessels of his house before thee and thou in thy lords, thy wives, and they concubines have drunk wine from them." They actually went over to the Lord's house, got all the vessels and were getting drunk on them.

"And thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze, iron, wood and stone," materialism, "which see not nor hear nor know in the God in whose hand thy breath is and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified. Then was the part of the hand sent from him and this writing was written." Remember the hand came and wrote on the wall and the writing that was written, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing. MENE, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. TEKEL, thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. PERES, the kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, put a chain of gold about his neck and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom."

When this man lived in opposition to God, when he flagrantly mocked God, God's hand wrote on the wall you are finished. God will not be ridiculed. God will not be mocked. When he desecrated those things that were sacred he did not escape. There is a law and the law says, "whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." Notice this is a divine principle and a divine principle is inviolable. I always think about the commercial where the...I don't know, somebody makes some kind of margarine and then it's a picture of this lady who says, "it's not nice to mess with Mother Nature." You know? And all the winter comes and so forth.

Who is Mother Nature? There's no Mother Nature. But I'll tell you something, it's not nice to mess with God. Mother nature is man's atheistic identification for the source of law. But God is the source. You see that's what this is saying. The law that says "whatever a man sows, he shall also reap" is the law of God. That's why it says God is not mocked. You see you're violating him when you violate the law. That's a simple law. What it really says is don't fight God. It's the law of cause and effect. In the Old Testament, the law is repeated in several places just to show it to you in a couple of places. Job 4, verse 8, "Even as I have seen they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same." Nothing new. You plow iniquity, you sow wickedness, you reap the same.

Another verse, Proverbs 1:31, "Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way." They shall eat of the fruit of their own way. Another statement in the Proverbs, Chapter 11, verse 18. "The wicked worketh a deceitful work, but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward." In other words, what you sow is what you reap. Just a couple of other verses that help support the thought. Hosea Chapter 8 and verse 7. "For they have sown the wind and they reap the whirlwind." They have sown the wind. They reap the whirlwind. And in Chapter 10 of Hosea verse 12, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy." I like that.

"Sow to yourself in righteousness, reap in mercy." Verse 13 says, "You have plowed wickedness. You have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies." It's the same principle again and again and the classic illustration is Haman, who built a gallows to hang Mordecai and wound up being hanged on his own gallows. How many times have we studied the Psalms on Wednesday nights and heard David say, "God find those evil people and trap them in their own traps." The harvest is determined by the plantings. The like begets like. What you plant is what you get. I had that illustrated to us. We came home from vacation. We planted a garden in our backyard. And in our garden we had corn and squash and carrots and what else? I don't know, whole lots of things. Anyway, I think we had some pumpkins and all this...and we came home and there was this monstrous thing there.

And my wife says look at the squash. And I thought that doesn't look like squash. How did it get there? What is it? And realized this thing is huge. That it's a sunflower. How did we get a sunflower in the squash? We didn't plant a...so we find out that some practical joker has planted this sunflower in our squash. But I at the point at which I was working on this message, I was hoping that there hadn't been some violation of God's law where you plant squash and get a sunflower.

We've found out somebody planted that sunflower. Somebody's going to get a package of sunflower seeds too. God's laws are not violated and if they're true in the physical world, they're true in the moral world. Did you know that the fruit of life is determined by what has been planted? Somebody said a man's character is the harvest of his early habits, a child foolishly indulged. A child encouraged to think only of its own whims and its own wishes, may be real cute until it gets old and

becomes and abstinent stubborn, sullen, self-centered, undisciplined man. That's tragedy.

One English writer put the law in a moral sense in these words. He said, "What strikes me more and more each day is the permanence of one's early life. The identity between youth and manhood, every habit good and bad of those early years seems to have permanently affected my whole life. The battle is largely won or lost before it seems to begin." The Bible put it this way. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old," what, "he won't depart from it." Yes, it's true in a moral sense. The law works in a moral way.

I'll give you classic illustration. Witness the absolute and total frustration and hopelessness of human psychiatry and psychology. I'm telling you, I wouldn't be a psychiatrist or a psychologist more than a month, because there's absolutely no effect on people. You know what? Because those people are the fruit of what has been planted for years and years. And what was sowed is reaped and the only thing that can ever change that is for there to be a new creation in Christ, so all of the psychology and psychiatry that attempts to change one thing into another just can't do it.

The absolute frustration of psychiatry finally resolves itself in handful of pills that you throw in your mouth every day so that you can just wind down and become a vegetable and not step on anybody else. The law is physically true. It is morally true. Thirdly, it is spiritually true. This law is a spiritual law. When a man sows sin, he reaps the consequence of sin. The Old Testament is very clear on this. In Numbers 32:23, "But if you will not do so, behold you have sinned against the Lord," watch, "and be sure your sin will find you out." That's the same law in the spiritual world. "Be sure your win will find you out." You cannot sin without consequence.

In fact, even your secret sin, Psalm 90, verse 8, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee are secret sins are in the light of thy face." God sees everything and you're accountable for violation of His law. It's a serious violation. Well, there are many other Scriptures. Proverbs 13:21, Isaiah 3:11, Isaiah 59:12, passages that tell us that in the spiritual world when you violate God's laws you pay the consequences. One particularly strong one is this, Romans 2:9. "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." That's pretty straight isn't it? "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

You can't violate the law and get away. Think about Sinclair Lewis, host of literary world, everybody hailed him as a great writer. He blasted God, mocked God, wrote a blatant mockery of Christianity called Elmer Gantry. Everybody thought oh, you know, he's got everything, money, women, fame, the whole works. What people don't know is he died a slobbering alcoholic in a third rate clinic somewhere in Italy. You can't violate God's laws. Oscar Wilde, the great English play write who so brilliant, so capable, wound up in prison as a homosexual in shame and disgrace. And he penned these words. He says, "I forgot somewhere along the line that what you are in secret you will someday cry aloud from the housetop."

You do not violate God's laws and get away. You say, John, but what about Grace? What about forgiveness? What about mercy? Yes, that's another law. And fantastic truth that I want to let you know. That law happens to intersect with the ultimate action of the law in Galatians when you put your faith in Jesus Christ. Now let me say that again. The law of salvation by faith in Christ intersects with the law of sowing and reaping, only in the ultimate sense when you put your faith in Christ.

I say that in this...listen, let me explain it. Because I put my faith in Jesus Christ, get this, it's not what I sow that I reap. I'm going to reap what Christ sowed, because God sees me in Christ. That's in an ultimate sense. Yet I still believe people with all my heart that it is true that even as a Christian, when I violate God's standards and I sin as a believer there will be consequence. I believe that. I believe that every son He loves He scourges. And He's certainly not going to scourge me if I haven't done something. I can violate His laws and there will be consequences. But in an ultimate sense, the law of salvation intersects this law ultimately and cuts it off and ultimately I will reap what Christ has sown.

That's the fantastic truth of salvation. And so I say to you friends, that if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, you will reap what you have sown, but if you put your faith in Him, receive Him as your Savior, ultimately the law of salvation intersects and you will reap ultimately what He has sewn and believe me He'll then begin to give you the strength in this life through the Holy Spirit to sow things unto God.

So it is then that in a very real sense ultimately the Christian is freed from the consequence of this law. However, in a day to day living of the Christian life, this law still affects us. Let me illustrate. For example, a person gets saved, that does not necessarily stop them from drinking and smoking and getting cancer does it? For a Christian who gets into a fight and gets hit in the mouth is still going to get his teeth knocked out. Or a Christian who sleeps with another woman is still going to be chastised. In other words, the law of cause and effect is still there even in the Christian's life. It is the ultimate sense of that law that has been removed by the act of Christ on the cross.

The Greeks believed in nemesis. That's a proper name. They believed that when a man did a wrong thing, immediately nemesis was on his tail. And nemesis, that's where the word comes when we say something is a nemesis. Nemesis chased the guy around until he caught him. You know what they were saying? They were saying boy there is a law of retribution in the world. They called it the God nemesis. You say well, John, are you saying that Christians have guilt? Yes, I think we have guilt for sin. I think our guilt is covered, but I think we have it and I think it's a good thing to have real guilt, not emotional guilt and psychological guilt, but real guilt. If I don't feel guilty for sin, I'm just going to go on right into sin and not even know what I'm doing.

True guilt is purifying isn't it? I want to have some guilt so that it shows me I recognize my sin. And so the law of cause and effect still operates in my life, though not in an ultimate sense. Let's look at

the second point in our little look at this chapter and these verses. First of all, we said the divine law was stated. Let's see the divine law explained. Verse 8, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Now there's two fields you can sow in. You can either sow in the field of the flesh or in the field of the Spirit. Now what does it mean to sow to the flesh? It is the act of choosing to gratify the cravings of sin. Now the flesh, as we've studied, and I'm not going to go into this in detail, but the flesh as we've studied it...you can get earlier tapes from Galatians on this. The flesh is the contact point for sin. And when we sow to the flesh, we are choosing to gratify that particular craving that comes from that contact point rather than to gratify the desire of the Spirit.

The result is corruption. You do what your fleshly gratification tells you do. You've sown seed to the flesh. You've put that seed in the field of the flesh and you're going to get the results. Now the Galatians particularly, they're particularly fleshly act was the fact that they were trying to live the Christian life in their own energy, legalistically in their own flesh. Can you imagine trying to live the Christian life with the fall of nature? That's what they were trying to do. And the result, look at it, the word corruption, it means decay and its ultimate meaning is death. It sometimes is translated death. It sometimes is translated decay.

And so when a person sows to the flesh, he reaps decay, he reaps death. Now let me hasten to say this, keep in mind, this is a general principle. The Christian who sows to the flesh shall reap corruption. That is the degeneration of the joy and the peace and all that he has with Christ. The unsaved person who continues to sew to the flesh all his life reaps ultimate death. Then there may be times when a Christian who sows constantly the flesh reaps death too. God just takes him home, right?

You sow to the flesh and you're going to reap corruption and some people even death. It's a sad thing to think about. The unsaved person just continues to sow to the flesh, sow to the flesh, so to the flesh, he reaps corruption, degeneration, ultimate death in every sense. You say when you sow to the flesh, what grows? You ready for these? Here are the lovely plants that grow when you sow to the flesh. Verse 19, Chapter 5, "The works of the flesh are manifest which are these, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousing, and the like." That's what you get when you sow to the flesh.

To sow beloved to the flesh is to pander rather than crucify the flesh. Stott says, and I quote him, "Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain and in pure fancy, wallow in self-pity we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we linger in bad company whose insidious influence we know we cannot resist, every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up and praying, every time we read pornographic literature, every time we take a risk that strains our self control, we are sowing, sowing to the flesh."

Some Christians sow to the flesh every day and wonder why they don't every reap holiness. You can't. Holiness is a harvest beloved of sowing to the Spirit. If you see an unholy Christian, I'm not talking about his position, I'm talking about his practice, if you see a Christian with sin in his life, it is because he sows to the flesh. In the case of the believer, corruption results. In the case of an unbeliever, death. Boy how tragic if you don't know Jesus Christ and you're in that situation.

Lord Byron, a genius, a young man, sowed all his life to the flesh. He was wild. Absolutely wild, immoral and he knew what his harvest would be and he wrote these words. "My days are in the yellow leaf. My soul is sear with sullen grief. It is as if the dead could feel the icy worm around them steel and shutter as the reptiles creeped to revel or their rotting sleep. Without the power to scare away the cold consumers of their clay."

A terrible way to look at death isn't it? But he knew he'd reap what he sowed. But on the other hand, you don't have to sow to the flesh. It says here you can sow to the Spirit and of the Spirit reap life everlasting. You say what does it mean, John, to sow to the Spirit. It means the same thing as being filled with the Spirit. The same thing as walking by the Spirit. It just means to be preoccupied, dominated by the Spirit. Instead of pandering the flesh, you just yield to the Holy Spirit and you say well, I don't know, can't you explain it better? I don't need to explain it better. The Holy Spirit will explain it plenty clear when the crisis comes.

You know, some of you want to get a great big long and technical explanation about walking in the Spirit. Listen, you know the difference between walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh, right? You better know. The Spirit will do His work. The Spirit's not going to say oh, I left him get too far along there before I warned him. No. You say what does it mean to sow to the Spirit, John? It means to be filled with the Spirit dominated by the Spirit, preoccupied by the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit, Christ conscious, studying the word, praying, dominated by the things of the Spirit. That's what it means.

What is the result of it? Life everlasting. What is life everlasting mean? Well, let me ask you this, is eternal life a quantity or a quality of life? Its quality isn't it? Is there any time in heaven? No. And I really believe you're seeing eternal life or life everlasting here in its qualitative aspect not its quantitative. And I say that for several reasons. Number one, eternal life is never a quantity of life in the Bible, it's always a quality of life. It's a kind of life. You know something, I have it now. I have eternal life and it's a different kind of life than I used to have, right? It's a quality of life. It's a kind of life. It's God consciousness.

So don't think of eternal life as some kind of thing that goes on forever. Just think of it as a kind of life. And the fact that the word corruption is a qualitative word indicates to me that the everlasting life is also a qualitative concept and that's the comparison. When you sow to the flesh you reap a certain

quality of life. When you sow to the Spirit, you reap another quality of life. You say well, then what is this saying to the Christian? It's saying this, when a Christian really sows to the Spirit, he enjoys all of the qualitative features of his eternal life.

Now my eternal life is going to go on forever. It is never ending, but I'll tell you one thing, there are times in my life when I don't enjoy being in the position I'm in because there's sin in my life, right? And I forfeit the joys, the qualities of my eternal life. I mean, some of the most...let's face it, some of the most absolutely retched, miserable people I've ever met are people with eternal life. Is that right? You say yeah, I'm one of them.

Yeah, well, that's probably true of a whole bunch of you. They're more miserable than unbelievers, miserable. Do you know why? Because of sin, they have forfeited the qualitative joys and blessings and riches of their eternal life. At least for the time, praise God that when they die, at least they'll get all back, fully. I'm not saying you forfeit your salvation. I'm not saying you forfeit eternal life. I'm saying you forfeit the joy and the peace and the blessing that comes when you're sowing to the Spirit. You know the difference don't you?

So the Christian who sows to the Spirit really reaps the qualities of his new life. Man, I live a spirit filled life and the blessings are so rich and so abundant and your own top and there's so much bubbling joy and rejoicing and peace and love and all of the fruit of spirit, love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, just gushes, you know. And then you walk in the flesh, and boom, see everything's down the drain. And the unbeliever, he has no capacity at all to sow to the Spirit. He receives no everlasting life either qualitatively or quantitatively.

He receives corruption, corruption, corruption, corruption that finally crystallizes into death, eternal death. So the alternatives are explained. The law is stated, the law is explained. Thirdly, the law is fulfilled, verse 9. Now already before I read it some of you are saying well, you know, I've been sowing a long time. And I've been trying to sow to the Spirit. When does the harvest come? Well, I seem to be getting troubled. John Brown the great old puritan said, "Christians are like children. They would sow and reap the same day." Some are saying I'm getting tired of sowing. I haven't seen the harvest yet. Verse 9 is for you. "Let us not be weary in welldoing for in due season we," what, "shall reap," if we don't run out of gas, free translation.

No, he says, don't grow weary of sowing to the Spirit. It's ekkakeo. It's a word used of a farmer who begins to slacken his exertion because of fatigue. Don't grow weary. I know some Christians have been so faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ and they've sowed for so long. Sometimes it's just...you get to the place, I've been teaching this class so many years. I need a vacation. 2 Thessalonians 3:13, "Brethren be not weary and welldoing." You know the Lord, He knew that some of us were going to go on for a long time.

1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore my beloved brother be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. For as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord, keep it up." Keep it up. And if you want somebody to look at who never gave up, Hebrews 12:1. "Seeing we are compassed about with the great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every wait and the sin that does so easily beset us. Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross." And the next verse says "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds."

You're getting weary of welldoing. You're getting tired of teaching, tired of serving the Lord, tired of sowing when you haven't really seen a lot of reaping and you expected more, then maybe you ought to look at Jesus who endured. And the next verse in Hebrews 12, says "you haven't yet resisted unto blood." You have died yet in your endurance. Be faithful. Believe me I tell you God is faithful and the rewards will come. The rewards will come.

You know, one of the problems that every Christian fights is spiritual laziness. Spiritual laziness, but not weary in welldoing. What does welldoing mean? It means doing good. Doing all the beautiful deeds that he's talked about. It's good in the simple sense of good. Not just in word, but in deed, welldoing, keep it up. Now, I suppose there are a lot of Christians who think nice thoughts and think about doing good deeds. You just don't ever do them. "Be not weary in welldoing." Whenever I think of this, I have to think of Paul. I always think of him...not a day in my life I don't think about him, but you know the man had that unbelievable commitment to follow something through.

Talk about guy who gotten weary, I can't even believe the things that he continually, continually pursued. In Chapter 20 he said, nothing moves me, he said in the book of Acts. I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing and get it all done and finish the work Jesus gave me. And nothing stopped him. I mean, I would have fallen apart. I would have been out of the ministry long before he was. You know how he got out of the ministry? The Lord had to have his head chopped off to take him to heaven.

He wouldn't quit. In 2 Corinthians 4 he says, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not." Never get tired he says. "We've renounced the hidden things of dishonesty not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of the God." And he says in verse 7, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." In other words, I carry this truth around. "We are trouble on every side, yet not distressed. We are perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted but not forsaken. Cast down, but not destroyed."

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. Who we who live are always delivered unto death." We always have to face death. But he says that's all right, because when death works in us, life works in you. We have the same Spirit of faith according as is written. "I believed therefore have I spoken. We also believe therefore we speak." In other words, nothing hinders us. And he says "we know even that if we die our earthly house of this tabernacle's dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in heaven."

Even if I go, I'm...it's just going to be promotion. He says, in fact, this is better anyway. I'd rather be absent from the body and present with the Lord any how. The end of his life. He writes 2 Timothy, he says, well, he says, I might as well die now. You say why? He says, well, I finished my course, I've kept the faith. Oh, perfect example of one who didn't faint. Oh beloved, you know, in these last days don't grow weary, welldoing. Jesus never did, Paul never did. Keep at it. In due season it says.

What's due season? God's time. You'll reap if we faint not. Now he's not talking about salvation. He's talking about reward. Here he really zeroes in on the Christians, I think, with the let us and the welldoing. I don't think unbelievers can do welldoing. And I think this verse shows they're Christians, let us. The other ones, he that, verse 8. Verse 7, "Whatever a man," very general principles all of a sudden being here, you get this idea let us. And in verse 10, as we, and he personalizes for the Christians, "We will reap if we faint not." You say does that mean we're going to reap salvation? No, it means reward. And do you know something, you can serve the Lord Jesus Christ and then you can run out of gas and lose your whole reward. That's what that says. You'll reap if you what? Faint not.

You say, John, that's a pretty strong statement to make. Can you support that? Yes, 2 John, verse 8. It says this, just a little Epistle. Listen to what he says. "Look to yourselves," well, that's good advice, watch yourself, "that we lose not those things which we have already wrought, but that we receive a full reward." In other words, you could forfeit something you already wrought by unfaithfulness. Sow to the Spirit, beloved, keep doing it, keep doing it. Keep doing it. You say well, when's the harvest? Don't you worry about that, in due season the harvest is going to come. You believe God?

So the divine law is stated explained fulfilled, ultimately. Lastly the divine law is applied. Therefore, verse 10, and we know what the therefore is there for. To point backwards on the basis of what he's just said as we have therefore because God's laws are inviolable, because we're to sow to the Spirit, because we're not to faint, therefore when we have opportunity let's keep on doing good unto all men especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Here's the practical injunction that goes with the principle. As we have opportunity, this is a most interesting statement. Literally it says, let us time, kairosis the word translated opportunity. Let us have a seasonable time. It's not saying do good when others come and give you an opportunity. It says do good by looking for opportunities. Let us have time. Let us have opportunity therefore. I like the translation, this is my own, make

opportunity to do good. Make opportunity to do good.

Incidentally, the good there has a definite article to do the good, not just general good, but the good that he's talked about. Restoring sinning brothers, expressing the fruit of the Spirit, the good in the context. The good, the good that God loves that God gives through the Spirit. And I like this, let us do good unto whom? Unto all men. Do you do good unto the unsaved? That is so important beloved, because you know they're getting their view of Christians from what we do with them and to them. Our goodness before the world has a profound affect, a profound affect.

In 1 Peter we read this this morning, Chapter 2, verse 15 says "So is the will of God that with welldoing, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." In other words, people are criticizing Christianity and the greatest way to stop the criticism is to do good to them. Instead of worrying about how articulate you are at presenting the gospel, why don't you worry about how good you are to the unsaved people at your job.

How kind you are to your neighbor, how loving. That's the heart of your testimony, believe me. It's the heart of your testimony. In 1 Timothy there is an indication of how our goodness affects others. It talks about how women are to dress. And it says "they are to dress in a certain fashion because this becometh women professing Godliness." And not only are they to dress this way, but with good works. Because this really adds to the testimony, this is the testimony.

In Titus 2:7, he says to Titus, Paul does, "In all things how yourself a pattern of good works." Why? Good works and sound speech that cannot be condemned that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed having no evil thing to say of you. That's real witness. I promise you something, just between you and me and the Lord. Paul said to Titus, "I will that thou affirm constantly that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good in profitable unto men."

And I'll tell you something, I'll promise you that if you're shy about sharing Christ and saying anything, if you start doing good, bending over backwards to do good, God will give you the time and the opportunity to say what you need to say. And if you have a lot to say and you don't do good, your testimony belies what you say. Do good to all men. Unbelievers, and then he adds, I love this, "especially unto them who are of the family." The Father's family, the household of faith.

I'll tell you beloved, the call's pretty clear here isn't it? There's the law. It's God's law. If you violate it, you suffer the consequence. If you're a Christian and you sow to the flesh, you're going to reap corrupted Christian life. That is a life where you lose on all of the joys, qualitative aspects of your eternal life. If you're an unbeliever, your whole life is sowing to the flesh and you're going to reap death eternal and ultimate. If you're a Christian he says sow to the Spirit. And some day you'll reap if you don't faith.

You say well, how do we sow to the Spirit? Practically, you do good to everybody, especially to Christians. Remember it, God will not be mocked. What you sow, you'll reap. Just this word in closing. Deuteronomy Chapter 30, verse 15, "See," listen, "I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances that thou mayest live and multiply. And the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land to which thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare unto you this day that you shall perish surely and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land to which thou passest over the Jordan to go to possess. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you. That I have set before you life and death blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life. Let's pray.

Father, we know that sowing to the Spirit there is life everlasting all that it is. Sowing to the flesh there is corruption and death. We pray that we might sow to the Spirit and the Spirit reap all of the blessings over everlasting life. Father if there are some Christians here tonight who have been sowing to the flesh and reaping a corrupted life, degenerated life, oh God, we pray that this might be time when they confess and get things right. For every seed that they have sown to the flesh, may there be confession. Father, those little things that we've done to pander and pamper our own will and way. We ask cleansing and we pray that they would repent and turn away from these things.

I pray it for my own self. Father, we might sow to the Spirit, of the Spirit reap the fullness of our eternal life. And that we would never grow weary, but that we would constantly and faithfully continue to sow to the Spirit, knowing the harvest will come in your good time. Help us to do good to all men and especially to the dear ones in the family. We give You the praise in Jesus' name. Amen.

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