

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

GALATIANS 6:10 – Looking Over One Another by Jean Davies w/c 5th July 2020

PAUL ENCOURAGES CHRISTIANS TO DO GOOD TO ALL, BUT STRESSES WATCHFULNESS.

As nature's summer fruits are beginning to be harvested, we can think of the goodness they bring to our bodies to repair, replenish, and refresh us for sound health. Likewise, the "fruit of the Spirit" produced in the Christian by God's Holy Spirit does the same work for the "body of Christ", those who believe in and follow Jesus, but also benefits all as Christians live in community with each other and in the world. Recalling this nine-part fruit in Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The heading of our study "Looking Over One Another" also reminds me of how a shepherd looks over, or examines, his sheep to see if they have any injuries or illnesses so that he can keep them safe and in good health, strengthening the whole flock. Just as our Good Shepherd keeps watch over us, we are to watch over one another, look out for each other, look over one another.

Read and re-read Galatians 6:1-10, praying that the Lord will show you what He wants you to learn from this brief study.

In Galatians 6:1-10, Paul encourages the Galatian believers, giving examples of how and when to use this spiritual fruit in everyday life so that situations do not develop into "recipes for disaster" but rather opportunities to demonstrate the power and love of God in and for believers, and also for all people in the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Situations such as being caught in a sin (v1); carrying life's heavy 'burdens' (v2); mean-spiritedness (v6); and weariness in doing good (v9) apply as much to us today in Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist churches and beyond as they did in these early Galatian churches. Paul sounds a note of warning, though, and this is for us also. In v1b, v4, v7 and v8, the Galatians are warned to be watchful against temptation, self-deception, and wrong motives. "Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked" (v7) reminds us of the awful fate of Ananias and Sapphira in a previous study of Acts 5.

Finally, Paul ends on another characteristic note of encouragement. Verse 10: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." This is the flagship Bible verse of Barnabas Fund, the Christian organisation called by God to give aid and comfort directly to suffering and persecuted Christians throughout the world, but by whose actions those who are not Christian often also benefit.

- 1 How do we define "sin"? What is our attitude towards it?
- 2 Are you or I in a situation where we are being tempted to "turn a blind eye" to sin because we love the sinner, or tempted to judge, instead of praying for them and "gently restoring" them if we can (v1)?
- 3 We continue to have many opportunities for doing good. Who do you know in need of your spiritual fruit, and how can you share its goodness, and in doing so share it with the Lord Jesus (v10)?

Paul ends this Galatians letter in v 18 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit", and we can receive this blessing for ourselves also. **Amen.**