

St Mary's 10am Thursday 28th July 2016

Galatians 1 v1-10; Galatians 1 v11-24 Galatians 2 v15-21
Galatians 2 v17-21 Galatians 3 v23-4 v7;
Galatians 4 v28 to 5 v1 + 13-25; **Galatians 6 v1-18**

GALATIANS SS7

We conclude our Sermon Series in Galatians as we look at the final chapter, Chapter 6.

Now, if I were St Paul, I would end Galatians 6 with Ephesians 6! After the great words about '*fruit of the Spirit*' at the end of Chapter 5 why not end with '*Put on the whole armour of God that you may stand*'? It would be such a great ending.

Well, just like Thomas Cranmer never took my advice nor it seems does St Paul!

Instead, Galatians 6 is a rather more subdued ending to an Epistle. But there is ONE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE between Ephesians 6 and Galatians 6. Whereas Ephesians appeals to the individual Christian to stand firm, Galatians speaks of our corporate responsibility TO EACH OTHER.

Galatians 6 begins with one plural word: 'ADELPHOI'

Literally, *brothers!*

Before the word "Christian" came into being, the word for a Believer was 'A Brother'. Because, by faith in Christ, we have been adopted into God's family we are '*Brothers in Christ*' and '*Sisters in Christ*'. We are children of the same heavenly Father. We are, as Galatians 6 v1 says, ADELPHOI.

And the right way to translate this is not "brothers" but 'ALL OF YOU' Paul is saying, "Listen! ALL OF YOU WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH, this is what you should do...."

And what should we do?

Answer: **Help each other not to sin.**

V1 "*If anyone is caught transgressing, (caught crossing over the line into sin) you who are spiritual, should restore that person gently*"

v2 "*Carry each other's burdens*" (the context means the burden of sin)

(2)

St Paul knows that the church will never be perfect.

St Paul knows that the Spirit will be weak and the flesh strong,
St Paul knows that we won't always be able to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

And the answer, knowing these depressing things, is not to despair or give up. **The answer is mutual help and support.**

Believer with Believer. 'Adelphoi'

The church is a place where we are helped to overcome our sins.

It is NOT a place for the faultless, for the Holier-than-Thou brigade.

It is, v3, a place for honesty.

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought because, if you do, you will deceive yourself and in your pride you will have lost the humility that is necessary.

The principle is very clear: v7 *"A person reaps what they sow"*

If we sow from the flesh, we will reap destruction;

If we sow from the Spirit, we will reap eternal life.

But in order to reap a good harvest we need the help and support and encouragement AND CORRECTION of our fellow believers.

Hence, verse 10, *"Therefore, AS WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY, let us do good ... especially to those who are of the family of believers"*

We need to look out for opportunities to support each other.

Which is one reason why Home Groups are so important.

They give us the framework and the opportunity.

Paul ends by signing off in his own hand-writing, *"See what large letters I use' v11 'as I write to you with my own hand'*

Perhaps this is because of the *'thorn in the flesh'* (2 Corinthians 12 v7) which could be bad eye-sight or perhaps it is simply to make them sit up and take note of what he is saying.

HE CONCLUDES by saying that what really matters is not circumcision or uncircumcision v15. **What really counts is THE NEW CREATION** and the ONLY thing to boast about is the Cross of Christ through which we are made a new creation and put right with God.

Our calling is not to follow worldly goals and ambitions but to be 'dead to the world' v14 and keep in step with the Spirit.

And to do this supporting, encouraging, correcting each other because Galatians 6 ends with the same word as it begins, ADELPHOI.

It's all about being ADELPHOI. All about supporting one another.