

Introduction:

- A. *Illus.*: I don't watch "The Bachelorette." Honest. But I heard about the current bachelorette, whose name is Hannah, because she is a professing Christian. I've read that among the bachelors vying for her attention there were some romantic sparks between her and another Christian named Luke. So they're having dinner, just the two of them. Very romantic, as you might imagine. And this is what happened. Luke, who, I read, "had traded his player ways to follow Christ," said,

"Let's talk about sex and how the marriage bed should be kept pure. Let's say you have had sex with one or multiple of these guys, I would be wanting to go home."

Hannah immediately took offense to Luke's comments and confessed that she has had "physical relations" with some of the other contestants but "Jesus stills loves her."

Later she explained to *Entertainment Weekly*, "Regardless of anything that I've done, I can do whatever, I sin daily and Jesus still loves me. It's all washed and if the Lord doesn't judge me and it's all forgiven, then no other man, woman ... anything can judge me."¹

Well, what do you make of that? Sounds fishy, right? But why? If she accepted Christ, isn't what she said true: "*It's all washed and if the Lord doesn't judge me and it's all forgiven.*"

- B. We're nearing the end of our study in Galatians so turn to **Gal. 6**. Paul has confronted those who wanted to add requirements to the free gift of the gospel but he also has to deal with those at the opposite extreme who say that since our sins are forgiven and we are free in Christ sin is no longer an issue. In the four verses we're looking at today we're taught the right way for Christians to think about this question. Listen to **vv.7-10...**

I. TO THINK THAT OUR SALVATION FREES US FROM THE RESPONSIBILITY TO OBEY GOD IS TO MOCK GOD!

A. **V.7, “Do not be deceived,” led astray. Ah-oo-gah!! Alert!**

Do not enter! There are those who say that since God has forgiven the sins of anyone who puts their faith in Christ, what we do—even if it is wrong—doesn’t actually matter. Hannah said that. So the Bible says here, **Do not be deceived about what our freedom in Christ means, because being deceived about that is very dangerous.**

B. **“God cannot be mocked!”** Well, wait a minute. I didn’t hear anyone mocking God. I mean, who would dare to do such a thing?! Hannah wasn’t mocking God, was she?

God’s purpose in sending Christ to save sinners was not only to forgive their sin but to recreate us as people who love doing good, who love obeying our Father. First, we are unburdened by the guilt and power of sin but also we are equipped and enabled to be the righteous people God has always wanted.

But to lay claim to Christ’s death for our sins—to say, *“it’s all washed”*—while doing little to stop sinning or to walk in step with God’s Holy Spirit, well, *that* is to mock God. As if to say, *“You saved me and forgave all my sin, so ‘I can do whatever,’ ‘sin daily and Jesus still loves me. The Lord doesn’t judge me.’”* That is nothing short of thumbing her nose at the righteous God. Like a spoiled rich girl saying, *“Oh, daddy will take care of everything.”*

God cannot be played. He’s nobody’s fool. He will not stand like a helpless patsy and whimper, *“But that’s not what I meant.”* **“God is not mocked!”**

V.7 continues with a timeless principle, “*A man reaps what he sows.*” But wait! The gospel says that when we put our faith in Christ we do *not* reap the consequences for our sin that we have sown. That’s true, but nonetheless...

II. THE GOSPEL DOESN’T NULLIFY THIS IMMUTABLE PRINCIPLE: A MAN REAPS WHAT HE SOWS.

- A. The first application of that principle is in v.8, “Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction.” The *flesh*, you’ll remember, is a Bible expression for our own, before-Christ, sinful nature that controlled us. Our selfish, self-satisfying desires determined all that we did. When someone who claims to be a Christian doesn’t turn from that way of living when they profess faith in Christ they haven’t actually repented and turned to follow Jesus. What they say they *believe* doesn’t matter much if they don’t turn from their old way of life to become Jesus’ obedient disciple.

When we do whatever we *feel* like doing, regardless of God’s commands, that is *sowing a seed*, according to this verse. It isn’t just doing a wrong thing. You’ve *planted* something rebellious in your own heart. Something that grows. A rebellious seed that has a life of its own and a certain harvest.

For example, you ignore the need of someone God has put right in your path simply because you don’t feel like helping. You plant that seed, and it will grow and spread in your heart. You fly off the handle and then act as if it was no big deal. Seed planted. You indulge in some illicit sexual temptations. Seed planted. You gossip, or ignore your responsibilities, or envy what isn’t yours. Seeds planted. And if we don’t repent and cooperate with the Holy Spirit to uproot them, they will most certainly grow.

These things are actually denials of our faith in Christ because disobedience—especially when it becomes a habit—is an explicit declaration that, as far as you’re concerned, Jesus is *not* Lord. To indulge in sin is to choose to walk out of step with the Holy Spirit. *Illus.*: Hannah might think Jesus is her Savior but he is most definitely not her Lord. She sees obedience as optional because she thinks God doesn’t judge her. But 1 Cor. 6 says, “*The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body... Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?*” Hannah? Don’t you know that?

V.8 continues with the outcome, “*Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction.*” That Greek word is translated elsewhere *decomposition*, *decay*. Seeds sown to satisfy our old nature actually deteriorate and decompose our souls. That is contrasted with reaping profoundly abundant, rich, complete life that never ends. I don’t know, of course, what Jesus is going to do about Hannah, but I know this: when professing Christians brazenly disregard sin, whatever form their sin takes, they spread deadly seeds in their own hearts (not to mention other people), and their spiritual lives will decompose, and if God doesn’t intervene with his loving discipline, they will find themselves in the last day calling, “*Lord, Lord,*” only to hear, “*Depart from me, I never knew you.*”

- B. OK, but how does this proverb apply to those who do obey Christ? Again, it is *not* to say that those who sow good deeds reap salvation, because no one has deeds good enough for that kind of a harvest. **V.8**, “*whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*”

Thanks to our salvation, sow good deeds in your walk with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit will nourish within you a harvest of life everlasting. The seeds we plant through these good deeds produce fruit called “the fruit of the Spirit.” Paul told us in **Gal 5:22-25**, “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*” Instead of deteriorating our souls, this fruit produces abundant and never-ending life.

- C. Coming to Christ is, in one sense, easy. “*Whosoever will may come.*” “*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.*” But this lifelong spiritual work of planting good seeds in our walk with the Spirit—well, that can be difficult and draining sometimes. So **v.9** says, “*Let us not become weary [i.e., lose heart] in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*”

You are undoubtedly more noble than I, but I have time where I just get tired of being—or trying to be—good. I often feel resistance. To begin with, we face the resistance of our **old self**—self-absorbed, complaining, spiritually lazy—pushing back every step of the way. Like Paul wrote in **Rom 7**, “*Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.*” Plus, there is the inevitable pushback of the **world** around us. They talk a good game about ‘doing good’ but Christians quickly learn that the people around us don’t always value that virtue if it doesn’t come on their terms. And then there’s the **devil**, who tempts and lies and accuses us at every turn. **No wonder we get weary in doing good.**

D. OK, but what about when I *am* weary in doing good? Then what do I do? I certainly sympathize. And when we are weary in doing good—when we feel like we’ve put up with all we can, or we don’t know how to resist the temptations that torment us, or when the price of righteousness has been high—we are vulnerable in those times, aren’t we. Here’s what I’ve learned.

- *Run to Jesus.* Find some space to seek the company and strength of the Holy Spirit. Read your Bible.
- *Ask others for help.* Tell a Christian brother or sister what you’re facing. Ask if they’d pray for you; check in on you. Don’t go it alone.
- *Trust—actively trust—that your weakness is the best vehicle to display God’s strength.* Give God your weakness, your weariness, as an offering for his use.
- *Do not sin!* Remember what God told Cain, “*Sin is crouching at your door. It desires to have you, but you must master it.*” Some sin will seem like a welcome relief but it is a lie. The guilt will drive you further from Jesus just when you need him most.
- *Persevere.* **Ps 27:14**, “*Wait for the Lord. Be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*” **Heb. 12:7**, “*Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children.*” **Ps. 126:6** says, “*Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.*”

Illus.: A week ago Casey and I went to visit **Gwen Holder**, who can’t come to church anymore. She is such a sweet Christian, and we had a great time with her. Before we left, I knelt down beside her chair and prayed for her because it is hard for her not to be weary in doing good. When I

finished, through her tears she asked, “*Is there a limit to God’s grace.*” The answer came to me as a song:

*He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.
His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His pow’r has no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.*

When I finished, we were all a little weepy. She rifled through some papers at the back of her Bible and pulled out a sheet. It was that very song written in her own hand.

- E. The promise, again, in v.9, “*for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*” My wife, Susan, saw this line in a book: “*He’ll plant the tomato seeds he bought to start in little Dixie cups. It makes him feel like the Lord above when those things sprout.*” It’s like that when we see our seeds of good sprout—when we see the fruit in our lives. But a harvest only comes in its own time. Christians, like farmers, must learn to wait. We plant our good deeds as we walk with the Spirit, and then we wait for them to bear fruit in our lives.

The thing about a harvest is that you always reap far more than you sow. Remember Jesus’ parable about the sower whose seed produced up to a 100 times more than was planted? That unimpressive little seed of godly patience you planted, nourished by the Spirit, will bear much fruit. Same with that little seed of Christlike kindness, or prayer, or gracious words. You will likely see some of the harvest in this lifetime, but certainly in the next.

Most of us aren't sufficiently tuned into the special joy of a harvest because we don't understand the waiting. We don't think about a farmer's tension over the weather report or the many weeks that he walks along the low rows, trying to measure progress. Our growing season is like that. It can take a long time. But the seeds of our good deeds planted in our Spirit-filled lives are promised here to produce a wonderful, abundant, everlasting harvest.

Conclusion

The conclusion is in **v.10**, *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*

So, to begin with, when you're walking with the Spirit, look for opportunities to do good to any and all. Remember, it isn't just what you're doing for them that matters. It is what you and I are sowing in our own hearts when we do good for others, regardless of their responses. Doing good requires us to plant our tiny seeds of *“love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control,”* but that is also the fruit that we will harvest in big bushel baskets from our lives. Illus.: In his little book, *Spiritual Direction*, **Gordon T. Smith** writes about a visit with his spiritual director. He said he was *“expressing frustration with some colleagues—looking, I admit, for some sympathy! But my director's response was simple and clear: “Well, Gordon, it is sometimes helpful to remember that ‘difficult people are the faculty of the soul.’”* [p.46] In other words, sometimes difficult people are our soul's most important teachers, or to put it yet another way, **challenging people in our lives are the best compost for the seeds of good deeds.**

The last line is highlighted by the word *especially*: “*especially those who belong to the family of believers,*” *the household of faith*. This takes us back to the command in **v.2**. “*Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*” And what is the law of Christ? “*Love one another.*” Would you join me in looking for ways to do good to others, especially other family members in our church and beyond? Would you agree to try to invite others to our family?

Illus.: When I was working on my book, *Feels Like Home*, I visited my pastor friend, **Josh Peterson** at Immanuel Church in Gurnee. I went because their motto is “*Welcome home.*” Josh told me about a couple in their church, Jason and Sarah. He said, “*When our friends were getting ready to adopt their first child, I asked them why they were doing it. Her response was: ‘It’s not because we think our family is so awesome. It’s because we’re dying to love them.’ So I’ve grappled with what a church would look like that saw every guest the way Jason and Sarah saw their son . . . dying to love them. That’s family being family AND welcoming outsiders at the same time.*”

ⁱ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/bachelorette-on-shows-sexual-relations-i-can-do-whatever-i-sin-daily-and-jesus-still-loves-me.html>