

4th Sunday after Pentecost
July 3, 2022

“New creation burden bearing, sowing, and boasting in the cross of Christ”
(Galatians 6:14-15)
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today’s text for this 4th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Epistle reading Galatians 6:14-15

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”

Here ends our text.

We’ve now come to the end of the book of Galatians that we have been hearing in our epistle readings these past three weeks. What a glorious journey it has been for us to hear the same words that Paul spoke to the Galatians and receive them in our hearts for they were written for us also! They were written to remind us that the promises given to Abraham of salvation in the coming Messiah, Jesus are also for us through the same faith given to Abraham by the Holy Spirit. It could never be by the keeping of the law that we become sons and daughters of Abraham, but it is by faith in Christ Jesus.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

On this 4th of July weekend, Paul guides us with his words to the Galatians that we are free from sin by faith in Christ Jesus. He became the curse on the cross so that we would be freed from the curse of everlasting damnation! So whatever your station in life is, whatever your nationality or gender is, you have the same benefits of eternal life, the inheritance through the gift of faith in your Savior Jesus Christ!

Let no one ever deceive you, let no one bewitch you into thinking that what Christ did on the cross to give you complete independence was not enough! Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything! Only the cross of Christ is our

comfort, our peace our boast our glory! For through it we have become new creations, Paul says.

That's freedom, brothers and sisters in Christ! That's total freedom that we who are sinners are made new, regenerated, given a new spirit, new hope, new life through faith in Jesus Christ! That is 100% God's work in Christ!

With laser focus, Paul concludes his letter to the Galatians and to us that, above all, the most important possession that a man, woman or child can have is being a new creation!

With laser focus, Paul lifts up God's goal and that of all believers – that God wants all people to have this most important possession of salvation! God forbid that Paul preaches or teaches anything else but Christ crucified for the world! For in Christ, Paul and every believer has been freed from the sinful world. It's crucified to the believer. We walk as new creations in the Spirit as we heard last week in chapter 5.

We walk as new creations to make new creations by our burden bearing and our sowing and reaping. This is the new imagery that Paul uses to focus our attention on mission – mission to the weak and erring, mission to the lost that all would repent and be received into the church of God, the Israel of God.

So again, on this 4th of July weekend we know how precious our national freedom and independence is – what the cost was to free us from tyranny and the ongoing work to keep us free from those within and without who want to enslave us with communistic rule.

Paul reminds us that our greatest work as Christians is to free erring souls with the Gospel of forgiveness. In two ways he brings this home – burden bearing and sowing and reaping.

First, burden bearing. **“Brethren”** Paul begins. For this is the responsibility of all Christians and each of you, the church. If “a man” be overtaken in a trespass, you who are spiritual should restore such a one with a spirit of gentleness. Paul says, “a man” for each of us can and have fallen into sin because of our sinful nature – our old man.

But, the goal of those who are walking in the faith is not to show an air of superiority to one who has fallen, but with gentleness bear the burden. Lead this person to repentance and forgiveness in Christ. It's a burden because it is work to

do this, especially with the kindness that Paul speaks of from the previous chapter when he lists the fruits of the Spirit.

It is so much easier to judge, speak badly about, gossip about, and forget about such a one, thinking I would never be in such a situation. I would never need any spiritual help! Again, Paul is speaking to the brethren, not to pastors specifically although pastors certainly help in restoring an erring brother. The main burden bearing, the main work of restoration begins with those closest to the one who has fallen, the believer in Christ who witnesses the one overtaken by sin.

The brethren's work of restoration begins with a humble spirit, recognizing that you and I are also tempted to do the same. It begins with a testing of one's own work and a full realization that one's own work is so imperfect and it is only by grace that one stands forgiven. It is with this humble heart, that one approaches a weak brother or sister in love, to lift the burden by showing such a one who has lifted it – Christ Jesus!

Oh, this burden bearing, this personal testing of one's faith and this restoration is the life of the Christian. For we all sin much and each of us need forgiveness daily. No one is better than another for we all glory only in Christ crucified. And in Him alone, an erring brother or sister is newly created by the Gospel -made a new creation!

This burden bearing is not burden condoning, but in a spirit of love, calling a brother, sister, husband, wife, child neighbor to the danger of losing one's soul if there is no repentance. It is burden bearing to love another when it is most difficult to love, especially if the trespass was personally directed at oneself. It is the glorious work that God has given to each of us to humble oneself and shine the love of Christ's work upon another. For by it alone are we both saved!

And that glorious work of Christ is found only in the Word of God, in the prophets of the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Epistles. This is the treasure trove! How precious is it to you? Paul concludes that only through the Word can a sinful man or woman be made a new creation. It is only because the Word was spoken to you that you have been restored and made new in Christ. How precious is it to you that this Word continue to be proclaimed to you and to others?

Paul says that's where your sowing and reaping is measured. What's important to you is what you sow. How do you sow your time, talents and treasures? On things

that are only temporal and have no benefit for the soul or on the eternal and the edification of the soul to “everlasting life”?

God is not mocked. God knows how each of us sow, whether to corruption in deeds of the flesh or to salvation in the proclamation of the Word. So, Paul tells each of us believers in Christ, **“Let him who is taught the Word share in all good things with him who teaches.”**

This is our ongoing stewardship of supporting the work of the church in supporting pastors, teachers, missionaries, translators, and all the different ways that God’s Word is shared daily! It is our joy to do so for by this Word we have been made new creations and by it others too will receive the same blessings! It’s the mission of our church to do good in sharing His word first to the family of faith and then to others who are not yet believers.

Yes, God gives each of us opportunities to share His Word to those outside the household of faith. He gives us opportunities to do good and be kind to others and lead them to the kindness of our Savior Jesus Christ. This is the freedom we have and which we share daily with each other with all our stewardship. May God bless each of us with much sowing by the power of the Holy Spirit and much reaping!

All glory to God for this great privilege to be His stewards. There is no boasting, not comparing, no works righteousness in being a steward of the most High God. We only boast in Christ crucified. For through Christ alone we are new creations given the high purpose of restoring erring brothers and sisters to be newly created. Through Christ alone, we are new creations to bring the Gospel of freedom to those still enslaved by sin using the Word of God graciously given to us.

How precious is this Word of God! How precious is our freedom in Christ! So Paul can conclude:

“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:16)

As many as walk in the freedom of Christ crucified, have His peace and mercy. What a joy it is to be called “brethren”! What a high privilege it is to serve God in our burden bearing, sowing and reaping as brethren of Jesus. So Paul, concludes his letter to the Galatians and to each of us.

“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)