

Sunday Morning Message

December 10, 2023 (Text also preached on May 17, 2015)

Don't Quit Before You Reach the Top

Text for Today's Message – Galatians 6:1 - 10

Congregational Reading – Galatians 6:6 - 10

Introduction

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

(Galatians 6:9)

Illustration – Appalachian Trail hike to Sunfish Pond with Don and Max

Overview – Don and I had left very early in the morning, hours before dawn, to meet up with two friends of ours who had left the day before. When we arrived at the parking area at the bottom of the mountain it was still dark. We started out full of energy and excitement and our goal was to reach the top of the mountain (five miles or so up) where there was a beautiful spring-fed, glacial lake. The hike should have taken us no more than three hours, which would have placed us at the campsite where our friends already were in time for breakfast. Our plan was to hike up quickly, spend all day at the lake, camp overnight, and then hike back down the next morning.

Things did not go as we had planned. We first got sidetracked on some scenic trails, and then we got lost. We wandered around the woods for several hours, eventually making it back to the parking lot in the afternoon. We still had a five-mile hike up the mountain to meet up with our friends. When we finally reached the campsite, which is still about a half of a mile before you actually see the lake, it was a little before sundown, and our friends were nowhere to be found. Note - This was back in the days of no cell phones.

We were both very exhausted and hungry. We set up our tent, and Don went to sleep. I was determined to see the lake, so I left and hiked the additional distance to reach the goal. Don never did see the lake. When we got up the next morning, we just hiked back to the car and went home. He was so close, and put in so much effort, but he quit just before he reached the top.

Transition – A lot of Christians do the same thing. They get saved, and they start out very enthusiastic and energetic, but they soon become weary in well doing and they quit.

Turn to Matthew 13:1 – 9; 18 – 23

In Paul's final letter – 2 Timothy – he is constantly encouraging us to stick with it, to keep going for the Lord. He observed in that letter that many had forsaken him and had thereby forsaken their faith in God.

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. ... Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." (2 Timothy 1:6, 13-14)

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

In our text today, the Apostle Paul admonishes the saints in Galatia to not become weary to the point where they quit serving God before they reach Heaven.

Background to Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Galatians was the earliest of all the Pauline Epistles. It was written primarily to correct some false doctrine that was beginning to creep into the churches in Judaea and had spread through the churches in Samaria and Syria all the way up to the region of Galatia where Paul and Barnabas had labored in their first missionary journey. The problem was legalism. There were a group of false teachers from Jerusalem visiting churches and telling them that they had to continue following the law to be saved. They were basically teaching a works salvation, which was a complete contradiction of the grace salvation that Paul and Barnabas had brought them.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Paul wrote *Galatians* to straighten out this problem.

Practical Point – As you grow in your Christianity, God will bring about changes in your life. You will become convicted by the Holy Spirit that there are things that you should do, and some things that you shouldn't do. God is working in your life to make you more like Jesus – He is conforming you to the image of Christ. This is good and natural for the growing Christian. However, whatever changes God makes in your life for the better, you and I must never forget that we did not get saved because we changed the way we live our lives. Those changes were, in fact, a byproduct, a result, of our salvation. Before we got saved, we were hell-deserving sinners. We were saved because we realized that we were sinners deserving of judgment, and we turned to the only One who could save us – the Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His blood and died on the cross to save us from the judgment in Hell that we deserved.

This morning, we are talking about not growing weary in well doing but let me pause here and remind us that we need to be careful that we don't grow weary of the doctrine of grace – the unmerited favor that God gave to us when He saved us.

Read Galatians 6:1 – 10

In Galatians 6, God warns us to not get so weary spiritually that we quit serving God altogether. In the text that we just read; I believe that we can see a progression. I used to believe that the principles contained in this final chapter to this letter were just separate thoughts, sort of like many of the principles found in *The Book of Proverbs*, but I believe the first two principles given here in chapter six, if heeded, help us to keep from getting to the third point - the place where we are so sick and tired of the Christian life that we just decide to quit.

I. Your Attitude Toward Others Who Have Fallen (vs. 1 – 5)

This thought ties in with the overall theme of the letter. The legalistic attitude that was invading the churches was causing the members to look down their Pharisaical noses at other believers who were struggling.

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12)

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)

The first step to your own fall will often be seen in a judgmental attitude toward others who have fallen.

God hates pride. Pride is the elevation of self over others. When you become lifted up with pride you are doing the exact same thing that Satan did. You are attempting to put yourself on the throne of God. You will always be a Hell-deserving sinner, saved by the grace of God. You are simply a beggar that found bread. In your flesh there still *dwelleth no good thing*, so stop looking down your nose at people who are struggling spiritually.

Instead, you should be praying for them.

Instead, you should be begging God to keep you from getting to where they are.

Instead, you should be strengthening spiritually so that you can help them get back up.

How's your attitude? Ask you wife (or husband): "Do I have a bad spiritual attitude?"

Do you find yourself always complaining about others and always being negative? You're developing a bad attitude.

Watch your attitude.

II. Your Accountability Toward Leadership (vs. 6 – 8)

The word, "communicate", in v. 6, means to enter into fellowship and become a partner with.

The church's job is to communicate the truth of God to the world around it. We have preachers and teachers, bus workers and soul winners, and various outreach ministers and disciplers. These

all are teachers of the Word of God. The great commission tells us that we are to preach the gospel, and then we are to teach “all things,” meaning the Bible principles that people need to live lives that glorify the Lord.

The members of the church are responsible to support those that teach. It’s kind of like what Aaron and Hur did for Moses as he fought the Amalekites. They held up his hands when he was weary. As long as Moses hands were up, the Israelites were victorious in the battle.

We are responsible to lift up the hands of the teachers.

Illustrate – Sunday school teachers – lift up their hands by encouraging them, helping them do what God has called them to do.

Be in your place.

Attend all the services.

Let him know when you can’t be there, so he doesn’t worry about you.

Go soulwinning.

Bring visitors to the class.

Pray for him.

Write him notes of encouragement.

Look for ways to help him.

When you stop doing these things or find that you have lost your desire to support the leadership as they teach the Word of God, you are moving toward quitting yourself.

III. Your Availability To Serve Others (vs. 9 – 10)

What Causes People to Quit:

1. They get sidetracked – sometimes into sin, but oftentimes it isn’t. It could be a good thing, like a job, or a hobby, or a person.

2. They get bored – they go through the motions for so long without seeing any real difference in the world around them – in fact they see the world getting worse, and they begin to think (secretly at first) that their faith isn’t real.

3. They get persecuted. Persecution for us in America is not the bloody kind. For us it’s just that we don’t fit in to the world around us. They mock us, and after a while, we get tired of it, and we give up trying to fight them.

4. They get sucker punched by the devil. He delivers a blow that just cripples us and we just can't seem to get back on our feet again.

5. They get burned by a friend.

6. Sometimes, they just get tired. Perhaps, they overdid some things, which caused a lack in some other area. Physical weariness will also cause us to become spiritually tired. (Elijah)

It may be something else. God wants you to finish what you started. He wants you to keep climbing until you reach the top. Keep serving until He takes you home to Heaven. Don't get weary in well doing.

Conclusion

Illustration - When I think back to that Appalachian Trail hike, I am glad that I finally made it to the top. I almost didn't. I was weary. I had gotten sidetracked from the main goal, which caused me to lose my way for a long time. I am glad that I finally got back on the right path. My friend Don, he was weary too, but he didn't keep going. He quit before he got there.

Don't quit! - If you find that you are less zealous for the Lord then you were at another time in your life, ask God to reenergize you so that you can keep going.

If you find that you are developing a judgmental attitude, or perhaps just a negative spirit, ask God to forgive you.

If you find that you are not as supportive toward the ministry as you once were. You used to work in a ministry, you used to give your tithes and offerings, you used to enjoy coming to all the services and Sunday School, you even used to go soul winning. If you used to do any of these things, but find that you no longer do, and no longer have a desire to – something is wrong. You need to ask God to help you.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

Don't Quit! - If you are truly saved, and you quit, you won't lose your salvation. God saved you unconditionally, but you may lose some of your rewards.

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." (2 John 1:8)

Don't Quit! - It will all be over soon. The Lord is soon coming back. Souls are at stake. People are watching you.

Don't be weary in well doing. You will reap eternal rewards if you don't faint.