

## What? Why? Depends on Who?

4<sup>th</sup> Sun. after Pent. – 07/03/22 – Mt. Calvary Luth.  
Text: Galatians 6:1-10, 14-18 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 8, **“For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”**

### **Introduction**

✘ The Worship Service is over. The organist is putting away music. The altar guild is cleaning up and attending to the Communionware. The elder of the day is taking care of his assignments. And the ushers begin to straighten things up in the pews.

→ One usher thinks to himself, “I can’t believe how messy some people are. Why should I have to pick up their trash and put their hymnals away.” While the other usher – one with three younger children, looks at his kids and says, “Ok, do your thing”. Which brings about three giggling voices and three bouncing little heads back and forth, one pew at a time on their side of the church.

→ Their goal? To see who can collect the most trash – bulletins and newsletters and whatever else was left behind, and who can straighten up and put all the hymnals away in their assigned pews faster than the other two so that they can present their prizes to their father, the second usher. Why do they do this? For the joy of it; to receive an approving smile from their father. It’s not work. It’s not a burden. This is a golden opportunity to show their love to the one they call “Dad”. The smiling faces and the arms extended upward with hands full of used bulletins tell the story. There’s no secret here as to why they did the thing they did. Because they love their father...and their Lord.

✘ That’s quite a contrast isn’t? Two different sides of the same coin; two different views on the same activity. One sees it as a terrible burden, the others can’t wait to do the work because they see it as a great joy.

→ As Paul writes to the Christians in Galatia, he looks at the things the people are doing and he teaches them by placing before them a very striking contrast as well. He says that he sees one group of people who are fleshly focused and one that is what he calls in verse one, “spiritual”. And the things that they do and say are like polar opposites. What are the things that they do? Why do they do those things? According to the Apostle Paul, it all depends upon who?

✘ So, what are the things that you and I do? Why do you – why do I – why do we do the things that we do? It all depends upon who?

### **I. The Fleshly Ones**

✘ First of all “Who are you? Who am I?” In verse three “if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing...” – that’s the first type of person that we’re going to look at here for a bit. It’s obvious this is a proud person right? But the problem is, according to God, the facts don’t match the pride. This is the definition of being conceited. As Paul says, “he deceives himself”. While he/she looks in the mirror and truly believes there is a good and honorable person in that reflection, verse one says this person is actually “caught in transgression”. God says do not lie, do not hurt your neighbor, do not swear or slander or take or destroy that which is not yours and yet these are the very things this person does – at the same time that he/she boasts about, and presents him/herself as a good, upstanding and honorable example of humanity. These people are living a lie, a dream, a contradiction in the flesh.

→ In Romans 12:3 Paul tells us this is the person who “thinks of himself more highly than he ought to think...”.

✘ If nothing changes, what happens to this fleshly minded group? Verse eight, “For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption...”. And in verse nine, Paul warns against those who “grow weary of doing good”. “Oh Mom, do I have to clean up my dishes? Why do I have to do my homework?” Or that first usher we talked about at the beginning, “Why do I have to clean up after these people?” Who among us has ever been tempted to think or say, “I’m tired of being good. I just want to go out and do what I want, when I want, with whom I want”.

➔ This kind of thinking is the warning sign of one who is “caught in sin”; who is headed for destruction; who is, or already has turned away from the Triune God and as Philippians 3:19 says, “their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things”.

## II. The Spiritual Ones

✘ On the other side of Paul’s contrast in this Epistle Reading are those people that he describes as the ones “who are spiritual”. Now, understand, there are a lot of people today, who believe in the exact opposite things or contradictory gods that all call themselves “spiritual”. This is not what Paul is talking about.

➔ He’s talking only about those here who are filled with THE Spirit – God’s Spirit – the third person in the one Triune God. Only those are “spiritual” who have received God’s gift of the Holy Spirit in His baptismal gift of water and Word, which produces faith in Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls.

✘ In verse one, those “who are spiritual” are called and gifted to help “restore” the ones we were just talking about who are “caught in transgression”. But how? With what kind of approach? With an attitude of arrogance and self-righteousness? Absolutely not! If I go to my neighbor who can’t stop cussing and taking the Lord’s name in vain and say something like this: “You know, if you don’t stop misusing the Lord’s name this minute and start acting and talking more like me because I’m the perfect model for you to follow, than you have no chance of forgiveness and you are going straight to hell!” If I approach the fleshly person this way, then guess what, I am deceiving myself and I too, in my own conceit, have become caught in sin.

➔ Instead we are to interact with this person in love; Paul says in “gentleness” – approaching and conversing with a spirit of humility because we know that we too continue to struggle with sin.

✘ And that is why in verse one, Paul warns us all as Christians – even as it is a must that we gently confront those who are “caught in sin”, that we must also “keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted”.

➔ None of us – not one person in this room is impervious or bullet-proof against the tricky and deceitful devil. Nothing would make him happier than to have you or me try to help our neighbor who struggles with the sin of gambling let’s say, then go up the mountain to the casino with them and end up caught in the same sin.

➔ “Be sober-minded; be watchful.” 1 Peter 5:8 says, “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”. And that someone folks is you! Whatever it is, if it is not pleasing in God’s eyes, then folks we are to stay away from it. It’s that simple. And it’s that hard. James 4:7 gives us important advice, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

✘ When it comes to our interactions with others verse three says, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Jesus Himself summed up the good works of the spiritual person when He said in John 15:12, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have

loved you". And how has Jesus loved you and you and you...? He sacrificed Himself for you! He considered you and your struggles more important than His own.

→ This is the great difference between these two contrasting types of people Paul places before us today. One loves himself first, last and always more than anyone or anything else. The other loves his neighbor, at least as much as he loves himself – ideally more. He sees someone else in need and he is happy to put aside his own comfort or plans for the opportunity to lend a helping hand, or a caring shoulder or a listening ear.

✘ The second part of verse eight says, "but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life". This end result of the spiritual life is perhaps the most noticeable difference of all, isn't it? It truly is the difference between corruption and destruction forever separated from God or everlasting life in paradise with our Lord Jesus and all of His heavenly saints – no pain, no suffering, no tears, no hunger – only peace and joy and contentment and perfection forever and ever amen.

→ But the difference is obvious even while we remain here on earth before Jesus comes, with the attitude that we have toward our activities and works. Verse nine, "Let us not grow weary of doing good...". And in verse ten, "as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith". "Let us do good to everyone...". Is there anyone that is not included there? What about my unlovable sibling or coworker? We are still to love them and treat them with respect and patience and do good for them. But even more are we to help and support and love and care for and encourage and build up our fellow brothers and sisters who are in the household of faith with us. Look, it's hard to be a person of the Spirit in this unspiritual world today. I need you to help keep me in the body of Christ. And you need me for the very same reason. If we can't help each other when we have the same foundation and focus, how are we going help those who do not?

### III. Why? How is this so different?

✘ That brings us to the most important point of Paul's teaching for us this morning. We've heard the what? What is it that we are to be doing as those "who are spiritual"? (v.1). But Why? Why do we do the things that we do?

→ We said it all depends on who? No, not who we are – that's what we just described. You see who we are all depends upon who it is that has changed us; transformed us from one who is fleshly-focused into one who is spiritual!

✘ It can't be the one in the mirror who has done it; who has made that change happen – sorry to break it to you folks. Because all of us, by nature are the ones who are caught in transgressions; who are conceited and who deceive ourselves and who sow to our own flesh so that we sow corruption and destruction and death. That's who we are by nature.

→ BUT that is not who we are any longer is it? Now we are the ones as Paul says in verse 14 who boast in nothing and no one "except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ".

→ Yes, we focus on the cross of Christ because it is upon that cross; in Jesus' ultimate and final act of sacrificial love that the cross has become a place no longer of death, but of victory! In His death and resurrection, sin and death and the power of the devil has been conquered for the world – for you and for you and for you and...

✘ And you see, that is why we now do what we do. Try to remember this: "We do what we do for someone else because Someone else (Jesus) has done what He did for us!

→ Verse 15 says it's not about the things of this flesh or of this world. Things like circumcision or cleaning the church or serving as an usher or even sitting here in this room this morning –

those aren't the "why" behind the things that you do. Instead it is the "who" that Christ has made you to be. You are, Paul says, "a new creation". In your baptism, the old sinful Adam in each one of you was drowned and the new man or woman in Christ has come forth in a new and different life!

→ Your nature has been changed, renewed, redeemed, restored to that of Jesus Himself. It's in your blood now to do good for everyone and to do it with joy and contentment rather than as if it is a great burden.

✘ As a new creation in Christ, with Paul, you and I boast in Christ and His sacrificial love to save us and change us. We are not embarrassed about Jesus or about our part in His Church. We boast in Him! We're proud of our part in His family of faith!

→ And because of that, we gently, lovingly seek to help those around us who do not know or cannot understand what He has done or who He is.

✘ Paul understood the danger and the trouble of walking through life as a Christian. Verse 17 says that His body had the scars from it. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 we're told how Paul endured "countless beatings", "five times receiving...forty lashes less one", "three times...was beaten with rods", was stoned, shipwrecked and much more because of his faith in Jesus.

→ Yet through it all, Paul remained confident and filled with joy at the privilege of serving Jesus in His Church; of living in the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v.18).

✘ This is who we are friends, because of Whose we are! To Him be all the glory in our hearts; in our lives. Amen.