

Sermon Outline

BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS:
A CHALLENGE TO PROVIDENCE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
(GALATIANS 6:2)

I. A Brief Note on Issue-Driven Preaching

- A. The challenges of issue-driven preaching are as follows:
 - 1. The preacher could force passages to address problems they were not meant to address.
 - 2. Too many issue-driven sermons can be demoralizing to a church.
- B. But the church will always need such preaching from time to time because people are sinners.
- C. In our church, the present issue revolves around a seeming reluctance on the part of some to offer themselves to for servant-leadership in an official capacity (in this case, Church Committee).
- D. But we need to be clear: Unwillingness to serve in an official capacity of servant-leadership is not itself the main problem.
—It could be a symptom of a deeper attitude in our congregation.
- E. Not being willing to serve in official leadership is also not necessarily a sinful thing.
—God may have other plans for us.
- F. The problem arises when we say No too quickly, without making the proper considerations.
- G. This sermon is not only for a few. It is for the whole Church because this issue concerns all of us.

II. Galatians 6:2 and Church Committees

III. The Spiritual Ones Must Restore the Fallen Ones (Galatians 6:1)

- A. In Galatians 6:1, Paul unpacks for us what it means to live a Gospel-inspired life.
- B. Those who are “spiritual” must restore those who are caught in patterns of sin.
- C. The way to restore is “in a spirit of gentleness.”
 - 1. A spirit of gentleness stands opposed to a spirit of anger, harshness, nagging, scolding, etc.
 - 2. A spirit of gentleness radiates compassion and humility.
- D. Why this spirit of gentleness when a spirit of harshness might achieve more instant results?
 - 1. Because gentleness reflects humility.
 - 2. People who know that they themselves are sinful and tempted to shun responsibility will not be harsh.

- E. Only those who are filled with the Holy Spirit (spiritual people) can show such gentleness and humility (see Gal 5:22).
- F. This spirit of gentleness and humility is part of a whole way of life—**the way of helpfulness**.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How are the spiritual ones to deal with those who are caught in habits and patterns of sin? (2) Why is a spirit of gentleness required when deal with sinning Christians? (3) Who produces this quality of gentleness in us? (4) Is this spirit of gentleness evident in your life? Is it the way you treat those who fail?

IV. Bear One Another's Burdens (Galatians 6:2a)

- A. 6:2 is a universal principle.
- B. Restoring the sinner is one way of bearing one another's burdens.
- C. Essentially, bearing another's burdens is to help another carry his or her struggles in life; whether physical, mental, emotional, or vocational.

***Questions for reflection:** What does it mean to bear one another's burdens? How far does this rule go?

V. Fulfil the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2b)

- A. The reason we need to bear one another's burdens is to "fulfil the law of Christ."
- B. In one simple sentence, Paul has given us a Christian vision of human community.
 1. The Church is not...
 - a. a bunch of *rugged individuals*, each pursuing his or her own desires without consideration for others.
 - b. a gathering of *clients and customers*, each demanding services and duties without consideration of the limitations of others.
 - c. a *board of examiners or a squad of religious policemen*, each scrutinizing how others live and judging them quickly and harshly.
 2. The Church is a *holy community of interdependent members*, helping one another to struggle against the world and fulfil God's call on their lives.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Why do we need to bear one another's burdens? (2) What kind of community does Paul envision in this passage? What is the Church not to be? What is the Church to be?

VI. Bearing One Another's Burdens at Providence

How does all this apply to our context here at Providence, especially with the issue of people not wanting to step up to leadership?

VII. Galatians 6:2 Is Not the Gospel—Thankfully!

The Gospel is not that we must bear one another's burdens. It is that God has already borne our burdens for us. Jesus bore our lack of love to the cross and died for it.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) "The Gospel [or Good News] is not that we must bear one another's burdens." Why not? (2) What is the Gospel? (3) What are the results of the Gospel? (4) How does the Gospel stir us to step up to serve the Church.

VIII. Stop "Arrowing," Start Sharing!

Providence, bear one another's burdens. For those of you who are able, offer yourself to the service of the Church. Help share the burden of leadership. Let the Church be the one to decide if you are to be used in that capacity or not. For those of you who like nudging people into action, stop nagging and encourage them! Don't make leadership harder by adding unnecessary burdens to your leaders. Strive to be part of the solution to problems. Give grace and strength to your leaders, not merely more feedback and calls for excellence. We must all strive to fulfil the Law of Christ.

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things"
(1 Corinthians 13:4-7 ESV)