

Gracious Restoration – Galatians 5:25-6:5

I. Introduction. A Culture of Grace.

- A. Grace verses legalism. It has been a main theme throughout the Book of Galatians. There is a thin line between grace and legalism (at least initially). Under grace, you pray, read the Bible, worship, etc. Under legalism, you pray, read the Bible, worship, etc. But there is no apparent subtle difference initially.
- B. Under grace, you are in a favored relationship with God Almighty. Under legalism, you follow rules and laws and become religious. The thin line between grace and legalism grows and eventually becomes an uncrossable canyon. Under grace is life. Under legalism is death. The difference between grace and legalism is glaring. The two never meet.
- C. The Book of Galatians deals with this glaring difference. This morning, our subject is *Gracious Restoration*. After all that has happened in the churches in Galatia, many people needed to be restored. Many were encumbered by sin and fell outside the blessings of grace. Paul addresses the process to restore people. The title of the message is *Gracious Restoration*.
- D. A culture of grace can become a reality in the church (Galatians 5:25-6:5). Grace is a gift. It is a gift imparted to believers. Grace is also a gift that believers need to give away to others. People participating in a culture of grace *receive grace and give grace*.
- E. Who needs a *Gracious Restoration*? Everybody. You, I and many around us need to experience God's grace. Within this church and outside this church, we need a *gracious restoration*.
- F. Before we look at the process of restoration in Galatians 5:25-6:5, let's pray.

II. The Holy Spirit's Role in Gracious Restoration (5:25-26).

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. **Galatians 5:25-26**

- A. *Gracious restoration* is a process where there are three participants involved in every restoration. These three are:
 - 1. The Holy Spirit.
 - 2. The person needing *gracious restoration*.
 - 3. The person God calls to come alongside the person needing *gracious restoration*.
- B. The first participant involved in *gracious restoration* is the Holy Spirit. Briefly, let us consider some basic doctrinal truths that will help us understand some of the ministry the Holy Spirit performs during a *gracious restoration*. The Holy Spirit is God. God is All-knowing, Present everywhere, All-powerful, and Eternal.
- C. The Holy Spirit ministers to a person needing a *gracious restoration* in the following ways:
 - 1. He is their *Advocate*:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever **John 14:16**

In different translations of the Bible, we see different words used for *advocate*: Helper, Comforter, Counselor and Paraclete. The Holy Spirit is an intercessor, a consoler, a comforter and a helper. He is an advocate who makes the right assessment because He is close enough to the situation. The Holy Spirit understands the issues a person has. Our Advocate knows what is needed. He creates a path for *gracious restoration* to take place. The Holy Spirit is the Helper the Father sent to us after Jesus' ascension.

2. He is the *Spirit of Truth*:

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **John 16:13**

The Holy Spirit possesses, reveals, teaches, leads into, testifies to and defends the truth. The Holy Spirit is the One who is your teacher of the truth. He leads us into deeper knowledge of the truth. Truth sets people free.

3. *The Holy Spirit reveals*:

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. **1 Corinthians 2:9-12**

The Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God. He also knows the deep things in our hearts. The Holy Spirit graciously ministers to people for their well-being and God's glory. For the person needing restoration, the Spirit's revelation gives insight, cleansing, forgiveness, redemption, healing, etc.

Through these ministries, the Holy Spirit personally performs gracious restoration. First, He ministers by coming alongside the person needing restoration to advocate, help, comfort and counsel. Second, He teaches and guides in the truth which will set them free. Third, the Holy Spirit reveals the deep things of God, and the deep things in a person's heart. The Holy Spirit resides in the believer. He is committed to restore a person struggling in sin.

D. Your life with the Spirit.

Since we live by the Spirit Galatians 5:25a

Living by the Spirit speaks of having an abiding fellowship with the Holy Spirit. It speaks of a close relationship with God. Our physical life, our spiritual life and our total life is a gift from God through the Holy Spirit. We have an ongoing relationship with God by faith.

E. Keep in step with the Spirit.

let us keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:25b

Keeping in step with the Spirit expresses a constant application of God's Word and spiritual direction by the Spirit. *Keeping in step with the Spirit* is a walk of faith. The Spirit gives divine guidance for us to follow. He awakens our hearts. He quickens our spirits. The Christian life is a walk, step-by-step. Our spiritual life grows and matures as we keep in step with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us, we follow Him. The Bible says,

“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” **Galatians 5:18**

The practical application of God’s Word in our lives is not automatic. We open our hearts to receive God’s Word. We apply what God is revealing from His Word to our lives. We follow the Holy Spirit as He leads. We keep in step with the Spirit.

III. The Person Needing Gracious Restoration (vs. 1-2).

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. **Galatians 6:1-2**

- A. The second participant in a gracious restoration is the person needing the restoration. This passage gives a hypothetical situation of a person caught in sin. The individual is trapped in sin and struggles. The sin may have been hidden for a long time. There may be a heavy weight of guilt upon the person’s heart. The person’s true situation has come to light. The burden of sin and guilt becomes more than they can bear.
- B. People who struggle in sin tend to become isolated and less transparent with other people. They are overcome by their sin and its consequences. A *gracious restoration* is needed. The word *restore* (v. 1) is a medical term used in secular Greek for setting a fractured bone. The word also means to mend something that has been broken or torn (Matthew 4:21). Restoration takes what is wrong or broken and mends or sets it to make it right. *Gracious restoration* does not neglect what is wrong. It will not openly expose the situation. It will graciously straighten and set things properly and in order.
- C. The needs of a person seeking restoration can be many and are great. As you sit and listen to your friend explain their situation, it may seem a bit overwhelming. How can I meet such great needs? (You cannot meet them). What can I do? (Pray, Listen, Follow the Holy Spirit’s guidance). What are their needs?
 - Love. Unmerited love.
 - Acceptance. Unconditional acceptance.
 - Forgiveness. Total forgiveness.
 - Fellowship. Your relationship (the one struggling and the one helping) is an ongoing gift from God.
- D. Sin, circumstances and problems tend to weave together and suffocate the person in need of a restoration. He/she does not feel love, acceptance and forgiveness. They are isolated and outside of life-giving fellowship.
- E. Restoring a person gently.
 1. Restoration is generally not a single act. It is a process.
 2. Restoration is a delicate work which requires time and tenderness.
 3. Gentleness is a divinely-originated virtue. It is divine strength given to the one overcome by sin with a gentle touch.
 4. Gentleness gives divine strength as we walk in faith, taking a next step with Jesus.

IV. The Person God Uses in Gracious Restoration (vs. 5:26; 6:3-5).

If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load. **Galatians 6:3-5**

A. The third participant in a gracious restoration is the person God calls to come alongside the person needing restoration. The “spiritual” person or “one who lives by the Spirit” reaches out to give *gracious restoration*.

1. We need to define a “spiritual” person. A “spiritual” person:

- Is available to God and to people in need.
- Applies God’s Word to their life and service.
- Is sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. **Galatians 5:25**

- Is continually filled with the Spirit.
- Desires to grow in their walk with Christ.
- Is alert and watchful to sin and temptation in themselves and others.

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **Galatians 5:16**

- Manifests spiritual fruit in their life.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **Galatians 5:22-23**

- *Receives grace and gives grace.*

2. Above all, a “spiritual” person is not perfect.

3. The process of *gracious restoration* will reveal more than anything your character and spiritual maturity.

B. Your Thinking: Be Humble and Gentle.

“If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.” **Galatians 6:3**

1. Think of God, who He is and what He does. He is Sovereign, All-knowing, Present everywhere, All-powerful, Eternal, etc.
2. Now think of yourself. I am not sovereign, all-knowing, present everywhere, etc.
3. Is God something? Absolutely! Am I something? Not so much.
4. If we think we are something, we are sliding towards legalism and slipping away from grace.
5. The Holy Spirit is here and in charge of the situation. I am here with a person who needs love, acceptance and forgiveness. All I am is a child of God who is available to be a blessing.

C. Your walk: Be Gracious not Legalistic.

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. **Galatians 5:26**

1. Conceit, provocation, envy and jealousy are symptoms of a legalist heart.
2. Legalism is self-centered in its focus. Grace is other-centered in its focus.

3. Legalistic attitudes imprison people.
4. Legalism jeopardizes the power we have through the Holy Spirit to walk in spiritual freedom.
5. Legalistic attitudes develop barriers between people and prevents true fellowship from taking place.
6. A gracious attitude *receives grace and gives grace*.

D. Your Service:

1. The believer is supposed to be dead.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. **Galatians 2:20**

2. Let Christ live through you.
3. In the process of restoration, we are only available to the Spirit for what needs to be done.
4. We desire to see the person struggling to be complete, strengthened and adjusted to walk with Christ in an appropriate, biblical way.
5. The good things that happen only happen because God is working.
6. Do not compare the gracious restoration you are a part of with other restorations around you.
7. Take pride of the restoration you are in and the wonderful things that are happening.
8. We just get the privilege to be a helping part of the process.

E. Carry your own load.

1. Peter being asked by Jesus “do you love Me?”
2. Three times Peter was asked. Three times Peter answered, “Yes Lord.”
3. Peter looks at John. “Lord, what about him.”
4. Jesus essentially says to Peter, “None of your business. Peter, you follow me.”
5. God decides. Then He calls.
6. He is calling you. Carry your own load.
7. Do not look around and say “what about him/her?”
8. Concentrate on what God has given you to do.
9. Say “I am available. Lord, help me. Lord, use me.”

V. Now Is the Time for Gracious Restoration.

A. A story of gracious restoration:

1. My family pastored a small church in rural, Southwest Iowa (6 years.)
2. There came a point during the pastorate when some problems came to light and needed attention.
3. After giving attention to these issues, there were changes which affected my salary. I went 17 weeks without receiving my salary.
4. I continued doing everything I was doing in the church. It was not easy. I tried to not show my frustrations to the members of the church, but I am sure my wife Lori and my children Cindy, Bryan and Allison were not shielded from those frustrations like the congregation was.
5. Where we lived, just having a job was a good job. There were not any jobs available when this happened.
6. Through this situation, one thing saved me: Minister’s prayer meeting, Tuesdays at 10 AM.
7. Attended by four ministers: Ken, Andy, Fred and me.
8. People of grace: they listened; they were concerned; they ministered to me and my family; they encouraged us. They were “spiritual” people that were restorative.
9. I came out of that situation because there were three guys with me.

B. Those caught in sin, who are hurting and struggling.

1. You are caught in sin.
2. You are hurting and struggling.
3. You may be wondering is there any hope.
4. My friend there is hope!
5. I want to encourage you to take a step towards your gracious restoration.
6. God has a person of grace for you.
7. It is time to take a step towards your gracious restoration.
8. Talk to a friend you feel you can trust.
9. If they are concerned, you probably have found your person of grace.
10. Take a step.

C. Those spiritual enough to help those who are caught in sin, hurting and struggling.

1. God calls believers to partner with Him to bring gracious restoration.
2. Will you be a person of grace to another in need?
3. Let God lead you. Be available. Be in partnership with the Holy Spirit.
4. Be alert to the needs around you. Take a step.
5. The process of gracious restoration has a way of showing areas where we who are “spiritual” need gracious restoration as well. You need a person of grace. I have a feeling that person of grace is before you, the one you will be helping in their gracious restoration.
6. Remember *receive grace and give grace*.
7. We all need people of grace in our lives.
8. Let me pray for you.

D. Receive grace. Give grace!

For further help and encouragement, you can call, text or email me at:

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