

One Another

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Galatians 5 | November 26, 2017

Prepared by Rev. Curtis A. Bronzan
curtis@gspc.org | 562/493.2553 x115

I. Introduction to this Study

This week we conclude our series engaging the “one anothers” found throughout the Christian Scriptures by discussing the call to serve one another.

II. Connecting with One Another

When have you been served by someone else? When have you sought to serve?

III. Study the Text

- a. Before engaging the text, think back over this series. Which “one another” command do you think our church most needs to work on? What about you personally? Circle them here:

Greet Live in Harmony Love Carry Teach Confess Forgive Encourage Serve

Why do you think we/you need help in this area?

How could our community/you practice this command?

How would getting better at this help us go deeper into community?

- b. As we saw earlier in our series, the Galatian church experienced significant conflict, brought on by an “agitator.” Read about this in Galatians 5.1-12.

What harm had been done to the Galatian church by this unnamed person or group?

Why does Paul think he’s being misrepresented?

- c. In verse 11, Paul writes, “If I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.” The word translated “offense” is the Greek word *scandalon*, which means “something people trip over.”

Why do you think Paul calls the cross a *scandalon*? How is it “something people trip over”?

Does the cross of Christ still offend people today? Why or why not?

- d. In verse 12, Paul expresses extreme anger. N.T. Wright says, “Church people and theologians can become so affable, so friendly, so nice to everybody that we fail to confront head-on false teachings that can do lasting damage to churches and to individual Christians. Maybe the only way we can get our message through is by

vivid language, multiple imagery, not just keeping people awake but shocking them into seeing what the real issues are.”

What are the “real issues” Paul is tackling?

What do you make of N.T. Wright’s statement? Do you agree that we should “shock people into seeing what the real issues are”?

- e. Read Galatians 5.13-15.

Earlier in the chapter Paul asserts, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Here, however, he declares that our freedom is so we can serve one another.

It has been noted, “In other words, we are first told not to lose our freedom by turning back to slavery; then we’re told to use our freedom by entering into slavery.” Is this a contradiction? Why or why not?

- f. Freedom is a powerful word. Paul asserts in verses 13-14 that freedom *from* something needs to be followed by a freedom *for* something else, for some particular purpose.

What is God’s purpose for our freedom? How do you use your freedom?

- g. Why – and how – can conflict among Christians be so destructive?

Have you ever seen Christians “biting and devouring one another”? What was the result?

- h. In one way, the Galatians’ preoccupation with the Law was self-serving. It led them to boast in their own righteousness and to criticize one another (verse 15).

How would serving one another turn this preoccupation with self on its head?

- i. Read Galatians 5.16-18.

What do you think Paul means by “spirit” and “flesh”?

Where have you seen the conflict between the spirit and the flesh in your own life?

Why do you think Paul adds a sort of caveat in verse 18: “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law”? What does he mean?

- j. The word Paul uses for “flesh” is the same word John uses in John 1.14: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

Is there a difference between Paul’s “flesh” and John’s “flesh”? What is it?

Why is this an important distinction?

- k. Read Galatians 5.19-21.

Paul lists 15 different works of the flesh in four different categories. How would you describe these four categories?

1)

2)

3)

4)

(If you're stumped, look for semicolons that divide the four – if that doesn't help, get the answer at the bottom of the page!)

Why is each category problematic in the life of a Christian (other than "because it's wrong")? To engage it another way, how does each act work against discipleship to Jesus?

- l. If Paul specifically engaged these works of the flesh with the Galatians, there's a decent chance these things were actually going on in their lives (in fact, many in categories 1, 2 and 4 were common practices in the surrounding culture!). Are they still common in our surrounding culture?

How do you account for the fact that such sins also occur among Christians? Why do we keep sinning even after knowing right from wrong?

- m. Read Galatians 5.22-25.

What does "the fruit of the Spirit" have to do with serving one another in love?

IV. Pray

- a. Pray for Good Shepherd – and all the other churches you know of, by name – that they would grow into these "One Anothers" to best reflect the family of God into which Christians have been adopted,
- b. Lift up the areas of your own life where you struggle with one or more of these "one anothers," (and let yourself receive God's grace!)
- c. Ask God to prepare our new elders and deacons for their service, to begin January 1st!