

Short Commentary on the Greek Text of Galatians

Chapter 6

Verse 1 Ἀδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημφθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινὶ παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραύτητος, σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς.

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

προλημφθῆ verb subjunctive aorist passive 3rd person singular from προλαμβάνω *Detect, overtake, surprise be caught (unawares) entrapped*

καταρτίζετε verb imperative present active 2nd person plural from καταρτίζω *put in order, restore; repair. Consider καταρτισμὸν Eph 4:12 "equipping" the saints.*

σκοπῶν verb participle present active nominative masculine singular from σκοπέω *notice, keep one's eyes on, consider.*

Ἀδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημφθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινὶ "to be caught unawares". This word is used in Jn 8:4 concerning a woman "caught" in adultery. This seems to refer to a sin that was committed unwittingly or unknowingly; not a deliberate sin.

παραπτώματι. Caring spiritually for one another within the fellowship. The "transgression" is probably referring to a moral deviation: παράπτωμα meaning "*false step, transgression, sin*". Such a person can be "caught, overtaken, entrapped" in some sin. In chapter 5 the focus of attention is moral and ethical living under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The works of the flesh (5:19-21) are to be avoided, but some may become caught up sin.

ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ. Probably those who are more ready to be led by the Spirit; walk by the Spirit and live by the Spirit (5:16,18,25). Is this what is meant by being "spiritual"?

καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραύτητος,, The use of καταρτίζω points to a repair, mending of something that is broken. It is a medical term in secular Greek for setting a fracture. Also of fishermen repairing their nets (Mark 1:19). The noun καταρτισμός is used in Eph 4:12 for the "equipment of the saints"; or the repair of the saints.

Paul speaks to the whole Church body in respect to this pastoral work, not just the leaders. The pastoral work will be to "restore", or repair the spiritual life of the one who has been overtaken in some transgression. This provides us with an interesting insight into the nature of NT pastoral care. Note how this work must not be done with an air of pride or "I am more spiritual and superior than you" attitude. It must with an attitude of "gentleness".

σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς. The warning here is to take care that the person doing the counselling is not drawn into the "transgression" of the person who has been "caught".

Verse 2 Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

βάρη noun accusative neuter plural common from βάρος *weight, burden*

Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε Paul has the whole Church in mind here being engaged in pastoral work. No one is allowed to say about a brother trapped in a transgression that, "It is none of my business". This maybe the NT answer to "Am I my brother's keeper" (Gen 4:9).

καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. For the Galatians who want to fulfil some Law, this is the way to accomplish such a goal. It is all about "You shall love your neighbour as yourself".

Verse 3 εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τις εἶναι τι μηδὲν ὄν, φρεναπατᾶ ἑαυτόν.

For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

φρεναπατᾶ verb indicative present active 3rd person singular from φρεναπατάω *deceive to cause someone to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth - 'to mislead,*

εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τις εἶναι τι μηδὲν ὄν, φρεναπατᾶ ἑαυτόν. Some suggest that this is a traditional maxim found in the Greco-Roman world and is here used by Paul. This negative statement may be written as a warning lest someone seeks to correct another with a spirit of pride and arrogance. He has already said that any counselling should be done ἐν πνεύματι πραύτητος

Verse 4 τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος, καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἔξει καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον.

But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbour.

τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος If "work" is taken as the fruit of the Spirit ("faith without works is dead") then Paul is urging that each person who seeks to counsel another must take stock of his or her own spiritual life - ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω . This seems to echo the words of Jesus when He spoke of a person wanting to take a "speck" from the eye of another, but who has forgotten that he has a "beam" in his own eye (Matt 7:3-5).

καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἔξει The person who is willing to consider the state of their own spiritual life and finds that he has not been "caught" up in a transgression will have cause to be pleased (boast, be proud, rejoice) if he does not find any sin.

καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον· Such a person will then be prevented from rejoicing in the spiritual fall of another Christian.

Verse 5 ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει.

For each will have to bear his own load.

φορτίον' noun accusative neuter singular common from φορτίον *burden, load*; Matt 11:30

ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει. Whereas it might be more attractive to try to bear the burdens of another Christian who has been caught up in a transgression, it is vitally important that each person looks to their own heart and life. Each of us has to "bear our own loads". The theme seems to stress the teaching of Jesus from Matt 7:3-5).

Verse 6 Κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ κατηχοῦντι ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς.

Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

ὁ κατηχούμενος verb participle present passive nominative masculine singular from κατηχέω *teach, instruct* Ac 18:25; Ro 2:18; 1 Cor 14:19; *to inform by word of mouth*; passive *to be orally informed*: *catechize*.

Κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ κατηχούμενος The one who is catechised (κατηχούμενος). Stott suggests that this might refer to a catechetical school where new converts were being prepared for baptism. The principle here is that the pupil / student should help to support the teacher. The pastor should be supported materially ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς by the congregation (see 1 Cor 9:14). This must be considered as genuine "fellowship" Κοινωνεῖτω, or "partnership" between pastor and congregation.

Verse 7 Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται. ὃ γὰρ ἐὰν σπεῖρη ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει·

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

μυκτηρίζεται. verb indicative present passive 3rd person singular from μυκτηρίζω *treat with contempt, mock*.

θερίσει· verb indicative future active 3rd person singular from θερίζω *reap, harvest*

Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, . The Galatians were in danger of being "deceived" - πλανᾶσθε - in doctrine by the Judaisers, and also being "deceived" by those who encourage a misuse of freedom through the practice of sin.

θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται It would be dangerous to play fast and loose with sin, and so be guilty of showing "contempt for God". He refuses to allow people to mock Him.

ὃ γὰρ ἐὰν σπεῖρη ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει· Paul teaches the seriousness and necessity of sanctification. Eternal life through justification in Christ alone can only be

"reaped" through a person "sowing" to sanctification. The following verse will explain this, ὅτι.....

Verse 8 ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν, ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

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.

φθοράν, noun accusative feminine singular common from φθορα, *ruin, destruction, dissolution, corruption*

ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ This is the person who continues to practice known sin - thinking that he will be saved by grace anyway.

ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν The end result will be that he will reap nothing but "corruption, destruction and ruin". He will lose his hope of eternal salvation.

ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα On the other hand this is the person who walks, lives and is led by the Holy Spirit (5:16-18) seeking holiness.

ζωὴν αἰώνιον Here, the end result will be that this person will gain eternal life.

Note: Paul's does not teach here that salvation is through holiness. He is, however combating antinomianism; the person who sins carelessly on the basis that God will forgive and that salvation is assured whatever he does. We cannot be saved through sanctification and neither can we be saved without it. Sanctification - "sowing to the Spirit" - is the proof of our justification in Christ.

Verse 9 τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιοῦντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν, καιρῷ γὰρ ἰδίῳ θερίσομεν μὴ ἐκλυόμενοι.

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

ἐγκακῶμεν, verb subjunctive present active 1st person plural from ἐγκακέω *become weary, tired, lose heart, despair.*

ἐκλυόμενοι. verb participle present passive nominative masculine plural from ἐκλύω *become weary or slack, give out Lose courage Hb 12:3*

τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιοῦντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν, Because of this teaching on sanctification, we must not give up our pursuit of holiness τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιοῦντες. Working at sanctification can be difficult and at times there is the temptation to become "weary" or a desire to "give up". The Christian must not give up because of the final end result; the final reaping.

καιρῷ γὰρ ἰδίῳ θερίσομεν μὴ ἐκλυόμενοι. What is this that we will "reap"? It is "eternal life" as written in verse 8. Sanctification will not earn us eternal life, but it will give evidence that we have been fully justified, and it is this latter that will bring us eternal life.

Verse 10 Ἄρα οὖν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

μάλιστα *especially, above all, particularly, (very) greatly*

Ἄρα οὖν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν Whilst time permits; or, as we have opportunity.

ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας Practice holy living towards all people; show good works to everyone.

μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως. Whilst universal kindness should characterise the Christian, showing good works in respect of other Christians must be of special (μάλιστα) importance. Note the reference to Christians as οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως - "those of the household of faith". οἰκείους is used also in Eph 2:19 for the οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ. The two must be synonymous.

Verse 11 ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ.

See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

πηλίκους adjective interrogative dative neuter plural no degree from πηλίκος *how large; how great*

ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ. Paul draws this letter to a conclusion (11-18). It is most probable that the AV translation is incorrect - *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand*. Paul's common use of ἔγραψα is never used for a whole Letter. He uses ἐπιστολή (Rom 16:22). Here he is referring to letters of the Greek alphabet. The ESV rendering is to be preferred.

J.B. Phillips translates, " *Note how heavily I have pressed upon the pen in writing this*". He says that this paraphrase is in accordance with centuries-old Eastern usage. It could be rendered, " *Notice how heavily I underline these words to you*" (Stott). Paul wants to emphasise strongly his teaching on this matter.

Verse 12 Ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται.

It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

εὐπροσωπῆσαι verb infinitive aorist active from εὐπροσωπέω *make a good showing* particularly with regard to outward appearances - 'to wish to show off' 'those who force you to be circumcised are those who wish to make a good showing in external matters' (literally '... in the flesh').

ἀναγκάζουσιν verb indicative present active 3rd person plural from ἀναγκάζω *force, compel urge strongly* Mt 14:22.

Ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπήσαι ἐν σαρκί, The Judaisers were concentrating on externals such as circumcision. Why? Because it was something to see, something to "show", something that would be evident. Whereas, true circumcision is of the heart (Rom 2:29). Christianity is a heart religion.

οἷτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμεσθαι The Judaisers were "commanding" circumcision; not suggesting or inviting circumcision. For them it was an absolute necessity for salvation, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." (Acts 12:1).

μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται. The Judaisers were not being persecuted by the Jews because of their insistence on circumcision. No persecution for them due to the Gospel of the cross of Christ. They could hide under circumcision.

Verse 13 οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουσιν ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμεσθαι, ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῆσωνται.

For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουσιν The problem with the Judaisers, who thought they were obeying the Law through circumcision, in reality were, like former Israelites, not keeping the whole Law. They were breaking the moral Law like everyone else.

ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμεσθαι, ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῆσωνται. The reality was, the Judaisers were only interested in being able to have something in which to "boast" if they could persuade the Galatians to be circumcised. They were not really interested in their spiritual welfare.

Verse 14 Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ ἔμοι κόσμος ἐσταύρωται κἀγὼ κόσμῳ.

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which¹ the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

γένοιτο verb optative aorist middle 3rd person singular from γίνομαι To become

ἐσταύρωται verb indicative perfect passive 3rd person singular from σταυρώω *nail to the cross, crucify*—

Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Paul picks up the last word in the previous verse, "boast". If the Judaisers, through commanding circumcision, are protecting themselves from being persecuted because of the cross of Jesus, Paul on the other hand, has an ambition to "boast" in the cross of Jesus. He will not run from the dangers associated with preaching the cross; on the contrary, he is proud of the cross.

The cross of Jesus was most central to Paul. To the Corinthians he wrote, *I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified* (1 Cor 2:2). To the Romans he wrote, *"I am not ashamed of the Gospel...."* (Rom 1:16).

δι' οὗ ἔμοι κόσμος ἑσταύρωται ἀγὼ κόσμῳ. Paul's double statement - the world to me and I to the world - is perhaps the same as the words he wrote to the Philippians when he said, *"whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ"* (Phil 3:7-8). The cross of Christ was all that Paul needed; he could lose the world because he had Christ and Him crucified.

Verse 15 οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.

For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία It is wrong for the Judaisers to boast because they are circumcised, and it is equally wrong for someone to boast that they have not been circumcised. This is because the fact of being circumcised or even not circumcised does not carry any weight with God in terms of merit or worth.

ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις. What carries weight with God is this "new creation", this new birth. Circumcision is an outward external act, and not being circumcised is also an outward external act (the absence of circumcision) - both can be regarded as works of the flesh. One has the mark and the other does not; both are works that people can rely upon.

This "new creation" is an inward, spiritual act of God on the heart. It is not external; it is not works; it is not obedience of the Law. This and this alone is what God requires.

Verse 16 καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν, εἰρήνη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλεος καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ.

And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

κανόνι noun dative masculine singular common from κανών *rule, standard* Phil 3:16; *sphere of action, province, limits* 2 Cor 10:13, 15f.

στοιχήσουσιν, verb indicative future active 3rd person plural from στοιχέω *hold to, agree with, follow* Gal 5:25 Phil 3:16.

καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν, Paul is not suggesting, by the use of κανόνι that a new law has been given. He is applying this "rule" to his doctrine of justification through faith in Christ alone without circumcision.

εἰρήνη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλεος . Paul is drawing his letter to a close. Just as he began his letter with a blessing, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" so he ends with a similar prayer for the Galatians. Notice how "peace" is repeated, but "grace" comes "mercy" in vs 16.

καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ. This word Ἰσραὴλ is probably used because of the Judaizers who want to point the Galatians back to the Old Testament. Paul wants it known that there is only one Church in both Old and New Testament ages; only one "Israel of God" in both periods of history. Indeed, he has already said that those who are of faith are the "sons of Abraham" (Gal 3:7).

Verse 17 Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω· ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω.

From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

κόπους noun accusative masculine plural common from κόπος *trouble, difficulty* Mk 14:6;

παρεχέτω verb imperative present active 3rd person singular from παρέχω *grant, show* *show oneself to be something*

στίγματα noun accusative neuter plural common from στίγμα *mark, brand*

Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω Paul urge to be left alone by those troublesome Judaizers. They had troubled the Galatian Churches and also the Philippian Church.

ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω. In the Greek speaking world a στίγμα was the mark of a pointed instrument, a tattoo-mark, or a brand. The latter also refers to the branding of a slave. Paul's use of this term might indicate a kind of spiritual branding by which he was enslaved to Christ. Due to being Christ's slave Paul had undergone many forms of persecution which included beatings and lashes (2 Cor 11:23-25). Could the marks left by these beatings be Paul's parallel to circumcision, by which he points to these scars in his flesh - the στίγμα - as the only physical marks in the flesh that are worth having?

Verse 18 Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί· ἀμήν.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Whereas "grace" was omitted in verse 18 it is included within this final benediction. On a level with Ephesians, the Galatian letter can also be called a letter of "grace". Paul mentions "grace" seven times: 1:3, 6, 15, 2:9, 21, 5:4, 6:18. This significantly points to Paul's argument that salvation is by the grace of God as also is the continued Christian life.

μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί· Why does Paul say μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν ? Christianity is of the heart; true circumcision is of the heart (Rom 2:29); the "new creation" is in the heart. All this is important for Paul as he labours to argue against the Judaizers' insistence of external religion.

ἀμήν. transliterated from the Hebrew *amen*; usually translated into Greek by γένοιτο (*let it be so, truly*); (1) liturgically, used as a particle of strong affirmation and assent at the

end of a doxology *this is indeed true* (RO 11.36) or a prayer of thanksgiving *that is the way it should be* (1C 14.16); (2) used with λέγω to emphasize that what is being said is a solemn declaration of what is true (JN 1.51); (3) figuratively and substantively ὁ Ἄ the *Amen*, used by Christ of himself as the one speaking what is true (RV 3.14) ἀμήν.

Richard Lee. February 2014