

“The Church is a Family”
Galatians 6:1-10
December 12, 2013

Intro: This morning I want to talk to you about the concept of church as a family...

What makes a family...? Love... Intimate Knowledge... For one another's common good. .. TOGETHERNESS. When someone in my family is rejoicing, I'm rejoicing... going through it, I'm going through it. We love the metaphor in Scripture for the church as a family. We say, we are a family on a mission.

Do life together. Walk together. Journey together...

If Redemption Hill (or any church for that matter), lives out the implications of the church as family, here's the result: We will . . .

The Point: Develop authentic relationships where mutual care exists.

Read 6:1-10

- As you can see, this is a radically *others-centered text*. It cuts against our natural inclination to focus on ourselves, even when it comes to our participation in the life a church. To our shame, we are often driven by questions such as these:
 - What's in this for me? What can they offer me? How can I be blessed by attending this church? I don't really care for this, or I don't really care for that. The music, the preaching, the crowd, the approach is not really *my* style.
 - Well, how about another set of questions: What can I give to this church? How can I be a blessing? Could I use my time, talents, and treasure to further not my agenda, but God's agenda through this church?
- So how does this text encourage us to give ourselves away for the sake of others? #1

I. Demonstrate mutual care through accountability and burden-bearing (6:1-5).

- “Brothers, (the Greek means “siblings in a family,” so we understand he is talking to brothers and sisters in Christ), Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.”
- When Paul says, “if anyone is caught in any transgression,” the word “caught” seems to imply unintentional wrongdoing. So many times, we are blinded to our own error. We quickly and naturally justify our actions and proceed, not realizing we have crossed the line and stepped out of God's will for our lives, which is what it means to “transgress.”
- Now, working from the lesser to the greater . . . If we should point out unintentional sin in the lives of one another, we should obviously address intentional sins in one another's lives...
- When we see a brother or sister struggling with sin in their life, *here our options*: ignore it, dismiss it, justify it, broadcast it, OR help eradicate it. Help them by lovingly talking to them about it!
- We do so because we want to assist our friends along their spiritual journey.
- This does not mean we walk around like little Sin Police Officers.
- The idea is one of two or three people or a group of people, committed to one another, saying, “I love you enough to let you know when you are beginning to deviate from God's best for your life.” To put it in stronger terms, “hey, the road you just turned on could be filled with pain and destruction and I love you enough to call you back to the path that God wants you to travel down, one that will glorify him and bring much joy to your life!”

Let's examine this closely... **Bringing others back to Christ**

- **Who** should do this work? **Those walking by the Spirit**

- “You who are spiritual...” Indwelt by the Spirit and walking in the Spirit (context)
- Those who are spiritual will not have a sense of superiority.
- **What is the goal** of this work? **Restoration** “should restore...”
 - The goal is always repentance that leads to restoration. The goal is to bring the person back to their original condition before they fell into that particular sin.
 - Do you see how this really builds on last week’s sermon? The goal is that we are pushing one another to grow in godliness, to bear the fruit of the Spirit and walk in the freedom Christ died to give us. The goal is spiritual restoration and flourishing
- **How** do we go about this work of restoration? “in a spirit of **gentleness**” and with **humility**
 - Those who are spiritual see their own sin, have removed the log out of their eye, and with a heart of love and sincere concern they take the truths of the gospel and teach us, counsel us, rebuke us, and encourage us with God’s wisdom.
 - All you need to counsel someone is the Spirit of God and the Word of God. That’s it!
- “Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”
 - Whenever we go to help someone with their sin, we go as those who are capable of the same sin, no matter how great it may be.

Trans: Then he says...

Bear one Another’s Burdens! Fulfill the law of Christ

- We should consistently be helping shoulder the load of our neighbor’s burdens. I mean, is anyone carrying burdens today?
- Some burdens are pretty light. It’s still nice to have a little help. Other burdens are heavy. Still others feel like they are almost going to crush us. Paul is speaking more about heavier burdens here. We all, from time to time, carry serious burdens. But here’s the beautiful truth: we were never made to carry them on our own. Consider this. There are probably people... around you, in your CG or in this church with financial needs, job challenges, family issues, difficult decisions to make, sickness, and other special circumstances requiring extra grace.
- Burdens are all around us, and as we’ve already discussed, the primary and nastiest burden we carry is the burden of our sin.
- Do you regularly bear the burdens of those around you, specifically those in this church, in your CG?
- How well do you know the people around you? We’re striving for deep, [family-like relationships, because we are a family.] God is our Father, and we are brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - Do they know each other’s joys & sorrows? Do they rejoice when others rejoice and mourn when others mourn?
 - Do you communicate joys & sorrows to others? Sometimes we get upset that no one cares about what we’re going through, but in reality, no one knows what you’re going through because you haven’t shared it with anyone!
- Are we a church that shares our sin struggles with one another? Heart issues...
- When we start doing this, verse two tells us that we will “fulfill the law of Christ.”

The Law of Christ

- Remember, Paul just told us in 5:14: “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14) Simply echoing the words of Christ to love one another like he has loved us! (John 13:34)
- **1 Peter 1:22** says, “**Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart**”
- This will flow from your relationship with Christ. We see this particularly beginning in Verse 3: “For... when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”
- Sadly, we can lift ourselves above our brothers and sisters, concluding that our time and energy is too important to help someone else. But verse 3 tells us, there is nothing special about us. Apart from God’s grace, we have nothing to boast about, and if we think we do, we are self-deceived.

- That's what we are to avoid. What should we do? Verses 4-5 tell us to be responsible for our own actions. Look at what he says **(4-5)**:
- Paul is not saying we should boast in ourselves. In fact, in the next few verses he declares in the clearest terms: "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."
- He is saying we should "give evidence of praiseworthy qualities" in our lives when we stand in the judgment. I believe he is warning against comparing ourselves against others. So he says, "bear your own load." In other words, "Carry your own backpack."
- The point is: we have responsibility for one another, and we have responsibility for ourselves before God for which we will one day give an account.

App to Community Groups

- So let me ask you: If you are in a CG, do you have a concern for each other's spiritual condition? We want to promote a culture at RHC where people live with the attitude and know, "Man, I want to see you thrive. I want to see you grow. I want to see you move forward in the faith."
- CGs provide a great context for this to take place. If you are not yet in a CG, I want to challenge you to visit at least 3 times at the beginning of 2014. Make it one of your goals. Get in a small group. 99% people move forward spiritually not backward.
- As we see one another's lives and the way that we live out our faith respectively before God, we are going to be encouraged, challenged, corrected, rebuked, and taught by each other's lives.
- For example, Angel may see that Haley consistently bears the fruit of kindness and compassion. At the same time, ___ may see that ___ is really demonstrating the Christlike character of boldness and speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).
- Now, I know all of this talk about going below the surface and even helping one another see and turn from our sin makes many of us quite uncomfortable.

Here are a **Three Encouragements**:

- **1) Remember that the gospel levels the playing field.** (We are all made for one purpose, all have sin in our lives, all *need the same grace of God* to make us clean and forgiven in the sight of God) If you think you have it all together, CGs are not for you...This church is not for you, but don't leave yet 😊
- **2) Practice transparency** by being available, approachable, and vulnerable (self-paced vulnerability). If you are willing to share your burdens, others will be more likely to share theirs. Simple as that.
- **3) Focus on the goal.** *Christlike fruit.* We should all be after the same thing. Life in the Spirit! Our motive is to glorify God by putting off the old man and putting on the new.

Trans: We need to practice accountable relationships that push us toward sowing to the Spirit and walking in godliness. #2

II. Demonstrate mutual care through doing good to one another (6:6-10).

- You know from experience: whenever you give to help someone else, there is always a blessing returned to you. That's why Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give, than receive."
- Paul tells us some specific ways to do this...
- Verse 6... Here's one way you can do good in church life. Take care of leaders in the church. Make sure those who care for you and teach you the gospel are provided for. "Give me neither poverty nor riches..." We want our staff paid where they can pay their bills and be free to focus on ministry. Our staff works hard and, if I have anything to do with it, always have the heart to go above and beyond the call of duty, and the reason that is the case is because that was the case with Jesus.
- So very practically speaking, this is part of why we take up a weekly offering.... 2014 Budget...
- Paul goes on to highlight how it is important to take care of one another in vv. 9-10 by saying, "And let us not..." Let us do good...

- If you listen carefully, and are sensitive to the needs of those around you, you will not lack opportunity to do good to those around you.
- We should be ready to help everyone, but especially those in our family! “Household of God.” He started by talking about the church as a family. He ends by talking about the church as a family.
- In the context of these verses, I believe this especially refers to material needs. (Which does not always mean monetary gifts.) But it goes way beyond that...

Trans: Now, before we conclude: let’s ask the question why this is so important?

- If we knew how important each day, each decision we make was to God, we would welcome serious accountability in our life. Check **vv.7-8**
- Is that straightforward enough? God is not mocked. God will have the final word and he will reward us for how we live our lives.
- If we sow actions, thoughts, deeds that are according to our flesh, the natural, sinful man apart from grace, we will reap corruption.
- BUT if we sow actions, thoughts, deeds that are according to the Spirit, we will reap eternal life. Sowing to the Spirit is really synonymous with “walking by the Spirit.”
- Do you get that? I’m not a gardener, but I know if you plant tomato seeds in your back yard, you should not expect jalapeño peppers to pop up, right? If our actions are not rooted in the Spirit, we can expect to reap corruption rather than life.
- It’s little wonder the next verse says, “And let us not grow weary of doing good...” Persevere... Keep walking by the Spirit (“Against such things there is no law”); keep sowing to the Spirit...

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

- Don’t miss that... If you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly. But sow joyfully & know that you can sow with confidence because God’s grace will abound to you as you invest in his kingdom.
- If Christmas teaches us anything, surely it teaches us about the generosity of God.

Conclusion: (Two key questions):

- How would you assess the depth of mutual care and relational oneness happening in your Community Group?
 - Are you enjoying relational depth? Accountable relationships? Bearing burdens? Serving one another by doing good?
- How would you assess the depth of mutual care and relational oneness happening in your life individually?
 - Do you let others into your life? Do you have strong, growing relationships with other Christians, or to be more specific for our context, in this church?
 - Do you live out your faith like a member of a family committed to mutual care and accountability?
 - Do you bear the burdens of others?
 - Do you look for opportunities to do good to others?

What is it going to take to see this happen at RHC? It’s going to take time (tweaking your weekly calendar). It’s going to take effort to get to know people. It’s going to need to be built on love and true concern and desire to see the other person flourish. It’s going to take a willingness to do whatever it takes to see the other person grow. ***Redemption Hill Church is a family committed to growing together by walking together.*** Let’s pray.