**Reflections - 6-12 July 2025 – Growing community**

**Bible study on Galatians 6:(1-6),7-16**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Lord, as we gather in your name today,
help us to focus on those who need us.
Help us to share not only our own burdens,
but those of others too.
We know we are stronger together.
Nurture and grow our community
so that we can stand tall and strong.
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

**Galatians 6: 1-17**

###  Doing Good to All

**6**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. **2**Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. **3**If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. **4**Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, **5**for each one should carry their own load. **6**Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

**7**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. **8**Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. **9**Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. **10**Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Not Circumcision but the New Creation

**11**See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

**12**Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. **13**Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. **14**May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%206&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29203a)] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. **15**Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. **16**Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%206&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29205b)] the Israel of God.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

Paul draws the threads of his argument in Galatians together by reminding his hearers that they are to look out for one another, bearing each other’s burdens while not shirking their individual responsibility to live the life of freedom and love to which we are called. The contrast with the early part of chapter 5 could not be more stark: there, the community was tearing itself apart through personal rivalries; here, we are called to care for and nurture one another so that we all grow in the love of Christ.

But there is a warning here – that we might become cocky if we compare ourselves to those who are not progressing in the Christian life as well as we are. We end up looking down on those we think are not as spiritual as we are. Paul calls on us to avoid this temptation and think realistically about ourselves, always measuring our progress in the faith against the benchmark of Jesus.

From verse 7, Paul broadens his argument, taking a metaphor from agriculture to ram home the central argument of the letter. If you sow division and point-scoring
in the church, you will reap a harvest of destruction and pain. This is what Paul’s rivals in Galatia were doing and he is desperate to rescue his young converts from that. Positive sowing into one another’s lives involves not becoming weary in doing good; rather, we go out of our way to meet the needs of all, especially those in our community.

From verse 11, Paul broadens the argument still further, returning it to its apocalyptic framework: the gospel is about the dawn of the new creation in Christ. That is all that matters. We have been delivered from the present evil age (1:4) through the cross of Christ, which by faith we share (6:14), so that we can be filled with the Spirit and live in newness of life.

Paul’s appeal is that we do not get distracted by the trivia of church life, contentious disputes and rivalries, but are able to focus on what matters: loving one another as Christ loved us so that we might fulfil the Law and point to the new creation in him. And he makes this appeal by seizing the pen from his secretary and writing it in his own poor hand (v.11).

 **Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

Burdens come in all shapes and sizes. Some are obvious – perhaps you’ve seen someone struggling up the steps at a station with a heavy suitcase or trying to manoeuvre a large piece of furniture. Other burdens, however, aren’t as obvious. Sometimes, we can feel sad, and our feelings ‘weigh heavy’ on us. But that may not be obvious to the people around us. Just like when we carry heavy objects, we can ask for help to enable us to carry our heavy feelings.

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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| Community house builders |  |

**Questions**

* What ‘heavy loads’ are you carrying right now?
* Where can you find help in your community?
* Whose burdens could you help to carry?

 **Prayer**

God of grace and growth,
we praise you for making us all equal, but different,
and, as we celebrate our uniqueness, so we celebrate your creativity – all the shapes and colours and seasons of creation, all the different traditions and rituals and music of each community.
May diversity bring us closer and unity make us strong, as we serve the world your Son came to live in and to die for.
We give thanks and pray in his name.
**Amen.**