

February 2, 2020

"Christ has set us free..."

"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...the only thing that matters is faith expressing itself in love...I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature....brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each others burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ..."

Galatians 5:1-6:2

"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."

Ephesians 1:22-23

"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of the faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members and those members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."

Romans 12:3-5

One of the hardest concepts for the believer to master, I think, is this idea that we are all part of a single, functional organism; that we literally all belong to each other. Because we have identified 'church' as those things which we do in and around the building for so long it is really hard for us to transform our thinking to match the function of a constant, interdependent organism.

But from the beginning of the church, as it is described in Acts, chapter 2, was composed of believers who met together every day, multiple times a day, and actively cared for each other so that individual needs were constantly being met. We, on the other hand, tend to live separate lives, sharing little, if anything, about our struggles, unless we are forced to by extreme crisis.

We, as believers, do not talk about our daily burdens, we do not confess our sins to one another, and we do not talk about those pressing needs that we bear every day unless and until we are in trouble. And then, maybe, we will reach out for help.

In contrast to this individualism and isolationism, the New Testament writers constantly draw us back to this idea that we are all part of one body and that as such we literally belong to one another. In our context for today, Paul will tell those who are truly putting the sinful nature to death and, in turn, being transformed by the Holy Spirit to **"Carry each others burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ."**

Understand that the Apostle is not suggesting a course of action to those of us who follow Christ. He is commanding those of us who follow Christ to **"Carry each others burdens..."** This is a two part commandment. As a believer I must be ready to help carry the burdens that my brothers and sisters shoulder. And, by inference, as a believer I must be willing to openly and honestly share my burdens with my brothers and sisters.

So ask yourselves, do I allow, will I allow, my brothers and sisters to help carry my burdens? If not, why not? The truth is most of us are really horrible at this second part. I don't doubt that each and everyone of us is more than willing to help those of our number who are struggling in any way. I know you all well enough to know that you are all more than ready to serve.

But I also know you well enough to know that most of you, maybe all of you, are not good about asking for nor accepting help. I know because I am not good at this either. We are much more prone to keep our struggles a secret, even from each other, or maybe especially from each other, until the bury us.

The church is a body, working together to take care of itself in every way. When we fail to share our burdens with one another we make it impossible for the body to function as it should which leaves both the body of Christ and those of us who are believers alone on the battlefields of life, and alone is always a bad place to be.

Never look down
on somebody
Unless
you're helping
them up

Bear one another's burdens, and so
fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:2



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