

May 28, 2017

Saved by Grace

Transformed by Spirit

"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 other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each should carry his own load. Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor."

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Galatians 6:1-10

The Holy Spirit of God is at work in us, if we have surrendered our lives to him, to transform us into the image of the Son of God. As those who are being transformed our actions and attitudes should begin to reflect that inward transformation. How can we tell if this is happening?

One place the difference will begin to show is in our attitude toward those who are caught up in sin. It is easy for those of us who wear the name of Jesus to see ourselves as much, much better than we really are, and because of this to judge and condemn anyone who doesn't live up to our self-righteous standards. Those who are being transformed will begin to reflect the attitude of Jesus in dealing with those who are caught up in sin. Our Master showed amazing compassion for sinners of all types and constantly tried to restore them, and so should we.

The Apostle would teach us that the pathway to this kind of transformation is in the honest testing of our own actions and attitudes. All of us are guilty of judging our own righteousness by comparing ourselves to someone else. It is always easy to find someone who appears to be a worse sinner than we are, then we can justify our own failures by claiming, "Well, at least I'm not as bad as..." The Apostle would teach us to test our own actions, without comparing ourselves to someone else, and to judge our own behaviors against the standard set by our Lord.

In the same way we should remember that we cannot fool God, even though we may fool those around us. We can look and talk the part of a truly transformed being when we are with other believers, and be completely filled with sin when we are alone. But God cannot be fooled. He knows the real us; what we are really like and he will hold us accountable to that.

If I am secretly feeding my sinful nature, even if I look and act like the greatest believer, then God will hold me accountable for my choices. And, if I am trying hard to let his Spirit live in me, then he also knows that and will reward that. God knows.

So, this transformation through the power of the Spirit is a life-long process. He will work in me to break down that which feeds my sinful self, and he will work in me to replace those selfish attitudes and actions with his fruit. As he transforms me I will become more and more the suffering servant that my Master was. But being a servant is tiring and all of us will want to call it

quits from time to time. Living a Spirit lead life is very hard and often nearly impossible. But Paul would encourage us, *"Let us not become weary in doing good...as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people..."*

