

Physics 2022

Galatians 6:7-10

Dr. Matt Cassidy – April 25, 2022

Well, good morning, Grace Covenant! Have a seat. I want to start by thanking everyone for being involved in our Easter celebration, Resurrection Sunday last week. Was that just awesome? I mean, we almost filled the house, so yeah ... And so many of you guys came early, so much so that we weren't ready for you guys showing up on time ... I mean, early ... And it was a great time. And some of you might have misread that I was leaving on sabbatical right after Easter. No, I'm here. Hey, I'm not leaving. I'm leaving soon after this, though.

I want to give one more lesson, and this is one of my favorite top five things to teach on. I live by this set of Scriptures and I feel like it is life-altering for every one of the seven seasons of life.

So, you can turn to Galatians 6. I'll meet you there. And I'll tell you how it all got started and why it means so much to me.

It all started in the great blizzard of 1972 in San Antonio. We had such a snowfall that the city was paralyzed. And the mayor was forced to shut the city down. No one could be on the roads. We had two inches of snow on the ground and four-inch drifts. There were places in my neighborhood where you couldn't see the curb. *[Laughter from the audience.]*

And what I loved about it was that there was no school. And we could just do whatever we wanted for that day. I mean, still there were lessons to be learned that day after all. Once we got the word, one of the guys blew the conch and then *The Lord of the Flies* met at the elementary school. I was in junior high, so that is *The Lord of the Flies*—perfect. It was eerie because it was like we owned the town. We were walking down the center of all the roads, about twelve or fifteen of us, walking down the center of all the streets like the wild west. *You know what? This is our town.*

And we had about twelve hours of, not a snowball fight, but more like slush ball fights. It was one of those snows. Anyway, it was a great day. It could have stayed that way, but the sanctity of the moment was violated by a car. A car is on the street, driven by no less than some high school kid—what was his name?—Dan Cook, Jr. I remember that, okay? It was a 1968 Chevy Nova, hopped up V8 engine, class pack exhaust so that it would be loud. And he's kind of

at the top of this hill and he looks at us and revs his engine—on my street—where we’re walking. And then he flashes his lights at us, and we’re thinking, *Well, bring it, high schooler. Let’s go.*

And as he charges down—this matador is coming, charging like a bull at us—we all took our positions behind trees and bushes and loaded up. And when he passed by, he was pelted by twelve to fifteen of these slush balls. And that sound—oh, I still remember it like it was yesterday. It was a lot louder than I thought it would have been. And when he got to the end of the street, that parking brake spun around a 180. He’s looking right at us through a shattered windshield. Yeah, I know.

We all scattered and ran. One guy got caught and wouldn’t do the cyanide pill like we all promised. He turned us all in. And I’ve got to go talk to my dad and tell him what happened. And my dad—you need to know that his undergraduate degree was in engineering, and so he thought. He wasn’t thinking too much, because he was asking a thirteen-year-old boy “Why?” And can I tell some of you parents, never ever ask a thirteen-year-old boy “Why?” The answer is that they don’t know.

So, I said, “I don’t know. It seemed fun at the time.” And this is where it all started. I said, “I didn’t think it could break a windshield. I mean, it’s just a snowball.”

And he said, “Matt, this is physics! It’s just the fundamentals of physics! If a half-pound slush ball is hitting a car going thirty-five miles an hour, it’s like the slush ball is going thirty-five miles an hour. It’s a weapon! Of course, it’s going to shatter the windshield! It’s physics. When do you take physics?”

I said, “I don’t know. I don’t know.”

Lesson learned ... kind of. Because three years later one of my brother’s better friends—we had a really unique relationship, because I would make fun of him and then he would beat me up. And so, he’s standing in my front yard talking to my brother, and now it’s time to get even. So, I blew the conch again and got some friends together, and one of them had a driver’s license. And we filled this balloon up with water, about the size of a cantaloupe, or more the size of a bowling ball, which will be useful in this illustration.

We got in the car, drove around the block a couple of times heckling him every time we drove by. And then the last time we’re coming off the hill on Indigo Drive and we’re catching air. And when we land, we honked the horn. And I’m leaning out the window and looking at

him, and I call his name, and I just let that water balloon go. It was awesome. It slid right down his hood—SPLASH! We all turn around as we're still going down the street, looking backwards and seeing water and glass and chrome and metallic paint. And we got to the bottom of the hill. The car stopped, he kicked me out. I walked home. By the time I got home my dad's in the front yard.

But by then, my father Jerome and I were able to communicate telepathically. And so, the conversation was much shorter than usual. And I just said, "Physics, Dad, right?"

He said, "Yeah, yeah, physics! Forty-five miles an hour? When do you take physics?"

"I think I'm going to take it next year."

Well, okay. Here's the lesson of those lessons. One is that ignorance and good intentions is no match for the laws of nature. Physics doesn't care. I mean, I didn't know any better, and both times things were done in good humor. They were for the fun of it.

But guess what? Both times a windshield was shattered. That was expensive.

Paul References the Laws of Nature

If you'll turn to Galatians 6, I'm going to show you where Paul is kind of going to use physics. He's going to use natural laws to prove and to show us and inform us of spiritual laws. And here's why—because we're spiritually learning-impaired, and naturally so. Like, how do we know what's going on in the spirit world and what the laws of the spirit world are, because they're invisible. And so, what Paul is saying is that, *No, you can see that the natural laws of the physical world that we can see and touch and taste and smell actually translate over to the spiritual world.* And Paul would say—and so did St. Augustine and G. K. Chesterton and C. S. Lewis, and some other men—*No, it precedes that. When God created all things, He was creating a lot of nature with laws built into it, because we would be spiritually learning-impaired, so that we could know how the spiritual laws work.*

In other words, *I'm going to write a set of natural laws. I'm going to try to take the mystery out of the spiritual realm.* If it works in the physical realm, maybe that's a clue to the spiritual realm.

Even the seasons of the year, you could say ... let's pick on two. The winter season is when you look around your yard or the city and it looks like death. Everywhere you look you think, *I've got to cut that tree down. There's no sign of life.* Your garden, your lawn,

everything—dead. Wait for it ... and then spring comes, the most vivid and brilliant of the seasons, and it gives us hope. I mean, we come out of the winter and say, *We can live again!* It's as though we planted a little seed in the ground in the winter time, and it just lay there, and we gave up all kinds of expectations. And then suddenly the seedling cracks through a stone and comes out with brilliant life.

And Jesus says, *Yeah, that's my story! You're going to plant me into the ground and I'm going to break a stone open and you're going to see a resurrection.* All of these winters that were followed by springs were to set this thing up for you. So, it won't be the first resurrection you'll see and it won't be the last. Your body's going to get planted in the ground and it's going to look very dead. Wait for it ... and then there will be another resurrection for you.

The point is that the physical world helps us understand the spiritual world. So, in Galatians Paul is going to help us understand (when he gets to the application section of this book) how we should then live.

Now in the context of this section it's important to understand that Galatians, this letter to this church, is, I would say, the most efficient and clearest expression and definition of the Gospel. And in this definition with its consequences, Paul is going to say, *This is the Gospel. This is the one and only Gospel. And if you deviate from this you're cursed.* I mean, angels would be cursed. It is in Christ alone, in faith alone, in the gift alone. It is only by grace, and grace means "gift." What was the gift? Jesus Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb. And it is faith in that death and resurrection and believing that to be what cures you of the curse that you have.

And listen, it's very important that you understand absolutely all of this, because it means that Jesus paid all of it. It's finished. You can't pay Him back and you can't try to earn the gift later. If you earn it, then it's not a gift.

So, when people come into it with a full understanding of the depth of the Gospel, there's usually two radically different responses, and that's what Paul is talking about. There are radically different responses to this. One has been going on for many centuries where people say, *What? Complete absolution of guilt? In honor of Jesus Christ himself? And the power of the resurrection in my life? I just want to live graciously. I want to live overflowing with gratitude. Gratefulness will rule my life. I will do anything and everything the Lord God calls me to do. He bought me out of hell.*

And some guy who's been mean for years to his ex-wife comes to understanding of this forgiveness.

How about you start being nice to your ex-wife?

Well, yeah, I'm going to pay her early. I'm going to pay extra child support. Why wouldn't I? It's what I got from God.

And so, that type of person not only lives graciously, but they give grace out to other people. They can't contain it. It's overflowing in their life.

So that's one response.

There's this other response, though. And the other response is, *Okay, so all my bills are paid? Then how about I just run up the bill then? How about I just continue to sin? How about I take advantage of God and do whatever I want?*

That sounds like entitlement, not appreciation, right? Because it is. And it sounds crazy. It is. It's ungrateful. And Paul is saying, *Okay, those are the two responses. Let's talk about how to respond to those.* And that's what happens in chapter 6, verses 7 through 10. And what's wonderful about Paul's teaching here is he's going to answer both of the problems of these two different lifestyle applications to the true Gospel, and he's going to use nature. He's going to use laws of nature to make clear the spiritual laws that are taking place all around us.

To the people who take advantage of God, he will say, *Hey, man, you might not have any consequences for those choices ... not yet.* And the people that live righteously but sacrificially are saying, *I'm not seeing much return on this investment either.* And Paul's going to say, *Not yet.* And the whole time he's going to use nature to do that.

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man plants, this he will also harvest.

Watch how this rolls out. Here's the general principle. It's the first sentence involved in our time together. Verse 7: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man plants, this he will also harvest."

There are some key words here: “Do not be deceived”---“Deceived” is sometimes translated as “foolish” or “naïve.” I love the translations where it just says, “Don’t be stupid.” Don’t be stupid here---you’re going to play cards with God and bluff? That’s stupid.

And it says, “God will not be mocked.” And the word “mocked” there physically means “to turn your nose up at Him; to sneer at Him; to ridicule God.” And do you know why you don’t mock God? Because He’s on a throne and He’s like a melancholy, Zeus-type deity where He’s watching all of creation. When He sees someone step out of line for too long, He zaps them with a lightning bolt.

That’s not it at all. He doesn’t say that’s the way God is. It’s not the wrath of God that Paul says to fear. He says it’s the laws of nature. He says, *Whatever you plant, you’re going to harvest.*

I know, city people---I’m going to take this slowly, because I’m with you. I have a lawn—that’s it. And it’s mostly dead. The fundamentals of farming today—if you plant a seed, know this to be true. If you plant a seed, that same thing will grow from that. It’s immutable. It can’t change. So, if you plant a watermelon seed, you’re going to get a watermelon.

The second thing we should know that farmers know is that you don’t just get one; you get more. It’s the same but way more. So, you plant a watermelon seed and you get a whole vine. And on that vine there’s a bunch of different watermelons. And inside those watermelons are hundreds of seeds. So, there’s a return on whatever investment or whatever choice you make. If you plant corn, you get a corn field. If you plant cotton, you better buy a cotton gin. You’re going to get the same thing, but a lot more. You can count on it, live by it, die by it. You can’t plant a walnut and get a blueberry. It’s the fundamentals of farming.

My dad? Physics. If my dad wrote this chapter, he’d say, “When do you learn physics?”

Every Decision Has a Price Tag

And here’s the thing about the laws of nature: your ignorance or your good intentions do not matter. It doesn’t care. This is the nature of the spiritual life. Every decision has a price tag. That’s what Paul wants us to know. Every decision has a price tag. And he’s going to apply this in two different ways. One, he’s going to apply it to these people over here that are living any way they want. And then he’s going to encourage those saints in just a few minutes.

Application: Harvest for Bad

So, the first application is harvest for bad. The very next sentence: “For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption.” “Flesh”—that’s a Bible word for saying our passions, whatever the meat is within us. You live by our passions, you’re going to die by those passions. The same thing: you plant weeds, you’re going to harvest the same kind of weeds, but a whole lot more.

Honestly, if you look at the simplicity of this, if you look at the marriage ministries which we have here at Grace, which would be premarital counseling, ReEngage, almost all of our adult communities, they’re overseen by older people to help younger people. And they’re effectively asking this question. They’re doing diagnostic work in people’s lives and saying, *So what are you planting? Let me see those seeds? Are these weeds or are those healthy things?* Because sometimes, especially with younger people, they don’t even know a weed when they see it. They might say, *Oh, yeah, we don’t show a lot of respect for each other.* Whoa! That’s going to come back, but with a lot more. That short temper you guys go back and forth with, it doesn’t get better; it only gets worse, and more.

And the mentoring couples say, *You’ve got to face these seeds that are weed-like, because they just keep multiplying.* And so, if you’re going to base a marriage on and continue to plant self-centered, you-meet-my-needs sort of values, you’re going to harvest, what, bliss? No, that’s not it works. Do you know physics? This is basic horticulture. No, no, no, you’re going to regret that. It’s the physics of marriage. If you plant anger, you’re going to harvest significant isolation.

Everybody, soon or late, sits down to a banquet of consequences. We are all going to that banquet.

--- Robert Louis Stevenson

I love what Robert Louis Stevenson says. Memorize this. “Everybody, soon or late, sits down to a banquet of consequences. We are all going to that banquet.” We’re all going to that

banquet. What you make in your choices you will eat--at the banquet. And Paul is saying, *You plant the flesh, you're going to reap corruption.*

Jesus says this. Again, it's: *Physics! When are you going to learn physics?* "If you live by the sword, you will die by the sword, Peter." Do you think that mob boss—what's his name—Jimmy Hoffa—died in the Florida Keys sipping daiquiris, listening to Jimmy Buffett? He's in an iron drum at the bottom of some lake near Chicago. You live by the sword, Jimmy, you die by the sword.

Every decision has a price tag, and Paul is coming here and saying, *Look, you don't pay the price for obedience; you pay the price for disobedience. You don't pay the price for courage; you pay the price for living in fear all the time. You don't pay the price for being diligent; you pay the price for all these opportunities lost in your compromising. You don't pay the price for holiness; there's a very big cost for living in the flesh.* That's what Paul is saying here.

And he's saying, *Do not mock; don't make God look ridiculous.* He can't allow it to continue. If you think you're going to continue to plant thorns and weeds and end up with a cute little basket of juicy strawberries, it's impossible for that to happen. God is not going to be made fun of. He's can't allow that to happen. It's a violation of the laws of nature, and therefore it's a violation of spiritual laws as well. And furthermore, you injure and continue to injure souls by not appreciating, and, better, respecting, the spiritual laws that are like the laws of physics.

Proverbs 20:4

A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.

There's a cost of being lazy. Again, it's just cause-and-effect stuff. There's a book for that --- Proverbs. Proverbs says this: "A sluggard"—that means a lazy person— "does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing."

I love it. This is my dad's tutoring. *Physics!* He sleeps through the planting season, but what's great about this little sentence here is that at harvest time he looks.

There's nothing in the field!

Well, you didn't plant, so you get nothing.

Do you know what you call a lazy farmer? Starving. Yeah.

By the way, this is not the wrath of God. This is just the laws of physics.

Do you want to know a way you can apply this first part, making bad choices? Do you know how you can apply the idea of this law of the harvest in life change? Watch this. Next time you're at your banquet and it's time to eat up on some of those consequences, have a hearty meal. Eat it up. Because the consequences are part of the reason that you don't want to go back there ever again. When you harvest of the flesh, corruption and destruction, for you and generally for the people you love the most—sometimes people will swoop in, well-meaning people, people in the church, friends and family outside of the church—they'll come in and say, "Hey, man, can I help you pay that bill? Can I help you get out of trouble? Hey, maybe I should make a phone call for you."

Stop them. Say "No, I'm a repeat offender here. This is not my first harvest. This is my third banquet, and every time someone comes in and helps clear the table for me. I'm not learning. I want to finish this banquet. I want to lick the plate. And maybe this is the last time I spend my time here."

Just watch what happens. I paid for those two windshields. I was broke for most of my adolescent periods, paying for my choices and not understanding physics. And when I was paying for the windshield I told my dad, "I'm looking at this, Dad, as tuition towards a physics class."

And he said, "You look at it any way you want."

And do you know what, though? I've taken that into my life. When I do sit down to these banquets of consequences and I'm not particularly liking the food, I'll say, "Tuition. This is tuition to never do this again."

Paul says you reap what you sow, you plant what you harvest. And he's saying this because there are times in our lives when we don't fear God. And he's saying, *If you don't fear God, fear physics*. Because physics says that for every action there an equal and opposite reaction. Paul is saying, *If you're not fearing God in this season in your life, you fear gardening. What you plant, you're going to harvest. And it's the same, but a lot more.*

There are times when you just mock God in your regular thought patterns, and Paul intervenes and says, *You ought to just listen to people when they talk*. There's a figure of speech you need to know about. "What goes around ... comes around." Right? We know that.

Paul is threatening us. He says, *If you don't fear God, then you fear Mother Nature. She is the uncaring, cold-hearted queen that rules her wild kingdom. And she will distribute poetic justice in huge servings with neither mercy nor malice. You'll just have to live with it.*

Harvest for Good

Galatians 6:8

But the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

But wait—there's more to this lesson. It's not all bad choices. Paul is trying to encourage the people on this side that want to live sacrificially for the Lord Jesus Christ because of all that He did. They want to glorify God with all they do in their lives. They want to become like Christ in all of life. What do you need to hear from him? Verse 8 says there's a harvest for good. "But the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life."

Wait a minute—this is the law of the harvest again. If you plant good seeds, you get good stuff—same but more. *We all sit down at a banquet of consequences*, he's saying. *But sometimes when you're at a banquet and all you've been cooking and preparing is grace, you're going to get grace back ... but more.*

If you go into a marriage with a grace-based relationship value, and you say, *I'm going to go into this marriage thinking, "What can I do to serve the collective us? How can I be God's instrument to help grace transform your life to become like Christ in a tangible way? I want to serve the King by serving you. How do I do that? Are there burdens that I can bear for you? Is there something I can do to strengthen your shoulders so that you can carry your own load?"*

If you sow those seeds, you're going to have a pretty good harvest. Again, if you sow an apple seed, you get an apple tree. And if you live a sacrificial, servant-driven, let's-glorify-God-in-our-marriage life for five, ten, or thirty years, you'll have an apple orchard. And I know some of you look at your marriages or your lives and think, *How did it get this good?*

And I'd say, *Physics, man. When do you learn physics? I've been watching you. I've been here for a while and I've been watching you for twenty-five years. You guys are outgiving each other. This is where it ends up.*

Luke 6:37b-38a

Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.

And just like in the previous proverb where it's talking about sloth leading to natural consequences, look what Jesus says the spiritual law of generosity plays itself off. It's just cause-and-effect. In Luke 6, Jesus says, "Forgive"—and guess what? "You will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you." The same? No! "A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap." Jesus says, *Try me. This is a spiritual law. It's cause-and-effect. It works. I built the place. Do it. Try me.*

What Paul is saying here is that is you don't pay a high price for obedience; you get rewarded for obedience. You don't pay a high price for courage; you get to live in freedom without fear. You don't pay a price for diligence; you have accomplishments to show for that perseverance. He says that you don't pay a high price for holiness; you can hear the very voice of God.

That's what Paul is saying. It's just connect-the-dots. And sometimes the Christian life is particularly hard and it goes on and we don't see very much change. And we wonder because we feel like God is distant from us. And so, Paul is saying, *You can't trust in the feeling of God's closeness. Just trust in physics. Because in physics there is an equal and opposite reaction for every action.*

Paul says, *I know what it's like to feel like your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling and you're wondering if the promises of God are true and you don't feel like you can trust God. He says, That's okay. If you can't trust God, trust in agriculture: what you plant, you harvest.*

Galatians 6:9

And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.

But there's this one thing. The harvest and the blessing are contingent on perseverance. Look how it's conditional. He says, "But only if you don't grow weary." Look at verse 9: "Do not lost heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

This is a powerful sentence because these are two imperatives. So, Paul's saying, *Now listen to this. This is the important part.* The first part is when he says, "Don't lose heart." The idea of losing heart in Greek is where we get the word "cowardly." Don't become cowardly. Stay courageous. And the second word is particularly helpful because it says, "Do not grow weary." And the word "weary" is not like when you're suddenly knocked to the ground by life, but rather, it's that slow drip of the grind of life that's sifting you. It's the straw that breaks the camel's back because it's fully loaded.

And so, he's saying, *Watch how these work together. Don't be cowardly because you've grown tired.* And those two ideas working together (that's why this sentence is so powerful) are in our figure of speech that you might have heard. I think a football coach said it once: "Fatigue makes cowards out of all of us." Fatigue will make a coward out of any of us. Because if he goes too long for too hard, a super valiant soldier becomes a traitor. He just quits. And Paul is coming into the lives of the ones living for righteousness, and he's saying, *I know some winters seem especially bitter and tremendously and terribly long. And when that happens it's going to be very easy for us to just give up and do things that are reckless.* And he's saying, *Remember the whole winter/spring? And winter is just a fake death and then spring comes ... but if and only if you don't dig up the seeds of righteousness that you've planted.* He's telling us not to grow impatient, but rather, live with endurance.

If we grow impatient and we're looking at all the plants and seeds that we've planted and they're all righteous, but nothing's growing; if we grow weary and cowardly, we're going to dig it up and say, *Where are those seeds? What are they doing?*

And he's saying, *You can't be impatient; you'll lose everything.*

Do you know what you call an impatient farmer? Starving. Right!

And so, he's saying that the law of physics is about endurance. It's about banquets of consequence, but without regret. What's the other saying? The roots grow deeper when it's dry. Again, agriculture: when it gets dry, the roots have to struggle further down to get nutrients like water. And so, sometimes the driest times for the longest times are actually the times when our roots are growing deepest. So, Paul says, *Don't dig it up*. Delayed gratification—it's all about endurance, and endurance means delayed gratification. And delayed gratification is "I'm not going to enjoy the present because it's an investment into my future reward." Present pleasure is not worth my future reward. But when it goes on and goes on and goes on, we just ...

Here's how it applies today, very much so. Right now in America, the between-fifty-to-sixty-year-old group is the largest demographic in America's history. And there's a word for that demographic. It's called "midlife." It's not even in the middle—it's most toward the end of the middle. And what happens during that time with drama at home with our family members is that we start seeing people our age die. And then we're starting to see the fact that we're going to die and then be forgotten, and people just move on. And watch—this is how this all works together. If I keep putting off present pleasure for future gain, somewhere in there during midlife a person says, *When is it my turn? I mean, when do I get mine? Because I've waited and I don't see much. I never sowed any wild oats. I've got no stories like that.*

And Paul is saying, *If you sowed wild oats, you harvest wild oats—the same oats, but a lot more*. You don't want to go there. You can tear up thirty years of a righteous life in one bad afternoon when you grew weary and cowardly. And so, don't do it.

Application: Endurance

Galatians 6:10

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

And so, his last application here is interesting. Because how do you keep from growing weary and how do you stay courageous? The next sentence says, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

How do we keep marching? He says to not march alone. How do we keep fighting the fight? Don't fight alone. He's saying that as much as possible, be good to everybody, especially those in the church, and to those outside the church as well. And he's saying that the purpose of being in community like this is so that we can have intelligent conversations, especially with people who are older than we are. And so, it's as though he's telling us, *Go find other farmers--* not when your winter is especially brittle, not when you're into the last stretch and you go and say, "Give me some advice." It's establishing those relationships early with people that have been where you're going or where you are.

That's why our whole church is structured around mentoring. You go to Celebrate Recovery, you go to Re|Engage, you go to any one of our communities, any one of our Bible studies, and there are going to be older farmers that have been where you've been, that can speak truth to your life and say, *Don't do this. There's a harvest coming.*

We saw this years ago—over thirty years ago. We saw in our student ministry, especially with our upperclassmen, that they started doing some math and they realized that living righteously isn't working. I mean, the wicked are getting celebrated, the righteous are actively made fun of, they're coming up on their senior year, and they're saying, "It's not worth it." They're growing weary, growing cowardly, sometimes in isolation, plus fear equals a lot of regret.

And so, over thirty years—and we did this up until the pandemic—we would take some of the upperclassmen and we'd sneak into a college Christian conference. CRU has one up in Dallas—we'd ask permission—it wasn't sneaking in, we weren't crashing. But we would come in for two days and one night. And these kids are sometimes the only ones in their class, it feels like, the only ones in the lunchroom, it feels like. And we'd take them there and there were hundreds, sometimes thousands of kids, worshiping God, surrendering their lives, telling stories of adventure. And in the night talk, the kids would say, "Is this real? Are there this many Christians out there?" Not at your school, but next year. Hang in there. Don't tear up the righteous seed that you planted.

The same thing happened to Elijah when he was torn apart and growing weary. God comes along and says, "There are 7,000 who have not bowed their knee to Baal nor kissed his idol." Elijah says, "Well, I don't know any of them." Well, they're out there.

So, this church is a multi-generational church. And the strongest asset that we have is this cascading wisdom of people that either regret plowing up righteous seed or hung in there and stayed until the end. Do that. Find yourself someone. And find someone ten years younger than you and drag them through the process so that we can have a harvest of eternal life together.

Paul's conclusion is pretty simple: every decision has a price tag. The price tags have been established. There's no changing it. And he's trying to take the mystery out of the spiritual realm. It's cause-and-effect. You plant, you harvest—the same and more.

So, don't plant seeds of the flesh. You can't live that way. Plant seeds of righteousness and endure until the end and you'll be glad you did.

Galatians 6:7-8

Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—⁸ harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.

I love how Paul in the Book of Galatians starts and ends the book with this idea of grace, that we live and thrive by grace and that grace transforms. So, let me read to you again a modern translation of this section that we read. And listen to how Paul is calling us out to live the abundant life. “Do not be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of other—ignoring God!— harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.”

This book called Galatians—and these verses are some of my favorite in there—is, quite frankly, the template for this congregation, Grace. It says it on the side of our building. We found out that grace transforms; that you are saved by grace and you're sanctified by grace. When you start with a gift, you don't try to earn your way later. And what we found is that if you give grace, you receive grace. Grace overflows, inside and outside the church. And it has been my

experience that for people who come here from outside the church, it's the first time they grasp the idea that God has done everything for them, and they're captivated by it. They want to live their lives according to it.

The other group of people that I find that we attract quite often here at the church is people who have gone to other churches where: *You've been saved by grace, now perfect it by doing, by getting busy!* And it's either some kind of legalism or—I'm just going to invent a word here and call it "busy-ism." *Just get busy! Everybody get busy!*

And when they come here—and this story is very common—they realize, *No one's making me do anything. No one is making me feel terrible or guilty because I'm only here x amount of times per week. This is refreshing.*

Well, you give grace, you get grace. And we're supposed to be living in the abundance of love and generosity and forgiveness for one another. And we do that because we have this absolute confidence in the deepest recesses of our souls that God has done all things for us, for His glory, so that we might present ourselves holy for His joy.

That's what I love about our church. The fuel that we run on is gratitude--not guilt, not obligation--but joy. And my prayer is that we would continue to do that. It's the power of the Gospel in the context of physical facts and truths such as this: Whatever you reap or plant, you harvest. You reap what you sow.

There's Paul's lesson to us. Let's pray that we might take it to heart.

Lord, I would like for Your Spirit to—well, first, maybe there are some people here who are planting weeds and they have nothing to show for it and so they think they're getting away with that. And they mock you and they're bluffing. And I'd ask that they would fear Mother Nature if they don't fear You. But I'd ask that they would have a banquet soon and that would be the end of that illness; that they would quit trying to play games with Your mercy and grace.

Lord, I'd ask the men and women here, even the young teens that are living for You and are growing weary, and sometimes I feel the courage drain and the desire to just want to give in. I'd ask, Lord, that their spirit would be strengthened, that they would be held up not just by Your Spirit, but rather these truths; that if we can't understand the spiritual world, we can understand that we can't grow weary in doing good. And I pray that these men and women, these teens,

would find someone to inspire them to wait until the spring when we see a resurrection take place, and we see a harvest of righteousness and even eternal life.

So, Lord, I'd ask that You give them a special greeting from someone and joy from someone, and that some of those people would even look for a mentor to inspire them and help them ride through the storms of life.

Lord, I'd ask that You would bless this church for its namesake; that we would be a church of grace; that we would give grace and receive grace, forgiveness, and joy; that the fruits of the Spirit would overflow into the pews and into the streets from this hilltop.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.