

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 24 September 2017. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

What Is Your Goal?

Galatians 6:10-13

In the late summer of 2001, after I had graduated from Bible College, I had one of those little “live and learn” experiences. At the time, I was working a part-time job at a distributor of books and supplies for primary schools. Now, at the time, I was still in the middle of an eight-year battle with ulcerative colitis. Because of my sickness, I had to sit out of college two full years; and I was constantly in and out of the hospital. After my graduation, I was still in very poor health. Finding a health care provider that would insure me was extremely important at that stage in my life. No health insurer would take me because of my “pre-existing condition”: and I had thousands of dollars in medical bills (mostly from hospital stays).

Well, during that summer, the management of my company announced that it was hiring a certain number of people to full-time positions. I went for an interview; and during the interview, they asked me what my **goal** was in working for them. I answered that my goal was to do the very best job that I could possibly do for the company. However, I made one mistake, which ended up costing me the job. At the end of the interview, they asked me whether I had any questions for *them*; and so, I asked whether health care was provided through their company. Well, they knew why I was asking that, because they knew about my health situation; and when they came to inform me, a couple days later, that I had *not* gotten the job, they commented that I sounded as though I was interested in what I could **get out of the company**, rather than in what I could **give to** the company. What could I say? “Live and learn!”

We are now coming down to the final lines of Paul’s letter to the Galatians; and in these final lines, Paul is summing up what he has written. In this passage of Scripture, Paul compares the **goal of the Christian** to the **goal of the falsely-professing Christian**. The title of this message is *What Is Your Goal?*

Read Galatians 6:10-13.

I. **The goal of the Christian: self-sacrifice (vv. 10-11)**

As people progress through life, they become increasingly aware that their time on earth isn’t going to last forever. As their time gets shorter, many people become increasingly perplexed about what their **goal** in life is. *What are they really living for?* In our present age, in which the influence of the Bible has been washed away in a flood of humanism and neo-paganism, multitudes of people are wandering around through life, moving from one foolish passion to another, trying find some kind of goal or purpose to fill the enormous “hole” in their soul.

Now, if you be a true child of God, you are *not* perplexed about your purpose in life, as the unsaved are. God has a purpose for your life; and He has revealed, in His Word, what that purpose is. His purpose for you is that you should serve Him with all your heart, mind, and soul, out of a heart of love for Him. His purpose is that you should bring forth fruit for His glory. *Your goal* in life should be identical with God’s *purpose* for you. Your goal should be to serve God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Even a brand new Christian knows, from the moment of his salvation, that his purpose in life has changed radically. He may not know much Scripture yet; but he realises that the Lord Jesus Christ is now his reason for living. The new Christian now realises that Christ has a purpose for his life. Let's take a look at God's stated purpose for the believer.

Read Ephesians 2:10.

Christian, *this* is the purpose for which Christ has saved you. Christ didn't save you merely so that you might go to heaven: He saved you so that you He might enable you to live for Him. He saved you so that you might ***“add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity”*** (2 Peter 1:5-7). He saved you so that you might ***“put on...bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,”*** and ***“charity”*** (Colossians 3:12-14). The Lord equips us with all these graces so that we might serve and do good to others. Serving and doing good to others is, in fact, a major part of serving God.

That is exactly what Paul is talking about in **Galatians 6:10**. This isn't an “after-thought.” Paul isn't saying, “Oh, by the way, when you get the chance, try to do people a good turn now and then.” No, this is the Christian's **mission statement**. Christ's mission for us is that we love others (both saved and unsaved), and do them good, just as Christ would.

Read John 15:15-17.

Read Ephesians 5:17.

Notice what Paul said in **Ephesians 5**. He urged the Ephesians to understand what ***“the will of the Lord is.”*** Sadly, many Christians today are confused about “the Lord's will.” Many Christians think of “the Lord's will” as that important, custom-made task that God has just for me—such as my life's profession. That is *not* the “will of God” that Paul is talking about.

Now, it is true that God has a plan specifically for you. For instance, He has an occupation (or, perhaps, more than one occupation) in life for you. (And it may not be what the world would think of as an “important” or “glamorous” occupation, either.) God calls some Christians to the Gospel ministry. He does have a specific place (or places) where He wants you to live, work, and raise your family. He wants to lead and guide you in every twist, turn, and avenue of your life. But before God shows you that specific “profession,” or that “big, important task,” He wants you to understand what His will for you is. His will is that you should ***“do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”***

In other words, serving God by serving others is God's **will** for your life: and that “big, important” task that God has specifically for you is merely a **means to accomplish** that will. A six-year-old child who knows Christ as Saviour can accomplish God's will for his life right now. He can love God, pray, read his Bible, memorize Scripture, go to church, obey and honour his parents, love others, and witness of Christ to others. I still remember a time, when I was nine years old, when I had a pen pal named Marty, who lived in Lubbock, Texas. I felt burdened to witness to him; and after several letters back and forth, I finally wrote a letter in which I explained the plan of salvation, drew a picture of Christ on the cross, and enclosed a Gospel tract. I never heard back from him after that; but I knew that I had done what God wanted me to do. Though I was only nine years old, I knew what ***“the will of the Lord”*** was.

So it is with everyone who knows Christ as Saviour. We can all know God's will, and do it. A man of eighty who has just accepted Christ as Saviour may be long past what the world considers to be the most "productive" years of his life; yet, he, too, is able to know and do God's will. No matter what your occupation may be, you are able to do God's will. Whether you be lower class, middle class, or upper class, you can do God's will. I once listened to an audio recording of a sermon, in which the pastor recounted a conversation that he had once had with a member of his church. This member happened to be the CEO of a large, prosperous company. Yet, he did not view his "big, important job" as his "calling." He said, "My *calling* is to serve the Lord. Being a CEO is just how I make a living."

As Christians, we are commanded to know "***the will of the Lord***"; and part and parcel of "***the will of the Lord***" is this command to "***do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.***" You'll notice, though, that there is a *time element* to this command. Paul says, "***As we have therefore opportunity.***" The Greek word for "opportunity" literally means "time." So, he is saying, "*Since we still have time, let us do good unto all men.*"

Christ was constantly talking about the shortness of His time on earth, and the extreme importance of accomplishing His mission. In **John 9:4** Jesus said, "***I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.***" Paul wrote to the church of Ephesus, "***See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil***" (**Ephesians 5:15-16**). Christian, the day is late. Death could be around the corner: or the Lord could come back today! You have an urgent mission, and only a short time to do it. Do you have an *urgency* about that mission?

Now, let's look again at this command to "***do good unto all men.***" (**Read verse 10 again.**) You'll notice that this command is twofold. There are two groups of people to whom Christians should "do good." First of all, we are to do good to the **unsaved**. Paul doesn't actually say, "Do good to the lost"; but he does say, "***Do good unto all men.***" "***All men***" includes the unsaved. That unsaved relative or friend, to whom you haven't yet gotten around to witnessing, may die tomorrow. Or *you* may die tomorrow: and you won't be able to witness to him again. The clock is ticking. Are you redeeming every moment for God?

The other people to whom we should do good are the **saved**. Paul commanded the Galatians to do good "***especially unto them who are of the household of faith.***" Are you doing good to the saints, Christian? Are you exercising the fruit and graces of the Spirit in order to edify the saints? Are you striving to grow and mature in the Lord, so that you may come to the point in your Christian life where *you* are equipped to feed God's Word to younger believers? You should be! In **Hebrews 5**, Paul rebuked many of the Christians in his audience because they were at the point in their lives where they "***ought to be teachers***" of God's Word; yet, he said, "***ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.***" Are you strengthening other believers? Are you willing to fulfil the seemingly "mundane" and "unglamorous" duties of the Christian life? Let's look at some of those duties.

Read Ephesians 4:1-3.

Christians who say, "I don't know whether God really has a calling for me, because I'm not very talented," do not really understand what their "calling" is! Paul says that our "***vocation***" (literally, "calling") consists of such things as being "***lowly,***" "***meek,***" "***longsuffering,***" "***forbearing,***" and so on. Sadly, many Christians pay little attention to this part of their "vocation," because they are looking, in vain, for the "*big picture*" of God's will for their lives.

God says, “*This is ‘the big picture’ for your life!*” These things are the very essence of Christian living. This is the purpose for which Christ saved you.

Brethren, we have an enormous task before us: and accomplishing that task will require **self-sacrifice**. (See **Romans 12:1-2**.) As Christians, we tend to *talk* a lot about the need for self-sacrifice. But talk isn’t enough. The Spirit-filled Christian doesn’t just *talk* about self-sacrifice: through the power of the Holy Spirit, he *practices* it.

Paul practiced what he preached. He truly gave himself as a living sacrifice for the Lord. Even here in **Galatians 5**, we see his self-sacrifice. Let’s look at **verse 11** again. (**Read verse 11 again.**) How do we see Paul’s self-sacrifice in this verse? Well, when you look closely at various statements that Paul made in his letters, you begin to realise that Paul suffered from some kind of eye disease. God used Paul, on many occasions, to heal people of incurable diseases; yet, he himself suffered from some kind of chronic eye condition. It is believed that he had a condition called *ophthalmia*, which made him nearly blind. In **2 Corinthians 12**, Paul referred to this problem as his “***thorn in the flesh.***” He said that he had asked the Lord three times to remove this thorn in the flesh from him; but God’s reply to Paul was, “***My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.***” Paul concluded that God was allowing him to have this health issue so that he would not be over-exalted in his office of Apostle, and so that he would rely on God’s grace from day to day.

So, how does all this relate to what Paul is saying here in **Galatians 6**? The point I’m making is that Paul would normally have relied on someone else to write down his letters. (For example, Tertius was the penman who wrote the letter to the Romans, at Paul’s dictation.) But in the case of this letter to the Galatians, *Paul himself* wrote the letter! He says, “***Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.***” By the way, the Greek literally reads, “Behold *with how large letters* I have written.” Paul had to write the letters very large, because he could only faintly see his own writing as he printed the letters on the parchment. Imagine what it would be like if you were nearly blind, and you took the pains to sit down and write something as long as this letter to the Galatians! You’d have to be strongly motivated to undertake such a task, wouldn’t you?

It is obvious what *Paul’s* motivation was in handwriting this letter. Even though the Galatians had turned to a false gospel, and were now suspicious of, and ungrateful to him, he *loved them*. By going to this great length to write this letter with his own hand, Paul was showing them that he was motivated by nothing but love!

Paul had absolutely nothing to gain from these Galatians. He received no wages from them. He had nothing to gain from *any* of the churches to which he wrote his letters. Several of his letters (**Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon**) he wrote while he was a prisoner in Rome. He was physically chained to Roman guards as he wrote those letters! If you were in that humiliating condition, would you be agonizing over the welfare of people more than a thousand miles away, whom you haven’t seen for more than a decade? How much less would you care to write a letter, with your own hand, to people who don’t love and appreciate you as they once did, *when you are nearly blind*? Most of us would not. Yet, Paul did.

Christian, there may be lost people whom you know who will never be saved until they see some “tears.” I’m not talking about fake tears, or fake emotionalism, which you “shed” in front of others in order to make an impression: I’m talking about *real* tears, which you shed in your prayer closet, while you cry out to God on their behalf. When you ask God to give you a

burden for the lost, He will answer your prayer; and that sincere burden for people's souls will be obvious to everyone around you, whether they ever actually see you weep for them or not. It may be that there are Christians who are not close to the Lord who may be stirred to get right with God when they see your genuine love and concern for them.

The Christian's goal in life should be **self-sacrifice for others**—not out of an ulterior motivation, but out of true love and service to God. That is God's purpose for you. Christian, does your goal in life match up with God's purpose for your life?

II. The goal of the falsely-professing Christian: self-glory (vv. 12-13)

Read 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

In these verses, Paul is giving Timothy a prophecy of what people will increasingly be like in the last days, as we await Christ's return. Now, you'll notice that "**lovers of their own selves**" is the very first description that Paul gives us. "Self-love" is the number one characteristic of those who will live in "**the last days.**" Is this not a perfect description of people in *our* day? It used to be that society in general at least acknowledged that self-love is a bad thing. Of course, people have *always* loved themselves; but it used to be that people had to *hide* and *disguise* their self-love. Why? Because it was understood that loving yourself is not acceptable. But today, people actually pride themselves in the fact that they love themselves; and they openly avow and profess that they will endeavour to love themselves more!

Now, you'll notice that these people of whom Paul is speaking *seem to profess Christianity*. They have a "**form of godliness,**" yet deny "**the power thereof.**" (Read verse 5 again.)

With this in mind, let's pause for a moment. What *is* the "**power**" that produces true godliness? **It is the Gospel!** The Gospel (the "good news" of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for our sins) is what saves men, so that they may live godly lives.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

Christ's death, burial, and resurrection is the means by which sinners can be saved from the **penalty** of sin (which is hell). But that's not all. The Gospel also saves people from the **power** of sin. The Gospel enables those who have been saved to live truly godly lives. Through the divine power of Christ's death and resurrection on our behalf, we who have been saved are now able to "**live unto righteousness.**"

Read 1 Peter 2:24.

The Gospel is "**the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth**" (Romans 1:16). The Gospel, and only the Gospel, has the power to save us from the penalty *and* the power of sin. So, what that means is that those who possess an *outward form* of godliness, but do not know the *power* that produces true godliness, are not saved. They have never experienced the power of the Gospel. They have never trusted in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Sadly, people who have a "**form of godliness,**" yet deny "**the power thereof**" are not a novelty of our times. False "Christians" have existed ever since Christ Himself walked the earth. Judas Iscariot was a false "Christian": and he was around at the very beginning of the church age! Well, guess what? That's exactly the kind of people who had sneaked into the churches of Galatia. Remember, the whole reason why Paul had to write this letter to the Galatian churches is that false teachers had crept into their churches, and had undermined the

true Gospel. These men were *falsely-professing* Christians. They appeared to be Christians; but they were not truly saved. Tragically, these false Christians managed to deceive the genuine Christians in the churches of Galatia with their false Gospel of salvation through “faith in Christ *plus* keeping the Law.” Paul wrote this entire letter to warn the Galatians to cast out this false gospel, and these false teachers, from their churches.

Let’s look at some of the things that characterise false professors of Christ. **(Read Galatians 6:12 again.)** In this verse, we see that falsely-professing Christians trust in their performance of *external rituals* in order to get to heaven. Particularly, these false teachers who had infiltrated the churches of Galatia were trusting in *circumcision*, as well as in other Old Testament rituals, to get them to heaven. God never intended these rituals to save anyone: they were merely *symbols* of spiritual truths. (Particularly, most of these rituals pointed to Jesus Christ as the coming Saviour.) Salvation has *always* been by faith in God alone. The **Habakkuk 2:4** says, “***His soul which is lifted up*** (in self-righteousness) ***is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.***” God told Israel, “Salvation is by *faith alone*”; but these false teachers said, “No, you must perform the Old Testament rituals in order to be saved.” False teachers say the same thing today—except that they have a new set of rituals that they say must be performed. Today people trust in things such as baptism, Eucharist, penances, rote prayers, confirmation, and attending religious services, to get them to heaven. The emphasis of falsely professing Christians is on *outward performances*—things that make them feel as though they’ve done something religious in order to earn favour with God.

The Bible clearly teaches that “***the wages of sin is death.***” Now, if you actually think that you can work your way into heaven, that statement is pretty hard to dance around. Even our *conscience* whispers to us that “***the wages of sin is death.***” How, then, do people deal with this truth, if they don’t want to face it? Well, a person who is trusting in his own good works to get to heaven is forced to do either one of two things. Either he rationalises away his sin, and convinces himself that he is not really a sinner; or, he puts a heavy emphasis on outward, visible religious rituals—things which a person can do easily enough (such as going to church services, or mumbling a prayer).

You see, when you start reading God’s Word, and you begin examining the *inside* of your heart in light of what you see in God’s Word, you find that your heart is full of *corruption*. That’s why false teachers strongly emphasise *outward* observances. Outward rituals make you *feel* as though you’ve done something righteous; but they cannot wash even one sin away.

What other things characterise falsely-professing Christians? Well, Paul points out that falsely-professing Christians **avoid persecution**. **(Read verse 12 again.)** The false teachers were not willing to suffer “***persecution for the cross of Christ,***” as Paul was willing to do. That’s why they had concocted their false version of Christianity in the first place! They had invented a salvation of “Christ + human works” instead of “Christ alone,” because that kind of “Christianity” is not offensive to most people. Their false religion did not bring persecution upon their heads. But the problem with this new version of the “gospel” was that it couldn’t save. It was powerless! By making salvation attainable by human effort, they reduced Jesus Christ to nothing more than some kind of martyr. They had made Christ’s sacrifice on the cross pointless. By saying that there was something we can do to merit salvation, they were insulting Christ, who shed His precious blood so that we might be saved. To this day, any “gospel” that adds any human effort to Christ’s sacrifice is an insult to God!

Another description of falsely-professing Christians is that they are inconsistent in their belief about salvation. **(Read verse 13 again.)** False Christians *talk* about the necessity of “keeping the law” in order to be saved: yet, they themselves don’t keep the Law. The *Bible’s* definition of “keeping the law” is that you must keep it absolutely flawlessly, without breaking it once. The Bible also makes it very clear that absolutely no one except Jesus Christ has met that standard! Jesus said, **“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?” (John 7:19).** James 2:10 says, **“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”**

Should *you* be trusting in your works to get you to heaven, then you are unsaved. Like everyone else in this world, you have broken God’s Law; and the **“wages of sin is death.”** Will you entrust your soul to someone who tells you that you must keep the Law to be saved, when the Bible makes it clear that *no one other than Jesus Christ* has kept the Law? You *must* place your trust in Christ, so that He can impute His righteousness to your account.

Now, the last description of a false Christian is that **he glories in the flesh.** **(Read verse 13 again.)** What does Paul mean when he says that the false teachers gloried in the “flesh”? What is the “flesh”? Well, “flesh” in Scripture, often means literal human flesh. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with the bodies that God has given us. But that is not the only meaning of flesh. Oftentimes, “flesh” means “any work that is produced by human effort, apart from God.” “The flesh” can produce filthy, lewd acts; or it can produce seemingly righteous acts, *which are done in one’s own power, and for one’s own glory.* That is the kind of “flesh” that Paul is talking about here. The false teachers gloried in their own religious “achievements.” However, their so-called “righteousness” was performed for self-glory.

Read John 7:18.

Jesus Christ did not seek His own glory, as sinful men do. As the sinless Son of God, He sought only the glory of His Father. What a contrast there is between Jesus Christ and us! Christ is sinless, we are sinful. He is just, we are unjust. Every work that Christ did was untainted by selfishness. We, on the other hand, cannot do any “good” thing *without* seeking glory for ourselves. Our old nature is totally bent on self-promotion. It is *because* we are utterly destitute of God’s righteousness that Jesus Christ became our Substitute. He took our sin upon Himself. He *became* sin, so that in exchange, you and I could be declared “righteous,” and forgiven of *all* our sins. Have you received His gift of righteousness?

Conclusion: If you be a child of God, God wants to work His purpose in you. That purpose is that you would, by His strength and power, **“do good unto all men.”** Christian, is your goal in life in line with Christ’s purpose for you? Are you submitting yourself to that purpose every day? The second question I would ask this morning is, **Are you truly saved?** Are you trusting in your own effort to achieve heaven, instead of in what Christ did for you? If so, please repent of your sin, and put your trust in Christ today!