

The Church Providing

Galatians 6:9 ESV (pg. 567) And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. **10** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

I. Last week I challenged NRLC to be a preaching church; meaning that the primary function of this, or any gospel-centered church, is to be a community of people who verbally proclaim the gospel as our most vital activity. I said we are commissioned to do this in two ways: by edifying (or building up) the people of God within the church, and exhorting (or

compelling) unbelievers to turn to Christ. Both of these are done through the proclamation, or ***preaching***, of the gospel.

A. As I concluded last week, I made a passionate statement against the philosophy summed up in words that are commonly attributed to St. Francis of Assisi (though Francis never actually said this)¹. **“Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary.”**

1. The usual conclusion of those who make use of this quote insists that preaching the gospel doesn't always require words, though it cannot be otherwise, or else the gospel hasn't yet truly been preached. This is the problem with the so-called “social gospel” which

can be very “social”, but unfortunately, not very “gospel” at all in many cases.

2.It isn't helpful to create a false dichotomy between a clear, verbal presentation of the gospel of God's redemptive work by Jesus, and benevolent, merciful works; implying works alone are superior to the words².

B.But it was pointed out to me that in my intensity, I may have diminished the value of good works, done in love toward the body of Christ, as well as the suffering world. That was not my intention, and I apologize for any confusion. The message I bring you today will hopefully fill in the gaps from last week.

1. What is the role of our deeds in our goal of being a preaching church? What is the place of giving, benevolence, and charity? What about kindness and merciful ministry? Shouldn't people expect that to be central in the lives of Christians?

2. What did Paul mean when he reminded the Thessalonians in our text last week that **1 Thessalonians 2:8b ESV** "we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God **but also our own selves**"?

C. I think he's saying that while clear communication of God's redemptive purposes are the main thing, it's not the **only** thing. A life overflowing with

sacrificial acts of love is a strong indicator of our belonging to Christ.

1. How much damage do you think has been done to the cause of Christ by those who were eloquent in theology, and that demonstrated various spiritual gifts, yet were completely deficient in showing genuine love?

2.1 Corinthians 13:1 ESV If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, *I am nothing*. **3** If I give away all I have, and if I deliver

up my body to be burned, but have not love, *I gain nothing*.

II. Last week I said what we call “preaching” takes place in two different ways: through edification of the body of Christ, and through exhorting unbelievers to be reconciled to God. I also said that there are two different places where this takes place: in church and the world. In this morning’s text, we see a very similar differentiation regarding the exercise of our good works of charity and kindness.

A. **Galatians 6:9 ESV** And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. **10** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to

everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

1. Verse 9 encourages us to be persistent in doing good, promising if we continue, we'll be rewarded. Our good works are like seeds to be sown. Just as the farmer looks forward to the harvest, a day will come for us to reap, receiving a harvest from that which we have sowed as well.

a) While the Bible is clear that we cannot sow good *moral* works in order to reap eternal salvation, it also refers several times to rewards which the righteous will receive for the works done as unto the Lord, for his glory.

b) **1 Corinthians 3:14 ESV** If the work that anyone has built on the

foundation survives, **he will receive a reward**. Other scriptures speak of crowns that will be given. and authority that will be granted in differing measures as rewards to God's righteous servants in the last day.

2. Verse 9 also tells us **how** to do good works: we do them without growing weary. We keep at it, doing them when our deeds are recognized and rewarded, and when they are mocked, ignored and dismissed by those around us (which may seem to be the case, more often than not!).

3. Verse 10 tells us **to whom** we offer charitable works when it says do good to **everyone**. We'll break that down more in a moment.

B. But first, verse 10 also tells us **when** to do good to others. It says “as we have opportunity”. Interestingly, the word rendered “opportunity” in verse 10, is the same word rendered “season” in verse 9³.

1. In context, verse 9 speaks of a “season” for reaping that is promised to us, therefore, verse 10 can only be speaking of the “opportunity” we have to do good as the designated “season” for sowing.

2. When it says “as we have opportunity”, it is not giving us a pass because of our perceived time or budgetary constraints, or our lack of gifts or talents. The implication is that God is distributing opportunities to honor

him through merciful service and generosity to each of us, and he is expecting us to act!

C. *“The future, on the whole, is the season of reaping; the present life on the whole is the season of sowing; and while life as a whole is the seed-time, in detail it is full of opportunities, openings which make certain good deeds possible, and which therefore impose upon us the obligation to do them. If we were in the habit of looking on life mainly as a series of opportunities for well-doing, how different it would be; and how different we should be!”*⁴ - Alexander MacLaren

D. It is an act of maturity and faith to keep both our eyes and hearts open for such opportunities, being ready

to act in obedient and loving response to God.

III. Let's return to the question of **to whom** we offer acts of kindness and love. The first portion of this verse is clear, "as we have opportunity, let us do good to **everyone**..." This is a sweeping and unambiguous call to be kind, loving, merciful and generous to everyone, wherever we find need; in all situations, dramatic and subtle.

A. "Everyone" is a clear and comprehensive word that doesn't need additional commentary. Jesus tells the parable of the "good Samaritan"⁵ to illustrate that we should freely give of our lives to anyone that we find in need.

1. In his account, Luke begins with a man trying to justify himself, asking

Jesus to clarify the verse that says “love your neighbor as yourself”⁶, asking Jesus to tell him **exactly** who his neighbor was. So Jesus tells him a story...

a) A man was traveling to Jericho from Jerusalem, a journey of about 16 miles, no small distance on foot or the back of a donkey! While on the road, he comes across some bandits who rob him, beat him, strip him and leave him for dead.

b) But it just so happens that a priest is also traveling that day, and comes across the poor soul. Hearing his moans for help, the priest crosses to the other side of the road. Due to the demands of his ministry, he just cannot spare

the time! Not longer after that, a Levite, part of the official ministry support team of the Jews comes by and does the same thing. He just doesn't want to get involved! It could turn into a whole thing!

2. Not long after that someone else comes by, but this time, it is a despised ***Samaritan***, someone clearly on the short end of the cultural stick! To the Jews, he was a political, religious, and racial outcast. There was no one lower than this half-breed; truly disgraceful! Beneath everything that is Jewish!

a) But when the Samaritan sees the man, he does something the priest and the Levite didn't do, He stops. Seeing the man

bleeding, his heart is filled with compassion, and he begins to tend to the man's wounds.

b) He puts the wounded man on his own animal (meaning now he'd have to walk), and takes him to the nearest inn, and rents him a place to recover. Furthermore, he tells the innkeeper that he will assume all additional expense that might be incurred for the care of the man.

B. When Jesus finished, he asked the man **Luke 10:36 ESV** "Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" The man answered, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus final word was

Luke 10:37b ESV “You go, and do likewise.”

1. Jesus made this same point central to the behavior and ethics of his disciples earlier in **Luke 6:35 ESV** But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, *expecting nothing in return*, and *your reward will be great*, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. **36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.**

2. It's important to recognize that kindness and generosity are not some colonization strategy we employ to tempt people into Heaven, thus expanding the kingdom. Rather, we are simply demonstrating the goodness of the

God the Father to the lost world, and reflecting the love of Jesus.

a) Isn't that what Jesus means when he says "do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return"? I'm embarrassed by how many times I have given something to someone, or done something for them, only because I expected them to be so moved by my "selfless" act that they would surely fall on their knees, and cry out, "what must I do to be saved?"!

b) What would the impact on Lubbock (and the North Ridge neighborhood) be if we acted in kindness and mercy, motivated by simply the glory of God, and

not for some supposed “return on investment”?

C. Another good question for us to consider about acts of kindness and charity is this: does “doing good to everyone” imply that we always give material aid to everyone who claims to be in need indiscriminately, and without question?

1. I have done some travel in places like Mexico and Guatemala. I have also witnessed the plight of Muslim refugees in 2 European countries. In these places, I have seen those that I would deem the “truly poor”. In these places, if I could’ve given out buckets of money, I’d have met some real needs, even if I wouldn’t have made a dent in the larger problem.

2. America also has many who are *truly* poor, but the problem of poverty in the West is often complicated by numerous programs that have made some of the population dependent, with no incentive or motivation to work, coupled with the fact that assistance is freely given to people who have made sinful and destructive choices that have severely affected their lives.

a) Because of this, it may not not be wise to hand cash to any panhandler that approaches you, or anyone holding a sign in a parking lot or at a stop sign, or showing up to the church with a sad story.

b)The inner-city missionaries I know have pleaded with Christians not to hand out cash, because in most cases, they may be exacerbating the problem, and not **truly** helping. Your “gift” may be making it easier for someone in a pit of sin to stay there, instead of offering something that would be real assistance (teaching them to fish!). This can also be a sin if you are being a poor steward of the money God has entrusted to you.

3.2 Thessalonians 3:10 ESV For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: ***If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.*** **11** For we hear that ***some among you walk in***

idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

D. So does this mean that we let hungry people go hungry, or people who are unsheltered stay that way? Of course not! Earlier I said that America has a poverty problem that is aggravated by dependency; but often, we who are not dependent have another problem as well. We tend to think that cold, hard cash will solve someone else's (or everyone else's!) problem.

1. Next time someone asks you for \$5 because they're hungry, why don't you take them to eat ***with***

you instead. What an opportunity to share the gospel, and your life, and not just a buck! Which do they need more? No matter how they got there, can you imagine how lonely homelessness is? You can help with a little **time**, **compassion**, and the cost of a burger combo!

2. Or what if you became an **expert** on programs (especially Christian ones!) that were available for addicts, the homeless, single moms, etc., so that you could help people get the real help they need instead of just throwing a few bucks at them? What if you **volunteered** at a shelter for battered women, orphans, addicts,

or the homeless, and really got to **know** some people.

E.The church can and should make a difference in the lives of the people who need it most. But we must do it in ways that steward kingdom resources well, ultimately pointing people to the gospel, bringing glory to God; not just making us feel better about ourselves. That might just be a mask for our narcissism.

IV.But did you notice that Paul's instructions to do good to everyone didn't end with a period, but continued with a comma. **Galatians 6:10 ESV** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and ***especially to those who are of the household of faith.*** Paul seems to be saying that as we do

our good works, that there should be a priority placed on those whom we call “brother and sister”.

A. Paul is not saying that we **only** do good to those in the church, but that we **especially** do good to them; to those who are a part of the body of Christ!

1. He is not alone in this! Time and time again, the writers of the New Testament place the emphasis of their command to generous, sacrificial love in the context of brothers and sisters in Christ, and not just on the lost.

a) **James 2:14 ESV** What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?
15 If a **brother** or **sister** is poorly

clothed and lacking in daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? **17** So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (The context is the church!)

b) **1 John 3:16 ESV** By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives *for the brothers*. **17** But if anyone has the world's goods and sees *his brother* in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? **18** Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in

deed and in truth. (Help the “brothers”!)

2. But that is not the only place in the New Testament where we find this kind of deference shown to the disciples in the charity of the church. In Jesus’ own words: **Matthew 25:34 ESV** Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. **35** For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36** I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ **37** Then the

righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? **38** And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? **39** And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' **40** And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these ***my brothers***, you did it to me.'

3. This famous reference is obviously about care for the household, as evidenced by the use of the term, "my brothers"!

B. So if this is true, how do we best show love and good deeds to the other members of the body?

1. What if you came to church each week with your ears tuned to find needs that only you could fill? What if this became a vital part of your worship?

a) One week you might find that someone has been sick, and could use childcare or a hot meal. Maybe someone lost a loved one, and you could send an encouraging email, or flowers. Maybe you know a lot about cars or computers, and could lend a hand to someone that doesn't have your skill. Maybe you could help an elderly member with something they can no longer easily do. There may even occasionally be an opportunity to cover a bill, or buy some needed

item that someone else can't afford.

b) Maybe instead of just tossing a quarterly donation in the basket for our missionaries, you could shoot them an email and ask how you can be praying for them. Maybe you could dig deeper into their needs and see if there's some unique way that you could be used to fill that need.

2. It doesn't really matter **how** we bear each others burdens, but that we are **willing** to genuinely serve each other in ways that God points out to us. Who wouldn't want to go to a church that is living like that?

C. And why wait until next week? Why don't you listen carefully for a way to help today. Paul said, "As we have

opportunity”. If God’s lays an opportunity before you this morning, what will you say? Will obey or avoid; acknowledge or deny?

D. Will you seriously consider the fact that the way you serve your brothers and sisters in the body, is really the way you are serving Jesus? Or will you look into his face one day and say, “Lord, when? where? We didn’t know that was **you!**”

V. May God make NRLC a church that has not just an open mouth to proclaim the gospel, but an open heart to the needs of each other and to the world, along with open hands that give **all the time** as unto Christ, instead of clenched fists and white knuckles that grasp tightly to these passing things!

1 Corinthians 11:23 ESV For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Life Groups Tonight

***Children's Ministry Meeting
immediately after church next week
(lunch and childcare provided)***

***Corn Maze Fellowship, Next Week,
5:30, 6323 FM 1294 Lubbock 79415***

Lunch at Furr's across from the mall

¹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/factchecker-misquoting-francis-of-assisi/>

² *ibid*

³ "Now, there is a double link of connection between the preceding words and our text; for 'do good' looks back to 'well-doing,' and the word rendered 'opportunity' is the same as that rendered 'season.' So, then, two thoughts arise--'well-doing' includes doing good to others, and is not complete unless it does." MacLaren, Alexander. *MacLaren's Commentary (Expositions Of Holy Scripture) 32 Books In 1 Volume.: An Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Kindle Locations 138658-138660). www.DelmarvaPublications.com. Kindle Edition.

⁴ *ibid* (Kindle Locations 138660-138664)

⁵ Luke 10:25-37

⁶ see Leviticus 19:18