

Sunday Service Sermons

17 January 2021

Restoring the Fallen Brethren

Text: "Brethren, if a person is overtaken in any trespass, you, who are spiritual, should restore them in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted." Gal. 6:1 of Gal. 6:1-10.

I believe that the abuse of helping one another has inhibited most of us from trying.

"I say this in love." has been used to promote oneself over others.

Or to gossip about others.

I have never been encouraged about anything that has begun with those words.

But I have been told off that way.

Maybe I should say I have been measured and come up short that way.

The plumb line being the person's own agenda.

It may be that it happened 50 years ago but the memory is still burned into me.

How do we help someone do better when we know that they have failed?

You know that I believe that the best way to lighten another's load is to shoulder up and help them carry it.

It is not to shine a light on it.

We need to be aware that we cannot change anyone.

Only the Holy Spirit can do that.

We are not called to correct.

We are called to love.

Wow! I just had a thought.

If you come to a brother or sister, whom you know is in trouble, with God or man, and show them love, how powerful would that be.

What did Jesus say?

I come not to condemn but to save.

The world is good at condemning.

Christians are to be good at loving.

Are we?

Maybe by loving someone it opens them up so the Holy Spirit can help them.

It just might work that way.

The church of the living God is the family of God.

A local congregation is a tangible expression of that family of faith.

In the household of faith we are brothers and sisters, and we have mutual responsibilities to relate to each other as children of the Father God.

The all-inclusive law that should prevail in the family of faith is the law of love.

As members of the family of faith, we are also servants of Jesus Christ.

We have been given the mission of evangelizing the world.

We can accept that but how about our next door neighbor?

Much harder to evangelize that person isn't it?

The biggest handicap in witnessing to others is the fact that they know people who claim to be Christian but do not live as they should.

Why do I want to be like them?

Or, I am a better person than they are.

I was raised with someone who grew up in Empire and knew the generation before mine and was convinced that he was as good, or even better, than those who attended this church.

It was hard to convince him that we are saved, redeemed, not perfect.

We all need the blood of Christ to pay the ransom for our sins.

But today we are thinking about how we can restore one who we have come to know has fallen from grace, shall we say.

As a pastor I hear about those who some feel are not living up to the standard.

I do not often hear how the person talking has gone to them and offered the love of God to that person.

We are so small now that this is not happening much anymore.

So think of it this way.

How would we react if someone in the community we know is not all that they should be came in to worship with us?

There have been a few who have come to test the waters and seldom come back.

True it is not always our reaction to them that inhibits them from returning or even coming in the first place.

They feel out of place because of what they know about themselves.

But how can we overcome that?

The love of God can overcome that.

Right now there are three people who come for food that would like to be in worship with us but are afraid that they would not be accepted or feel comfortable here.

You can pray for them to come and if they do make sure that they feel welcome.

That we are all the same here.

We all need the salvation offered by God through Christ.

Today's lesson focuses more on one of our own that has fallen away.

In that situation it is not for us to point out their faults, and flaws, and chastise them.

No one is scolded back into fellowship.

They can only be loved back into fellowship.

If we are truly spiritual, which I take to mean, following the leading of the Holy Spirit, then we are called to reach out in love, breaching the gap of sin, and welcome the straying one back into fellowship.

For it is only when in fellowship that they can be redeemed.

There can be a warm fire in the house, but if you are not invited into the house you cannot warm yourself by the fire.

In one of my guides for today the term "Brethren" is defined.

We who call ourselves Brethren have come to debate if it is a sexist term.

It simply means the plural of Brothers and Sisters.

When brothers and sister gather they become Brethren.

For Paul being spiritual is being lead by the Holy spirit.

And in being lead by the Holy Spirit one then would exhibit the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Every born-again Christian needs to face up to the challenge of caring for the fallen brothers and sisters in the congregation or in the community.

All of us stand in need of the ministry of restoration.

Why? None of us is perfect!

We continue to live in and be a part of an unchanged human nature.

We all need continual new-birth.

Sin is all around us and even within us.

The devil is working continually to deceive, to defeat, and to destroy us.

He never sleeps and he can do his work while we are sleeping.

Our guard can never drop in regard to his effort to overcome us.

We, as church members, should be constantly assisting one another toward spiritual maturity.

The work does not stop with the baptism.

Together we become, so we should be helping each other become as God wants us to be.

We must constantly be aware that any and all of us can be lead astray.

That is why we need the family of faith to strengthen us and help us be victorious in our faithfulness to God.

If you dare, listen to this one.

An improper response to being hurt or disappointment in someone else can cause us to fall into an improper attitude and spirit that can lead us astray.

This happens continually in human interaction.

Kathy's new phrase is, delete and go on.

It is so difficult to forgive and forget.

The forgive is a must for us as Christians.

We all have been hurt, sometimes it is intentional and sometime it is accidental.

If possible go to that person and talk it out.

Some people hold back because they know who they are and are sure that if you really knew them you would shun them.

Our love should be so strong that no one feels unlovable due to their past.

God is in the business of restoring our souls.

Leading us to good places.

Feeding us in the midst of our difficult situations and protecting us at every turn.

One of the inhibitors in the process of our efforts in redemption is an attitude of self-righteousness.

Lord I am so glad that I am not a sinner like that person is.

No you're not, you are your own kind of sinner.

None are righteous, no not one.

Also a critical spirit is an enemy of redemption.

Gentleness and love are the tools of redemption.

Jesus was constantly criticized for being in the company of sinners.

They are the ones who needed him.

You cannot help someone who you are not in contact with.

That is the core of Friendship Evangelism.

Befriend and redeem.

Here are some ways to help others come into the family of God.

Put love to work for others.

Practice forgiveness toward all people.

Lift others up before God in prayer.

Encourage each other to draw close to Jesus.

Draw near and listen to others.

Reach out to those you usually avoid.

Encourage one another in spiritual growth.

Bring people in and make them feel at home in the family of God.

Be the love of God and the grace of God to all people.

The words of today's text reveal our personal responsibility toward one another in the household of faith.

Our love can help another return to a closeness with God.

It is our duty and responsibility to bring one another into the fullness of life in Christ.

Maybe we need the slogan, "Leave no one behind" to be our motto also.

So that, together, we can all enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Enjoying the Kingdom of God forever more.