

In our New Testament lesson Paul concludes his letter to the Galatians with practical advice for life in the community of the church. The principle of “bearing one another’s burdens” applies to those found in transgression to shared work, to the support of teachers, and to all other aspects of life in the body of Christ. The apostle warns again of the dangers of those who would pervert gospel liberty by the imposition of the law, speaking specifically of those who would require circumcision for Gentile believers. It is the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ alone which is sufficient and the only source of confidence. Hear now these words from Paul’s letter to the Galatians

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, 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 they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load. Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever 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.

See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule - to the Israel of God.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

In the gospel story Jesus appoints seventy-two missionaries to go before him and gives them their instructions. The number recalls the leaders who were once chosen to assist Moses in his work and signifies all the nations of the world. The narrative is meant to prefigure the evangelization of every land. The ministry of proclamation and of healing is a

matter of urgency and brings judgment on all who fail to receive its messengers. The disciples are representatives of Jesus in a battle with the powers of evil. Hear now these words from the gospel of Luke.

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’

“Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

This is the word of the Lord. **May the reading and the hearing of your word inform our minds, comfort our souls and guide our feet.**