**Galatians 6.1-end**

(Wednesday 24th June 2020)

We have been thinking about how Paul reacted to the serious division that was occurring in this community, between those who were behaving in a way which was, in effect, saying that Gentile Christians must embrace the Jewish faith. We have now reached the final chapter and Paul’s summing up of the consequences of what he has been saying and his ending of the letter in his own hand.

First, they should concentrate on care and support of each other. He says to them that they should, ***“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ”*** (6,2)

In this context he encourages them to examine their own contribution and to make sure that each is pulling their own weight. They are a fellowship, and no one should be simply just receiving. Yet they should be realistic in the evaluation of their own contribution (6.4).

Notice too how he encourages them to look after those who are supporting them. In other words, they must become the kind of fellowship that truly reflects the one whose Name they now have taken. That family likeness should be so obvious, and it should be something that now just happens naturally.

He sums all this up in his final four verses of his dictation,

*“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.”*

He then stops his dictating to write the last few lines himself, *“See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand”.* There is some evidence that Paul suffered from eye problems and this would fit in with that. It also says something about the love that he has for all the churches he founded.

His final call to them is to dismiss the “Circumcision Group” as ones looking to their own self-interest, *“they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh”* (6.13). But that is all passed, God has moved on to the completion of his plan they are in danger of going backwards.

Many would argue that this is Pauls’ first letter written somewhere around 46 AD. (The first Gospel (Mark) is usually dated about 70 AD.) So, we have been looking at our earliest link to the beginning of the Christian faith.

On that score, it’s rather a special bit of scripture!

**Prayers**

(just a few thoughts!)

* Let’s remember those who are suffering from Covid infections at this time and also those who are close to them.
* Pray for those recently bereaved.
* Pray for folk who are still finding this “lockdown” so difficult to handle and for those who are worrying and trying to care for them.
* Let’s remember those known to each of us who are suffering from other chronic ailments and who are finding it difficult to get their normal care and support.
* Please pray for the teams who are working towards finding a therapy and a vaccine.
* Continue to hold in your prayers those in the NHS who are still very much the “front line”: and for their families who must continue to worry about them.
* Pray for those we know who are not well at this time. Continue to pray for Rebecca.
* Remember our government leaders and the scientists who advise them. They clearly need our prayers particularly as they advise on the steps to come out of lock-down
* Continue to that the world-wide response to the killing of George Floyd in America will lead to an acceptance of each other as “A person for whom Christ died”, irrespective of any skin colour.