

**Galatians 6:1-10, 14-18**  
**"Love One Another"**  
**Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**

**July 2/3, 2016**  
**Our Redeemer Lutheran**  
**Vicar Peter Adelsen**

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

**[Intro]**

Mandisa Hundley, a gospel singer, was one of the 12 finalists on *American Idol* in 2006.

When she met with judges Simon Cowell, Paula Abdul, and Randy Jackson to find out if she had made it through to the next round, however, she got a stinging comment from Simon.

After Mandisa had sung, who was heavysset, Simon asked the other judges, "Do we have a bigger stage this year?"

When she had entered the room to learn the judges' verdict, Mandisa looked right at Simon and said:

*"Simon, a lot of people want me to say a lot of things to you. But this is what I want to say: Yes, you hurt me, and I cried, and it was painful. But I want you to know that I've forgiven you, and that you don't need someone to apologize to forgive somebody. And I figure that if Jesus could die so that all of my wrongs could be forgiven, I can certainly extend that same grace to you. I wanted you to know that."*

Simon apologized and hugged the singer and Mandisa discovered she had advanced to the next round.

You see, Mandisa was walking by the Spirit in forgiving Simon and restoring him in a spirit of gentleness.

What would you have done if someone would have said something like Simon said to you?

**[Walk by the Spirit]**

In today's epistle reading, the Apostle Paul, through Inspiration, is writing to the Galatians and us today to do good rather than evil and to help others, especially fellow Christians.

Paul writes: **"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness"** (Galatians 6:1a).

Oh, how easy it is to seek revenge when somebody has done you wrong.

Would you have sought revenge upon Simon if he told you what he said of Mandisa?

This week's epistle starts off where last week's epistle ended.

Last week, Paul wrote that Christians should *not submit again to a yoke of slavery* (Galatians 5:1). This yoke is following the works of the flesh, rather than liberty when being led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:17).

When we walk by the Spirit, we bear the fruit of the Spirit.

We bear the fruit of the Spirit when we express love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness and self-control.

### **[Culture]**

But, the world today – our culture today – often says that if you express the fruit of the Spirit, then you are weak.

Of course, the world around us would not express these virtues as “fruits of the Spirit.” For the world, does not want to acknowledge God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The world would just call these virtues as weak, or sissy.

The world today is quick on getting revenge for whatever cause or reason.

Just look back at the unrest in Ferguson, Baltimore, or Staten Island, New York.

There were many people, including Christian leaders, who were calling for works of the flesh: Strife and fits of anger, because in their opinion: “No justice, no peace.”

The second half of the opening verse reads: *“Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted”* (Galatians 6:1b).

Oh, we are tempted all the time.

It is our natural instinct to avenge when we perceive that someone has been wronged. Who here has never held a grudge?

But, at the same time, we need to realize that vengeance belongs only to God.

*“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord”* (Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30; Deuteronomy 32:35).

For this reason, Paul is teaching us Christians to keep an eye on our own actions, so we don't fall into the Devil's trap.

***[Law of Christ]***

So, instead of falling into the Devil's trap, we are to lift up our fellow believer whenever they are caught in a sin.

But, be careful to ***keep watch on yourself, so we are not tempted.***

When we rebuke a fellow Christian of their sin, how often have we fallen into sin?

At the same time, that sin should not be ignored. It needs to be rebuked and repented of. Our fellow brother or sister needs to be "restored".

Paul tells us to ***"bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"*** (Galatians 6:2).

Correcting and admonishing a Christian brother or sister is not lording it over him or her. It is helping that person. It is sharing a burden, making it our own and showing a genuine concern about it, so that in a real sense we are joining him or her in carrying it.

By doing so, we are "fulfilling the law of Christ."

Law of Christ? What is this?

"Law" in this use does not mean a legal requirement, but rather, a model to follow.

As Christians, we don't follow the "Law of Christ" to earn favor or merit with God, rather what we do is out of appreciation for all of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

The Law of Christ is this: ***"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"*** (Galatians 5:14b).

***[Reap Eternal Life]***

We are to love our neighbor – those we see next door, those we see at the department store and those we see out on the highway – as yourself.

By doing so, we do not sow to our own flesh, but instead sow to the Spirit. When we sow to the Spirit, we will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

For this reason, we do good works. We do good works – not to be saved by them – but in thanks for what Jesus Christ has done for us. We do good works in thanksgiving for what Our Savior has done for us upon the Cross, as a sacrifice for our sins.

With His death and resurrection from the tomb, Jesus has made us just like Him – as white as snow – for all who put their faith and trust in Him!

As Paul writes to us: ***“So then, as we have the opportunity – since time is short – let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith”*** (Galatians 6:10).

Your lives – as believers in Christ – give witness to an identity in Christ and the Spirit. The Spirit is seen in how we live and what we do.

### ***[Independence Day]***

Now, this weekend we celebrate Independence Day. We celebrate our earthly freedom from tyranny with fireworks and sparklers. We celebrate George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison for risking it all for us at the founding of this Republic.

We continue to celebrate all those who have stood up for us to preserve our freedom.

I would like to close with a few quotes from President George Washington’s Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1789:

*“Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor...*

*“And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions...*

*“To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue...”<sup>1</sup>*

You see, George Washington realized that the new country had been caught in many transgressions through war and needed to be restored and made right with God. So he chose to walk by the Spirit in asking God for forgiveness.

So, let us always do good to everyone as we walk in our faith. Amen.

Now, let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord! Amen!

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<sup>1</sup> The American Republic: Primary Sources, “George Washington’s Thanksgiving Proclamation, October 3, 1789” (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund), 69.