

Important Words in Galatians 6:1

By Mark McWhorter

The apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Galatia. The name of the letter is Galatians. In chapter six and verse one we read, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

The word in the Greek translated as “restore” is a very interesting word. It was used by the Greeks to mean several different things. We will look at a few of these meanings in this article and see how they may apply.

Mending a Net

The word was used for mending a net. In the first century, nets were used for fishing. These nets were very important. If they became broken, the fishermen could not catch the fish. Every time a fisherman came back from fishing, he would look over his net. He would inspect the entire net to make sure that there were no broken places and that there were no weak places. If he found such, he would fix it. He would try to make the net be as good as it was when new.

We are to do this with members of the church who are broken spiritually. We need to look them over very carefully and see where the problem is. Then, we need to do whatever is needed to fix them spiritually. We want to help them become just as good as when they became new Christians.

It is interesting to think of a Christian as a net. God tells us, that as Christians, we are to be fishers of men. If a Christian is spiritually broken, he cannot catch other men. He must be a good, sound Christian. (And a net can only catch fish if it is thrown into the water. So, a Christian must be willing to go out and catch. It is useless to have a sound net and not cast it out.)

Be sure you are a sound net. And make sure you know how to mend other nets. The only way to do this is to know God’s Word, the Bible.

Fix a Broken Bone

Have you ever had a broken bone? I have. I have broken a finger, a toe and a bone in my neck. Having a broken bone hurts. A broken bone will keep you from doing things as well as you should.

When I had my toe broken, I could not walk or run as I should. When I had a broken finger, I could not do things with my hand like I should be able to. And, when I had the broken bone in my neck, I felt like I did not want to do much of anything.

Most broken bones must be fixed by a doctor. He will put the bone back together (set it) if it is completely broken in two pieces. Then he will put a splint or a cast on it. This will keep the bones from moving while they heal. After a certain amount of time, the bone will be healed and the splint or cast can be removed.

The word “restore” in the verse above is from a Greek word that was used for fixing a broken bone. Even in ancient Greece and Italy, doctors fixed broken bones.

Paul says that Christians need to fix the spiritual broken bones of Christians who have stumbled from the faith. We must carefully look at the fallen brother and see what needs to be fixed. Then, we must carefully set the problem in order and put a splint or cast on it to help it heal. This means we must be patient sometimes with the fallen brother. Some problems will take time to heal. And, we must know what kind of cast to use to help it heal.

We must be gentle but firm as we put the bones back in place. Sometimes the doctor must put very firm pressure on the bones to get them back in place. It hurts the patient a great deal. The doctor does his best to not make it hurt too much. But, the doctor and patient both know that sometimes the hurt must happen for the bone to heal right. Sometimes spiritually broken bones will require the person to hurt a great deal. We must let the person know that the hurt is necessary for the proper healing to take place.

Study your Bible. Learn the Word of God. Know how to avoid falling and breaking your spiritual bones. And, learn how to help those who break theirs.

Supplying the Army with Provisions

Every kingdom has an army. This army is used to defend the kingdom. And at times is necessary to invade and defeat an evil enemy. The army is used to battle the enemy.

Therefore, it is important to keep the soldiers of the army well supplied. They need plenty of food so that they can keep up their strength. They need good weapons so that they can fight at the same level as the enemy. They need good information as to where the enemy is and how the enemy plans to attack.

Without any of this, the army is sure to be defeated. Sometimes the army does not get what it needs because those in charge decide they know better than the King of the kingdom. They may decide to go out on their own and disobey orders. Then they get in trouble and can only get out of the trouble with the help of others who bring the supplies and information that they need.

In Galatians 6:1, we read, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” The Greek word translated “restore” is used to describe this process of supplying the army with their provisions.

Paul is saying that Christians must supply the fallen soldier with the necessary supplies for him to become the good soldier he should be. This soldier may have gone out on his own thinking he knew better than God. But, now he is to be given the proper supplies and the proper directions so that he can fight the enemy, Satan.

Of course, spiritually, the Word of God, the Bible, is what contains the supplies and directions that the spiritual soldier needs. Read it and obey it. Do not become a fallen soldier. And, be ready to take supplies to soldiers that fall.

Manning the Fleet

In ancient times, many empires were very dependent on some type of shipping fleet. This was particularly true of the empires around the Mediterranean Sea. There was a great deal of shipping done across the Mediterranean.

This shipping helped different nations trade their goods for other goods. This shipping helped nations grow and expand. This shipping increased the economies of the nations involved.

Ships were used to transport businessmen, prisoners and even important politicians. Traveling by ship saved valuable time that would have been lost to travel around the coasts by land. Important messages could arrive quickly.

Each empire also had a navy. They did not necessarily call it a navy, but these ships fought battles on the water for their nation. These ships also carried supplies to armies in distant lands. And, these ships transported soldiers to distant lands.

An important task was getting the men to work on these ships. The fleet needed good sailors who would make sure the ships arrived safely. At times, the sailing could be difficult. The sailors might waver in their wanting to continue. It was important to keep these sailors on their jobs. And, it was important to continue to find more sailors.

The word “restored” in Galatians 6:1 was used to refer to this job of “manning the fleet.” At times, some Christians decide to leave the job of manning the ship. It is our duty to get them back to the ship. The ship (the church) needs every person doing his job well. Every person is important in the church. For the church to effectively take the message of the Gospel to the world, every person needs to be manning his station. For the church to grow spiritually, every person needs to be manning his station well. For the church to fight the battle for truth against Satan, every person needs to work his best at his station.

Be the good sailor you should be. Read the Bible to learn what you should do. And, help to man the fleet. When you see a fellow sailor fall away, bring him back to the ship.

Bring Him Into Line

Every nation has a set of laws. Citizens are expected to live by those laws. Each nation has its own form of government. Those serving in the government are expected to abide by the laws of the nation. They are also expected to serve in the government by abiding by certain rules.

When those serving in the government no longer stay within the rules and laws, they are considered poor government representatives. This may be because the person is unaware of the particular rules and laws that he is breaking. Other government

representatives go to the person and try to persuade this person to change his ways. They try to bring the person “into line.” This means that the person will now govern and represent in a proper way according to all the laws and regulations.

In Galatians 6:1, we are told to “restore” a brother who has been caught in an error. The word “restore” in this verse was the Greek word used to describe “bringing into line” the person who no longer was living by the rules.

As Christians, we are to live by the rules of God’s kingdom, the church. There are certain ways we are to behave. There are certain ways we are to represent God to the world. When we are not doing that, other Christians have the duty to “bring us into line.”

We should always be kind as we try to bring others into line. We do this because there is the possibility that someday we will need to be brought into line. And, we want to treat others like we would want to be treated.

Study God’s Word to know how you should behave. Learn God’s laws for his kingdom, the church.

We should always read our Bible. It has the truth and solid ground for us to spiritually walk on. But, at times, we need the help of others to see things that we do not see. And, we need their help when we unintentionally fall.