

A sermon **What Really Counts**
From the Text: Galatians 6:1–16
Preached at Plymouth Presbyterian Church
St. Helens, Oregon
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Introduction:

When the Apostle Paul nears the end of his freedom letter to the Galatians, he drops this powerful line:

“For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!”
(Gal. 6:15)

In other words, the things people used to brag about—what team they’re on, what background they come from, what rule they followed—don’t really count anymore. What **really counts** is whether we are living as new creations in Christ.

So what does that look like? How can we measure what really counts?

Paul gives us a roadmap in Galatians 6. Let’s draw three guiding applications from this passage.

Application 1: Restoring Others Gently Is What Really Counts

“Brothers and sisters, if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.” (Gal. 6:1)

Paul doesn’t say:

“If someone messes up, shame them.”

He doesn’t say: “Talk about them behind their back.”

What Paul does say:

He says: “Restore them. Gently.”

Example:

Years ago, a church I knew had a deacon who quietly stepped away from leadership. Some thought he was just burned out. It came out later that he was struggling with addiction. One member, a retired teacher, took him out for lunch every week for six months. Never judged. Just listened. Shared scripture. Encouraged recovery.

That man came back—not just to church, but to *life*. That’s restoration. That’s what really counts. Restoring Others Gently Is What Really Counts

We can either carry stones or carry burdens. Only one of those is Christian.

Application 2: Persevering in Doing Good Is What Really Counts

“Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.” (Gal. 6:9)

It’s easy to get discouraged when you don’t see results. We plant kindness, but weeds of indifference grow. We try to forgive, but conflict lingers. We work hard, but nothing seems to change.

Paul says: *Don’t stop*. The harvest is coming. Just keep sowing the right seed.

Example:

In a small-town food pantry ministry, a volunteer kept bringing groceries to an elderly man who never said thank you. Just grumbled. After a year, the man called the volunteer and said, “I just wanted you to know, I cleaned my apartment today. I want to come to church tomorrow.”

Sometimes what we plant today takes root long after we've walked away.
Don't give up. Your small acts of goodness are seeds in God's soil.

Application 3: Living from Grace, Not Ego, Is What Really Counts

"May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Gal. 6:14)

Paul once prided himself on his religious resume. Now, all he boasts in is the cross. He's not building a brand; he's living from grace.

We live in a culture of constant comparison:

- "How big is your church?"
- "How perfect is your family?"
- "How productive is your week?"

But Paul says what matters is not how impressive we look—it's whether our lives reflect the love and sacrifice of Jesus.

Example:

There are those in our congregation who send handwritten birthday cards to members in this church. It's not flashy. They doesn't post about it. But you know what? Those who receive those cards remember.

That's grace at work. Quiet. Steady. Real.

And it *counts*.

Conclusion: What Really Counts?

Not our religious track record.

Not how many spiritual gold stars we think we've earned.

What really counts is this:

- Are we helping to restore others with gentleness?
- Are we persevering in doing good, even when it's hard?
- Are we living from grace, not ego?

Paul ends his letter with a blessing:

"Peace and mercy be upon all who follow this rule, the Israel of God." (Gal. 6:16)

Let that be said of us— we are people who live by what really counts.

Amen.