

Audio Transcript:

40 Days, Week 8

HS = Hannah Schindler

JM = Joel Muddamalle

Music

HS: Hi and welcome friends! If you are studying with us live, then you know First 5 and Online Bible Studies are doing this study together! If you're doing this at a later date, whether it's an archived OBS study or in the First 5 app, we're so excited you are here. Each weekend, we have an audio teaching to connect the chapters we studied this past week. This is where we will be able to dig deeper into the Scripture and content we studied together. So we just finished Week 8, our final week of our study, *The Answers to Your Deepest Longings: 40 Days Through the Bible*. My name is Hannah Schindler, and I get to serve on the First 5 team here at Proverbs 31 Ministries. Today we have joining us our director of theology and research, Joel Muddamalle. How's it going Joel?

JM: I'm doing great, Hannah. I cannot believe it is — what in the world? That just flew by!

HS: Isn't that crazy? I mean, it's truly — it's such a shock! Guys, we hope that you have loved this study as much as we have. It has been an honor to do this study together. Joel, I'm excited for your teaching, but let me read our Major Moments before you jump in.

- Galatians 6: God began inspiring the New Testament writings of the Bible.
- Acts 15: Paul, Silas and Timothy set out on their second missionary journey.
- Acts 18: Paul sets out on his third missionary journey.
- Acts 28: Paul ministered to the Roman government and people of Rome.
- Revelation 1: Jesus disclosed to John that He will return in glory and final victory.

OK, Joel. I know we covered a lot this week so I'm excited for your teaching today.

JM: Yeah! Me, too. As I was getting ready and preparing for the teaching — first of all, if you've got your Bibles, jump to Galatians 6. We're gonna spend most of our time in just the first couple verses there. Hannah, I was thinking about our major theme for this week. When we're talking about a longing for the Lord to return —

HS: Mmm

JM: I began to think about just how ... What just very practically, right ... What do you and I do while we're waiting? I'm gonna ask you a question. We didn't prep for this ahead of time.

HS: No, we did not! [laughing]

JM: Hannah does not like when I do this to her, but I think we get the best answers when we do this. So, I'm putting her on the spot. Hannah, when you are waiting for something that you are super excited and stoked about ... what is it that you do in the waiting period?

JM: Hannah, I've got a question for you. I'm just curious; when you are waiting for something, not something small, but something exciting, like you are just so stoked for this to take place, what do you do in the midst of your waiting?

HS: If I am waiting at my home, let's say for someone to arrive or maybe I'm waiting to see this new TV show on Netflix — let's be real —

JM: Right!

HS: I'm gonna keep refreshing on Netflix —

JM: Oh, this is so good.

HS: — and wait until midnight. Then if I'm waiting at home, I'm pacing back and forth, I'm checking the windows. My dog is probably on the couch looking up at the window waiting for that person as well, especially if it's for Brian, my husband, to come home. Bentley and I are both in the window anticipating seeing his lights come down our streets.

JM: If anyone is wondering, "Hannah, is Bentley really on the couch waiting?" I have seen proof on Instagram of Bentley patiently waiting, like, patiently enduring and waiting for Brian to come home. So this is so true. Now this is what I find so very interesting, and I think this is one of those subconscious things that we do. If you are listening to this right now, depending on where you are, you may even want to just pause and just ask this question for yourself and try to identify what is it behaviorally, emotionally, maybe in your thought processes — what is it that you do in the midst of waiting? I have a suspicion that whatever it is that we do while we're waiting is an indication of the condition of our heart and probably some indication of more that's going on. For instance, I'm gonna do a little bit of suggestion. I know you a little bit, Hannah, right?

HS: Mm-hmm.

JM: You're pacing, right? It's because there is a restless energy inside of you and you gotta get that pacing out.

HS: Yeah.

JM: You walk back and forth. Sitting on the couch and watching Bentley wait and watch for Brian, it's even something in your mind that gets your mind off of it. So now you're just paying attention to what Bentley is doing. For all of us, what I want to identify is that while we're

waiting, typically, it's not just passive activity. Even if it is passive, our mind is racing, and I have, again, a really strong suspicion that truly, if we get to the very core of it, your fingers are doing something; your feet are tapping.

HS: Mm-hmm

JM: You are — there is an anxiousness about you. I began to think about this longing that we've had this week. As I think about our longing for the Lord to return, what is it that you and I do in the between?

HS: Mmm.

JM: What is it that we do? How do we act and how do our actions really give indication of the condition of our hearts? Again, I'm asking this question: Is our heart conditioned and postured in a place to receive and to welcome the coming King of Heaven and Earth? Or is there some work that needs to be done to get us to that place to where we can receive him? What I love about Galatians 6, and some of you might be thinking, "Joel, how in the world are we going to get from a longing for the Lord to return to Galatians 6 — *'bear one another's burdens,'*" right?

HS: Mmm.

JM: That might be what is on the top of your headline, but let me suggest this. What I believe the Apostle Paul is doing is he is giving us marching instructions — marching orders — on what our life is supposed to look like while we wait patiently for the return of the King. I think it is great indication that our actions — what it is you and I do, what we think, how we act, how we behave — are all indications of the readiness of our hearts to receive the righteous King of Heaven. Right when we start off, we find a bit of a tension. So I'm just going to read a few verses of the text, Galatians 6:1-4. This is what Paul says: "*Brothers,*" and in the Greek this could be brothers and sisters. "*Brothers [and sisters], if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.*" And then this is key, "*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself, but let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load*" (Galatians 6:1-5).

JM: One of Paul's — you know, Paul has some favorite phrases. If you've heard me teach before, you may have heard me say this. Whenever we see that phrase "one another," it's a Greek reciprocal pronoun. It's the Greek word *allelon*. What this word means in the Greek context, if you were in the ancient Greco-Roman world and you heard Paul say this Greek word, instantly in your heart, in your mind, you'd recollect that there is a ferocity of expected relationship that is equitable amongst two people. So in other words, the same way that I am going to

ferociously love and care for my family members is the expectation that that is reciprocally received and then returned.

HS: Hmm.

JM: The other person is going to do it as well. This is not a one-sided love; this is not a one-way relationship. Again, if you've ever been in one of those relationships, I think you know how devastating that can be. In fact, you're probably not going to be in that relationship for too long, right?

HS: Mm-hmm.

JM: What we find here is a balance and a tension that there seems to be indication of responsibility for both people. But notice this, that Paul, he actually shifts from individual responsibility and corporate implication or corporate responsibilities. What do I mean by that? Notice that what he says in verse 5, "*For each will have to bear his own load*" (Galatians 6:5), what he's saying is that we have to also – He says this elsewhere throughout these first verses, in verses 6 and 7 and definitely in verse 2. He says be careful that you yourself aren't tempted, right? What he's saying is that we have a personal responsibility because we have personally experienced the goodness of the gospel and the gospel teaches us how to live and how to act. However, that personal responsibility doesn't end at just me, myself and I. That personal responsibility fleshes itself out corporately in my relationship with my neighbors, in my relationship with my loved ones.

JM: The context here: Paul is talking – it seems like – within the household of faith, but there's also implications that this is extending outside of the household of faith. There's one way that we're supposed to relate to brothers and sisters in the body of Christ and then, also, there's the way that we're supposed to relate to those that are on the outside. Here is what Paul is actually doing: He's referencing — when he says "*Bear one another's burdens*" (Galatians 6:2), he's not speaking in isolation, but he's actually referencing Psalm 55:22, where we've got the Lord Himself who is doing this. This is what Psalm 55:22 says: "*Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*"

HS: Mmm.

JM: The same idea is echoed in 1 Peter 5:7, where Peter says, "*casting all your anxieties on him...*" Why? Because "*...he cares for you*" (1 Peter 5:7). What we actually find in these verses is that when you and I — as family members of the household of God — when we bear each other's burdens, when we care for each other, we're actually acting in the same manner as God Himself. It is a divine-like characteristic, and we're called to that. In fact, God Himself — the God-Man, Jesus, the Son of God — He bears the burden of the iniquity of humanity. All of sin,

all the guilt, is laid on Him; He bears it on our behalf. We see this modeled in perfection with Jesus Himself.

HS: Mm-hmm.

JM: Again, this is this larger story that we're always being invited into — into Scripture. We never have to go somewhere that the Lord Himself has not Himself gone. He's just inviting us —

HS: Right.

JM: — to follow Him in His journey. I love what Charles Spurgeon says in relation to this verse, I just love his language. He says, "We who are joyous might often lend some of our sunbeams to those who are in the dark. And we ought to do so. It would be to our own profit as well as to the profit of others." I love that language of sunbeams, right?

HS: Sunbeams, yeah!

JM: Yeah! Who wouldn't want to experience moments of the sun shining on their face, especially when they've been in seasons of darkness?

HS: Mm-hmm. Yeah!

JM: I love the imagery because it's again evidence the light that is within us will always — there's never an instance that the darkness can overtake light.

HS: Right.

JM: Light always causes the darkness to recede. Then [Paul] moves on. He says, "Okay, so now you're supposed to *'bear one another's burdens'*" (Galatians 6:2), right? So this is our action while we're waiting and longing in anticipation for the return of the righteous King of Heaven and Earth. When we do this — this is really interesting. When we do this, we actually — this is verse 2, the end of verse 2 — we're fulfilling the law of Christ. There is an obedience that is taking place. What does it mean to fulfill the law of Christ? If we go back to Galatians 5:14, Paul already mentioned this. This is what Paul says, "*For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'*" (Galatians 5:14). We've heard this before, Jesus, the Great Commandment, right?

JM: The law can be summed up in this way, and then it goes on. What Paul said earlier in Galatians 5:14, right, that first section, was "*For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another...*" Notice that again, the reciprocal pronoun, *one another*, "*But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another*" (Galatians 5:14-15). In 5:14, Paul is actually creating a contrast, a juxtaposition, that we see a better way in Galatians 6. He says there is this one way

of living, and this one way of living is the way of the world. The way of the world is going to demand that you actually devour each other because it's all based off of your own selfish ambition and vain conceit (Phillipians 2:3), right? It's all about you, yourself —

HS: Mm-hmm.

JM: — how you can be elevated and exalted. But the way of the gospel is so different. The way of the Gospel says, actually, you have an individual responsibility, but that individual responsibility is meant to be used powerfully in the love that you have for your neighbors, which is a model of the love that God has had for us that we have seen in the perfection in Jesus on the cross. There's another theologian, a guy named Sage Dahd, and in his commentary on this verse, he says this, "The law of Christ is essentially concerned with the quality of the act and the direction in which it is moving." So catch that, it's the quality of the act —

HS: Mmm.

JM: — and the direction in which it is moving. So if I were to reverse this, and if I applied this verse to Galatians 5:14, 6:1-2, the same thing is present. There is the possibility that the quality of our action is not good and the direction in which it is moving is against the gospel, away from the Lord, and that is what happens when we devour each other in Galatians 5:14. But, when we bear each other's burdens in the same way that Jesus bore our burden, it's actually not a devouring of one another, but it is a celebration and honoring of one another. Then the quality of that act is righteous versus unrighteous, and the direction that it's moving us towards is Christlikeness, right? This is such an important reality that we find in Galatians 6. I want to finish our time with just three things that I think Paul is going to get to here. If you've got time, I want you to read Galatians 6. I think it's just good; you can do it in a couple of minutes.

HS: Mm-hmm.

JM: It's not hard at all, make some notes. I've categorized these three approaches as this: one is our posture, second is our perspective, and third is our position — so our posture, our perspective and our position. Ultimately, these all deal with our approach. The first one, the posture that you and I are commanded to have, right? This is essentially what Paul says. He says, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked" (Galatians 6:7). This is verse 8: "...the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:8). Then he goes on, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap" (Galatians 6:9). We have this entire language of where we reap and where we sow. Earlier on, what Paul says — is he talks about this deception against ourselves that if we think too much of ourselves that we will be deceived, ultimately, by our own selfishness. This is where Paul is reminding us that our posture of humility actually guards us against future humiliation.

HS: Mmm.

JM: Our posture of humility guards us against future humiliation, so we should not be deceived by ourselves. We shouldn't be deceived by a perception of our self-ability, a perception of our self-knowledge, a perception of our self-worth apart from the finished work of Christ on the cross. Here's what's brilliant: When we see ourselves rightly through the lens of Christ, we actually will see rightly and have the right perception about our ability because our ability is rooted in Christ, about our knowledge, because it's framed by Christ, and about our worth because it is worthy in Christ. Apart from Christ, we're not going to have a right view of ourselves. There's an ancient church Father by the name of Jerome. Jerome comments on this, and he really does an incredible job, but ultimately what he says is there's something deeper that is going on in these verses about our self-deception. He says that when we buy into this lie, ultimately, it's an indication that arrogance has taken over, and the presence of this arrogance leads to our own self-deception.

HS: Mmm.

JM: We have to be really careful that we're not a people who will be deceived by ourselves. You know, the Scriptures say that the heart is wicked amongst all things (Jeremiah 17:9). We need the right heart posture, but the right posture comes with humility when we see ourselves rightly in the light of who the Lord is. So that's the first thing, our posture. The second one is our perspective. There has to be a balanced perspective. Notice again in those first five or six verses of Galatians 6, we have both individual responsibility and corporate responsibility. The one flows into the other and the other has implications of the first one, right? What I'm trying to say is let's not isolate these two things and build what I would call a modern monastic society — like we just run to the hills. It's just me and myself and my little Christian community and we have no responsibility on earth. That's not what the Gospels teach us. The Gospels teach us that we have to be responsible with the Good News — in 2 Corinthians 5, the Great Commission, (Matthew 28:19-20) in the book of Acts, the words of Jesus — that we have a responsibility to preach and declare the good news of the gospel with both our works and with our words. It starts with us individually, but it works itself out corporately. That's the perspective — we have to have a right perspective.

JM: The last one is our position. Paul often is using this language of agriculture. You know, I'm not a farmer. [laughing] Hannah, you know this —

HS: You're not?! [laughing]

JM: I'm not. I don't know, y'all ... If you've been on my Instagram, you can probably count on your fingers how many times I've mentioned any type of farming or plants or anything. It's just

not happening. [laughing] I had to do a little bit of study, because I'm like, "Listen! He uses farming language all the time. What is going on?"

HS: Mm-hmm.

JM: Here's something interesting: I had an allergy test a while ago just to figure out what's going on because every now and then something happens with me when I eat pineapples, and I can't figure it out. Sometimes I'll eat pineapples and I'm great. Other times, I eat pineapples and my throat gets itchy and it's like I'm getting an allergic reaction, and I don't know what's going on. What I did — in the allergy test, I actually found out that I'm allergic not necessarily to the pineapples — this is crazy. What I'm actually allergic to is a type of the ground, of the soil, that the pineapple has actually been in.

HS: Wow!

JM: It is very possible that there is some ground, some soil that I'm totally good with. There is other ground that has something in its makeup that when the pineapple is in that ground growing, it actually causes an allergic reaction. What [inaudible] teaches us is that there is an indication, ultimately, that the position matters. What we reap we sow. We plant in the flesh; we reap corruption of the flesh. We plant in the Spirit; we reap the new life of the new creation empowered by the Spirit of God. We're marked by where we invest and where we plant. Our approach matters. The question is "In what soil are we planting in?"

HS: Mmm.

JM: [inaudible] we plant that's essentially where we're going to reap. Again, Paul in these verses is so clearly teaching us not to be deceived and not to be motivated to plant in the flesh because it's only going to reap what the flesh reaps, which is corruption and death.

HS: Mmm.

JM: If we plant in the Spirit, if we plant in the goodness of who the Lord is, and we allow the Spirit to work inside of us, we will reap the benefit, which is ultimately life with the Lord when He returns. I just wanted us to end with those reminders, right? What is our posture? What is our perspective? What is our position? That intentionality of our approach will prepare us to have the right heart, the right motivation, the right actions to live faithfully as representatives, as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, while we live as resident aliens on Earth.

HS: Mmm. That's so good, Joel! I love that last point when you were talking about position matters. You said, "What soil are we planting in?" I just think there are so many places that we can be planting in soil right now. There are so many things that are seeking our attention. What are we planting in our soil, and is it the flesh or in the Spirit?

JM: Mm-hmm.

HS: Thank you for this. I love that – I mean, I took so many notes I’m trying to even look over them to share a little more. I love that even at the beginning, you asked us our heart condition to receive Christ’s return. Are we in that season of anticipation? Are we serving him and serving our loved ones and our neighbors? Or are we just so focused on ourselves, kind of like you were talking about, that balanced perspective of the individual and the corporate responsibility? Joel, this was such a great teaching, a great way to wrap up our final week of the *40 Days* study. Any closing thoughts, Joel, as we finish the *40 Days* study?

JM: I would just say that the main thing that I have learned is that the object of your affection — wherever your affections are — is going to have direct impact and influence in your life. Again, at the very beginning of the *40 Days* study, we talked about how the heart — really Augustine — the heart is a pump, and it’s pumping out love. The fall knocks the heart off kilter, and it doesn’t stop pumping love, it just ceases to orient in the right direction, the appropriate direction. This is the tension of living in the already, but the not yet, in living in anticipation of the return of King Jesus. We’re always in the midst of a course correction. You let us see a boat out in the middle of the sea, and you let it sit for a while; it’s not going to be in the same spot because there are waves. It’s going to move it, it’s going to drift. Our hearts, at times, have a tendency because of the reality of sin to drift. We have to be so aware of the longings that our heart has, identify the lies that the world wants to tell us, that satisfaction is going to be met, and replace those lies with the truth of the gospel, with the scriptures, and reorient our hearts on the object of true affection which is Jesus Himself who can truly sustain and satisfy all of our needs. Then there’s a journey of faith to be able to walk that out without actually sometimes having that tangible, hands-on understanding in the moment. It’s an experiential journey that the Lord takes us on that actually, again, puts us in a posture of humility, gives us balance, perspective, and reminds us that the position of our hearts matters.

HS: Yeah, wow! I have nothing else to add. That is just, yeah — this study, guys, I hope that you have loved it as much as we have, and that you have seen this beautiful narrative of Jesus from Genesis to Revelation throughout the entire study, and how He was there in the beginning, He’s there in the end. That is where — that’s our home — that’s where we are going! I love that as we’re in this in between we get to have hope in Jesus. We get to have faith in Him, and trust Him, and love, and just adore Him. Guys, we are just so thankful that you have been a part of this study with us, and with that I am going to go ahead and close us in prayer.

HS: Father God, we just want to say thank You. Thank You for allowing us to be Your sons and daughters. Thank You so much for allowing us to be in a relationship with You, Jesus. Thank You for, like Joel said, we are able to replace the lies that the world tries to tell us with the gospel, with the good news of Jesus, with truth and hope of You, Lord. Jesus, thank You so much that

You came to this earth to die a horrible death and were raised from the dead so that we can have life in You, that we get to spend eternity with You. I pray for every person who has been a part of this study, or maybe today was your first day jumping in at the end of Week 8, that you have been able to hear that there is this beautiful posture that we can have. This posture of humility — that we can have a balanced perspective of our individual and corporate responsibility and that our position matters and what we [sow we reap]. God, I just thank You so much. I thank You for all that You've done in our lives, all that You are doing. Lord, we thank You for what You will do ahead. We know that like the end of the Bible that New Jerusalem is coming and that Eden will be restored. I pray for our hearts to just be in a posture to receive that joy and that excitement for that day. Lord, we love You and thank You. Amen.