

GALATIANS SESSION 4

Review: Last time we went through chapter 3 where Paul asks the question “The things that have begun in the Spirit, can they now be completed by the flesh?” He then goes on to explain the role that the law played and its intent. Its purpose was to drive us to faith in Christ, not to justify anyone. The legalists were focused on taking these New Testament Christians back to Moses, but Paul took them even further back to Abraham...showing that Abraham was justified by believing the promises of God. All those who have exercised faith in Christ for salvation are the spiritual children of Abraham.

Galatians 4:1-5 Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. *During the time that Paul wrote this, in Roman culture, a child was under tutor chosen by the father in his will until he was fourteen. At the age of fourteen, the boy came of age, but was still not free to do as he liked because he was then placed under the control of a curator until he is twenty-five. Only then did he come into his full inheritance. Adoption in their culture was about inheritance rather than entrance into a family. The point here is that a minor, although heir to a noble name, great expectations, wealth, honor, position etc. was still a minor and, for all practical purposes no better than a slave.*

The application is made that the law treated people as infant children. Everything has to be spelled out for little children. A child must be told when to get up, what to wear, when to eat, what to do, when to go to bed etc. From the time it gets up until it goes to bed it must be told what to do and where to go. Nearly all its decisions are made for it. Such was the law, such was the state of spiritual infancy of those under the law. Jesus Christ came to redeem those that were under the law, that they might move from rules to a relationship. He fulfilled the moral law in his life, and the ceremonial law in his death.

Galatians 4:6-7 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. *The new birth is the entrance into the family of God. We're not hoping to someday become the sons of God, we're sons of God now. Since we are sons, then we are no more slaves having to be under the law. The term “Abba” is equivalent to our English term “Daddy” an affectionate name used of a child to its father. It was forbidden to household slaves, as an acceptable form of address directed to the head of the family.*

Galatians 4:8-10 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. *The point Paul is making is that a relationship is superior to rules so why would you want to go backwards? All that the law can*

do is put you under bondage... it has no power to redeem or restore. He wants to know why they would give up their liberty that Christ died to give them. He calls legalism weak, beggarly and bondage. It operates with the mindset that God accepts and blesses based on performance instead of by grace. Legalism attempts to put God into our debt – which of course, He cannot be.

Galatians 4:11-12 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. *Paul was afraid that his efforts to make disciples there might have been wasted because of how quickly they turned out of the path he had set them on. He says be as I am for, I am as ye are...meaning that even though I by nature am a Jew, I live as a Gentile because I'm no longer under the law. He no longer keeps the Jewish calendar of sabbaths, new moons and feast days or dietary laws etc. Being like them (living in the grace of God and not under the law) hasn't hurt him spiritually at all.*

Galatians 4:13-14 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. *On his first visit to this region, Paul was suffering a poor physical condition but that didn't stop them from accepting him or the gospel he preached.*

Galatians 4:15-16 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? *It is a fact that Paul suffered eye sight problems. Most of his epistles were hand-written by someone else while he gave dictation because of his eye sight. He says here that the Galatians had such strong gratitude for his ministry there that they would've given him their own eyes if they could've and now they've turned away from the foundation that he laid there. Will they now become his enemies?*

Galatians 4:17-18 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. *The false teachers that visited these places were only concerned with disconnecting these churches from Paul and turning them into their own proselytes. These people had zeal without wisdom, which is dangerous. They were stirred up but only to go in the wrong direction. Zeal is a good thing as long it is the motivation built on sound doctrine.*

Galatians 4:19-20 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. *Paul likens himself to a mother travailing in labor. He was suffering on their behalf to break them free from the damage done by the legalists and bring them back to a fruitful relationship with Jesus Christ. When he talks of wanting to be present with them so he could change his voice... he means like when a parent changes their tone to get their children's attention.*

Galatians 4:21-26 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is

written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. *Here Paul uses Abraham's marriages to both Sarah and Hagar, and their sons to teach the Galatians a spiritual lesson. An allegory is a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning. Abraham had two wives – a slave (Hagar) and a free woman (Sarah). These two women represent two covenants – Hagar(law) and Sarah(grace) and are likened to two mountains – Hagar (Mt. Sinai) and Sarah (New Jerusalem). Abraham had sons with both women – Ishmael with Hagar and Isaac with Sarah. Ishmael was a product of the flesh, meaning he was conceived naturally with no help from God. Isaac was a fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham and Sarah because he was born supernaturally when they were 100 and 90 years old. The only thing law could produce was bondage while grace produces free children.*

Galatians 4:27 For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, *thou* that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. *This was a quote from Isaiah 54:1 which likened Israel in Babylonian exile to a childless woman. Just as Israel would be released from captivity and blessed with numerous children, so Sarah – a once barren woman- received a promised son and numerous descendants.*

Galatians 4:28-29 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now. *In the same way, the Galatian believers were like Isaac, children of promise. They were the recipients of God's promise to justify the Gentiles through faith in Christ. They were the children of grace, and of freedom. But just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so the legalists and Judaizers persecuted Paul and anyone who had embraced grace and lived by faith.*

Galatians 4:30-31 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. *In the same way that Sarah cast out the slave woman and her son for mocking Isaac, Paul is instructing the Galatians to cast out the Judaizers for their legalism. The legalist who functions under the law, has no inheritance alongside the believer who is under grace. Law and grace cannot coexist in the same house (or in the same church). Salvation and spiritual development cannot take place when these two are under the same roof. Followers of Christ are not to live under the law but to live under grace, responding to the love of God by faith through obedience.*