

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 16TH-17TH, 2024 // GALATIANS

MATURITY (GALATIANS 4:1-7)

CHILDISHNESS IS SIMILAR TO SLAVERY (VS. 1-3)

Paul uses a cultural example about heirs not having access to their inheritance until adulthood to show how living under the law before knowing of grace limited spiritual maturity.

- **Legalism or claiming Christianity but living by the "elements of the world" keeps us in spiritually arrested development.**

"WHEN THE TIME CAME TO COMPLETION"

Conditions were ripe for Jesus' birth. The Romans had created relative peace, intricate highways, and simplified communication.

- Humanity had twisted or moved so far away from the commands of God that it was time for Him to **personally step in, pay the price for forgiveness, and clarify how to live.**

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A DOWN PAYMENT

When we genuinely give our lives to Jesus we become heirs, and the Holy Spirit is given to us as a down payment of our inheritance.

- **The Spirit enables a deep relationship with God similar to a son or daughter with their Dad (Abba).** In this, we have **love, comfort, and counsel.**

WE'RE ALSO CALLED TO LIVE LIKE AN HEIR OF GOD

Legalism or spiritual apathy is childhood. Living in the true knowledge of grace is adulthood. But the privileges of adulthood come with responsibilities.

- **If we're God's heirs through Christ's work, it's our responsibility to honor our adoption by modeling the life of our Savior.**

WALKING TOGETHER (GALATIANS 4:8-20)

ENSLAVED BY GODS

Before the Galatians knew Jesus, they worshiped pagan gods such as Zeus and Dionysus, but God had delivered them from the bondage of following powerless sources.

- **A god is something held sacred or worshiped. Do we depend on things that ultimately don't have the power to save us?**

TRYING TO EARN GOD'S FAVOR

Similar to making sacrifices to the Olympian gods, the Galatians were observing Jewish "special days, months, seasons, and years" from the OT in order to win God's approval.

- **Observing weekly church or holidays is worthless if the heart is not in alignment with Jesus!**

LOSING SALVATION OR NEVER SAVED?

Paul saw people he loved were not living as true Christians and wondered if his time with them had "been wasted."

- **Whether they lost salvation or never genuinely had it was irrelevant. Their lifestyles indicated a disconnect from God and that was a serious problem.**

GETTING BACK TO WALKING LIFE OUT TOGETHER

Paul begs the Galatians to return to the grace that saved him from legalism. In vs. 12-14, he recounts a time when he was sick and they "received [him] as an angel of God."

- **We see the necessity of accountability, church community, and walking out life with other people to hold each other up.**

"...ENEM[IES] BECAUSE I TOLD YOU THE TRUTH?"

Even if we successfully share the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), we may experience rejection because the truth often contradicts our "truth."

- **We're to love people and speak truth even if they don't reciprocate. It is also slightly arrogant to think we're the source of rejection. It isn't our truth but God's.**

"MY CHILDREN, I AM...SUFFERING LABOR PAINS"

Paul is frustrated and angry, but we also see he loves the Galatians like a parent loves their child. He doesn't "know what to do about" them, but he is willing to work until "Christ is formed in" them.

- Though difficult, **are we working to love and have patience for others?**

CHOOSING FREEDOM (GALATIANS 4:21-31)

AN ALLEGORY

Paul uses the story of Abraham's two wives, Sarah and Hagar, and their sons, Isaac and Ishmael, to further show that salvation through human effort is flawed while salvation from God's promise is perfect.

- Like the conflict between Isaac and Ishmael, there's conflict between law and grace.

SARAH AND HAGAR (GENESIS 16)

God promised Abe and Sarah many descendants, but after 10 years, they still had no children. They took matters into their own hands and Abe impregnated a slave, Hagar, but God fulfilled His promise of a child with Sarah.

- Hagar/Ishmael represent the law (our abilities). Sarah/Isaac represent grace (God's abilities).

TWO JERUSALEMS

Vs. 25-26 compare the two women to two Jerusalems. Hagar represents earthly Jerusalem built by human abilities, but Sarah represents the New Jerusalem in heaven built by God.

- The point is still the same, **will we depend on temporary human ability or on God's eternal power and grace?**

"DRIVE OUT THIS SLAVE WITH HER SON"

Paul quotes Genesis 21:10 to remind the Galatians that they have **a choice to live in freedom and grace**, but they have to **first expel anything that detracts from the truth.**

- **God's desire is for us to live in the freedom of His love and grace.** But in love, **He also gives us the choice.**

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

- Legalism (our works) and easy "belief-ism" are both signs of spiritual immaturity and they prohibit a deep relationship with God.
- Genuine faith in Jesus enables intimacy with God and produces fruit in our lives, but **there's a responsibility in spiritual adulthood to model the One we claim to follow.**

WE ARE DESIGNED FOR COMMUNITY

- We need Jesus first, but **we also need other believers to hold us accountable so we don't drift back to powerless "gods."**
- Some people don't want to hear truth or walk in sincere Christian community, but we must still **love all people, speak truth, and walk in mutual accountability.**

WHAT DO WE NEED TO EXPEL?

- Paul was shocked and appalled that people who knew the means of salvation, love, and freedom were returning to things that had no power to save and change.
- It is God's desire that we live in grace and freedom, but **in order to do that we must expel (drive out) the things that enslave us.**

ARE WE CHOOSING FREEDOM?

- What is enslaving us? Lust? Greed? The performance trap? The affirmation trap? Other's perceptions of us? What is the desire of our heart? **Do we feel free?**
- In God's love for us He gives us a choice, and **if we choose to trust in Him, He will save, change, and sustain us forever.**
- **Hebrews 12:1-3**