



Lesson Nine

TEXT

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

5 Word Summary of 4:8-11 (ESV): _____

Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. What then has become of the blessing you felt? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

5 Word Summary of 4:12-20 (ESV): _____

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds

to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband."

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

5 Word Summary of 4:21-5:1 (ESV): _____

A QUICK REVIEW

After giving an extended biographical introduction which was intended to remind the Galatians that the Gospel comes straight from God who entrusted to him as an apostle (1:1-2:14), Paul then lays out the Gospel: justification (complete forgiveness/complete "rightness") is by faith and not by obeying the law (2:15-3:9). Following this he then explains that the true purpose of the Law was always to drive us to Christ and never to be the means by which we tried to relate to God or pursue salvation (3:10-29).

The Essence of the Argument

"Why on earth would do you want go back to being a slave when you have a Dad who loves you and has given you the keys to the mansion?!"

- *Paul, a son of Sarah and Isaac*

SUBTEXT

“Are You Saying You Want to Go Back?!”

Formerly, when you did not know God... You observe days and months and seasons and years! (Galatians 4:8ff)

Stott again proves unparalleled in his clarity and brevity:

[Paul’s] argument is this: “If you were a slave and are now a son, if you did not know God but have now come to know Him and to be known by Him, how can you turn back to the old slavery? How can you allow yourself to be enslaved by the very elemental spirits from whom Jesus Christ has rescued you? *You observe days, and months and seasons and years!* In other words, your religion has degenerated into an external formalism. It is no longer the free and joyful communion of children with their Father; it has become a dreary routine of rules and regulations. And Paul adds sorrowfully *I am afraid I have labored over you in vain.* ...Instead of growing in the liberty with which Christ had set them free, they have slipped back into the old bondage. ...[We all at times feel unworthy to be considered God’s own children]...but how can anyone be so foolish as to say: “You have made me your son; but I would rather be a slave”? It is one thing to say “I do not deserve it”; it is quite another to say “I do not desire it; I prefer slavery to sonship”. Yet that was the folly of the Galatians under the influence of their false teachers. (Stott, p. 108)

Paul’s Understanding of Spiritual Formation

Power of Modeling

Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. (Galatians 4:12a)

I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me. (1 Corinthians 4:16)

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

Become as I am =’s live your Christian life as I live mine; as a free, loved Son, not as a slave.

I also have become as you are =’s when I came to Galatia, I came right up to you. I didn’t treat you as Gentiles because I was a Jew or inferior because I was saved and you were not.

You did me no wrong. You know it was because of a bodily ailment ...you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. (Galatians 4:12ff)

Paul notes that even though it was physical infirmity that caused him to first come to the Galatians, they were happy to bear his troubles because of the joy they found in his message about God.

Also of note is the question “What then has become of the blessing [joy] you felt?” Their initial joy of salvation had “worn off.” Paul’s question is, “Why? Your need for salvation hasn’t changed and neither has God’s provision for it”.

Soul Question: Where’s Your Joy?

What has happened to all your joy? (Galatians 4:15a)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Support and Challenge

Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. (Galatians 4:16-20)

Paul continues by asking if he has now become an enemy to the Galatians because he continues to preach the truth forthrightly to them when the false teachers lie but do so with flattering but ulterior motives. Paul says, “Don’t be fooled. They’re making a fuss over you, but only in order to get you to obey them. I’m making a fuss over you in the same way that a mother labors to deliver her child.”

The NEB renders “*I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you*” a bit better: “*I wish I could be with you now; then I could modify my tone; as it is, I am at my wits’ end about you.*” Or Peterson, “*Oh, I keep wishing that I was with you. Then I wouldn’t be reduced to this blunt, letter-writing language out of sheer frustration.*” Paul’s impassioned arguments and provocative tone can be clearly seen when reading the “E-Mail to the Galatians.”

Competing Goals of Formation

Judiazers – rule-keeping obedience and personal loyalty

Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. (Galatians 4:17)

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. (1 Timothy 1:5-7)

Paul – Christ formed in you

For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16)

Living like an Heir of Sarah

Solitude

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. ¹⁸ Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. (Galatians 1:16-18)

Meditation

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9)

Prayer

pray without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

....that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)