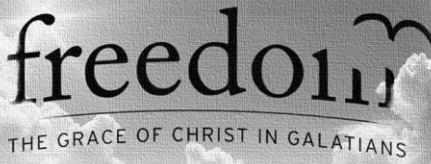


Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, March 21, 2018 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



freedom
THE GRACE OF CHRIST IN GALATIANS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS Paul's Passionate Appeal *Galatians 4:12-20*

CASE STUDY: I was visiting with a friend of mine the other day, and we got in a conversation about church and what it really means when someone says they are a “Christian.” I shared my views and she shared hers. We didn’t exactly agree. But things got a little tense and awkward when she asked me this question, “Suppose you were to die right now, and you stood before God, and He said to you, ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’ What would you say?” I said that I didn’t know what I would say exactly, but I would probably just tell God that I believed in Him and that I tried to live my life like I thought He would want me to and treat people right... that I was basically a good person. She pretty much condemned me to hell right there and said that God would never let me into heaven based on what I said. It was very awkward. I left that conversation feeling like now I understand why so many people are turned off by church and judgmental Christians who treat people that way. I actually feel that I am more on the right track with God than she is.

REVIEW: Just for review and to get back into our study of the book of Galatians, let’s briefly remind ourselves of some of the background material to the book. These are important background facts to keep in mind as we navigate this important and strategic book in the Bible.

4 Important Background Facts on the Book of Galatians:

(1) **Written by the Apostle Paul** – Paul wrote a large portion of the New Testament. This particular book/letter may have been his first letter. Also interesting to note is that some scholars believe that Paul have penned this letter himself, with his own hand (all of his other letters/writings were done through/with a personal amanuensis [scribe, secretary, recorder]).

(2) **Written as a circular letter** – Most of Paul’s letter that we have in the New Testament were written to individual churches (i.e. Ephesians, Philippians) or to individuals (i.e. Timothy, Titus).

This letter is different because it was written to a number of churches, and was meant to be passed/shared or “circulated” to each of these churches.

(3) Written to churches in the region of Galatia -Galatians is written to a number of different churches that Paul established during his first missionary journey in the region of Galatia in Asia Minor, which would be located in present day Turkey. This area was particularly important in the advance of the gospel and the New Testament church because it represented the movement of the good news/gospel further toward the west and to the rest of world, something Jesus had commanded from the very beginning of the New Testament church in Acts 1:8, “*8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*”

(4) Written to oppose and expose false teaching of the Judaizers – After Paul had left the region of Galatia, following his first missionary journey and the establishment of these new churches, false teachers came in and began to expose these churches and new believers/Christians to false teaching. These false teachers were known as “Judaizers” and they taught a “work-righteousness” system of salvation. Their teaching essentially said that in order to become a Christians you must first be circumcised and become a Jew, by obeying and following Jewish laws and customs. This was in direct contradiction to the good news/gospel Paul preached, which was salvation by grace, not by works.

3 Claims for A Salvation by Works-Righteousness: For those who may attached some type of works-righteousness for salvation, be that the Law, good works, morality, religious duty, etc., there must by necessity be some claims that must be made... if one is to be saved by “works” in any way.

1. **Salvation must be conditional** – That is, our salvation must be based on something that we do or have done. It makes... even must make... salvation conditional. Conditional on what you do or do not do... i.e. keeping the law, obeying customs and standards, being good enough, doing enough religious duty, not breaking certain codes or laws,
2. **One must maintain he or her own salvation** – If salvation is a matter of what we do (i.e. law keeping, rule following, adherence to a moral code of good) the onus (responsibility, burden, obligation, duty) fall us to keep ourselves saved and in good standing with God by adhering to the standard. Further, it may indicate that since God has saved us, we will maintain our salvation as we continue to match up with God’s required standard.
3. **Salvation must by implication become losable (capable of being lost)** – If it is conditional and up to us to maintain it, the implication must be that if we don’t live up to the condition and fail to maintain it we will no longer possess it. Therefore, a works-righteousness system of salvation automatically make salvation a losable proposition, at least possibly.

A Rebuttal of the 3 Claims for a Salvation by Works-Righteousness:

Claim 1: Salvation must be conditional –

Rebuttal: Scripture teaches that salvation is “unconditional” in nature and indeed doesn’t depend on anything that we do or have done.

Scripture:

- (1) **Ephesians 2:8-9** - *“⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.”*
- (2) **John 3:16** - *“¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*
- (3) **Romans 6:23** - *“²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Claim 2: One must maintain his or her own salvation -

Rebuttal: Man could never match up or be good enough to match up to God’s Holy standard according to Scripture.

Scripture:

- (1) **Isaiah 64:6** - *“⁶ All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”*
- (2) **Romans 3:10, 23** - *“¹⁰ As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one’... ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
- (3) **Matthew 7:21-23** - *“²¹ ‘Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

Claim 3: Salvation must by implication become losable (capable of being lost)

Rebuttal: This claim would be in direct violation of Scripture. Scripture clearly teaches that once saved it is forever and cannot be lost in the doctrine of “the eternal security of the believer.”

Scripture:

- (1) **John 10:27-30** - *“²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. ³⁰ I and My Father are one.”*
- (2) **Titus 3:5-7** - *“⁵ He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”*
- (3) **1 Peter 1:3-4** - *“³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*
- (4) **Jude 24-25** - *“²⁴ Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. ²⁵ All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.” (NLT)*
- (5) **John 3:16** - *“¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*
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“All head and not heart” is the familiar criticism leveled at the Apostle Paul. Other descriptive terms are also used of him in a negative way... too intellectual, hard, severe, woman-hating, militant, abrasive, dictatorial, dogmatic. But much of that fades when we come to a section like this one in Galatians 4:12-20. Here we see the other side of rigid, inflexible, stern Paul. Within this text, Paul comes across as warm, tender, even vulnerable. Here we find not Paul the theologians, but Paul the pastor, genuinely and passionately interested in the Galatians personally. With deep feeling for their welfare, he pleads that the conflicts be solved so both side can return to a position of support rather than division.

I. AN UNFORTUNATE MISUNDERSTANDING OF PAUL

Part of the difficulty with the conclusions people came to in regard to Paul is that they assumed certain things about the apostle which were untrue. Here are three example from Scripture.

3 Erroneous Conclusions People Drew of Paul in His Day:

1. **Regarding his authenticity** – In **2 Corinthians 10:7-11** we read these words regarding Paul, *“⁷Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ’s, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ’s, even so we are Christ’s.⁸ For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us⁹ for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—⁹lest I seem to terrify you by letters. ¹⁰“For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” ¹¹Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.”* This indicates an attack on Paul’s realness... his authenticity. The essentially said, “He is not personally what he appears to be in his letters.” In other words, “He talks a good game, but it’s just talk and not backed up by his life.”
2. **Concerning his authority** – Here is what Paul has been telling us in our letter that we have been studying, Galatians. In **Galatians 1:1-2** Paul begins this letter with these words, *“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),² and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia.”* And then a little further down in **verses 11-17** Paul would tell, *“¹¹But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.”* And in **verse 20** Paul said, *“Now concerning the thing which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.”* The false teacher who had come into the region of Galatia and these church was questioning the “authority” of Paul accusing that “He is not an apostle as he claim to be.” This was an assault on his authority.

3. **About his personality** – Listen to Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 2:5-8... Paul writes, *“⁵For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ⁸So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.”* This was an assailment of his personality. This criticism is answered by implication in our passage, in Galatians 4:12-20.

Why these attacks on Paul, do you think? Why would they go to such lengths to undercut Paul? Several reasons have been suggested and may be at play here.

5 Reasons Paul was Attacked:

1. **His threat to Judaism** – Remember that Paul had been an up and coming leader in Judaism, a zealous and devout practicing Jew in the hierarchy of Judaism. His conversion was a huge blow to the religious establishment both at Jerusalem and surrounding areas. Paul has been a persecutor of the aberrant religious practices. His conversion to Christianity not only gave Christianity credibility, but testified to its power and threat to Judaism.
2. **Rise of Christianity** – Christianity was considered an aberration (deviation, abnormality, anomaly). It was viewed as a heretical and dangerous cult by both Judaism and Greco-Roman culture.
3. **His message** – Remember we said, as we began our study that if you could destroy the messenger than you could undercut his message, if not totally undermine it. Hence, they attacked the messenger to destroy his credibility and destabilize and weaken his message.
4. **Conviction** – Perhaps a very real reason for their attack upon Paul was the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon their own lives by the gospel message that Paul preached that had brought about the conversion of these Galatians Christians. Think of it! When God’s truth goes out it always convicts, steps on toes, make us uncomfortable. It confronts our sin, and our need for a Savior. Think of it! These false teachers thought they were good, holy, righteous based on what they do. How dare Paul declare that they needed someone outside of themselves to save them because they were not able to save themselves by what they did. What might their reaction have been? Well personal conviction that cause them to want to destroy the one delivering such a hard to hear message.
5. **The Enemy** – It must never be forgotten not the truth taken for granted that the enemy, Satan, would stop at nothing to stop Jesus Christ and His message. Jesus Christ dealt Satan a death blow at the cross and the empty tomb. His post resurrection appearances, one of which has led to Paul’s own conversion, had give proof of Satan’s demise, and now the enemies only recourse is to destroy the message and good news of the gospel, so that others don’t come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. So you can be sure that Satan was at work raising up those who would try to destroy both the messengers of the gospel and their message.

A Good Question to Consider: Are these factors still at play in trying to destroy the messengers and the message? Cite examples.

II. A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE CONFLICT

2 Points to the Conflict:

1. **Doctrinally** – The Galatians had fallen under the spell of false teachers and were following the erroneous idea that salvation is a faith plus works transaction.

5 Ways to Protect Yourself Doctrinally: How Do We Protect Ourselves Doctrinally? (2 Timothy 3:16)

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; ⁹ but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was. ¹⁰ But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- (1) **Be grounded** – The importance of Christians/believer being grounded in God’s Word cannot be overstated. This may be the primary reason behind a declension into false teaching and doctrinal deviancy. This seems to be Paul warning in Colossians 2:6-8, *“⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. ⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”*
- (2) **Think critically** -
- (3) **Be discerning** -
- (4) **Surround yourself with others who are doctrinally grounded and sound** –
- (5) **Learn to recognize false teaching** –

2. **Personally** – Seeing the doctrinal compromise, Paul approached the issue as a scholar and as an exhorter. His comments were forthright. The Galatians perhaps had the impression that Paul was heartless, cold and uncaring.

III. A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF THE PASSAGE (Galatians 4:12-20)

Paul's pattern of address in this letter suddenly and dramatically changed. His feelings of intense passion and warmth surfaced, as we shall observe.

3 Things to Make Note of in Galatians 4:12-20:

1. **Paul's Appeal (v.12)** – Paul says in verse 12, *"^{d2} Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all."* As if he had fallen to his knees, Paul begins pleading and begging. He was talking to *"brethren."* In spite of the direct approach he'd taken thus far, we begin to see that he felt no distance... he was deeply concerned. With the words *"You have no injured me..."* he assured them that his complaint was not personally related, but was issue-related. He had not complaint about the way they had treated him... no bad memories... no scars... no unfair treatment... nothing he was trying to forget.
2. **The Attitude Toward Paul (vv.13-16)** – Notice Paul's words in verses 13-16, *"³ You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. ⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ⁵ What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. ⁶ Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"* Paul began to develop the attitude the Galatians had toward him. He drifted in thought back to those days they were together when he was sick. He reminded them of their response to him in those earlier days. *"⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise (loathe) or reject (spit out), but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus."* The term *"received"* means *"to be welcomed."* Their arms were opened to him. Describing the extent to which they received him, he said they did to *"as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus."* Their acceptance was without hindrance of any kind. Tough Question: Where then is that sense of blessing you had? Paul asks in verse 15, *"What then was the blessing you enjoyed?"* And in verse 16 he asks, *"Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"* From *"angel"* to *"enemy"*... those two words signal the change in the Galatians attitude toward him.
3. **Paul's Attitude Toward Them (vv.17-20)** – Look at verses 17-20, *"⁷ They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. ⁸ But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. ⁹ My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, ¹⁰ I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you."* In the midst of this passionate plea, Paul calls attention to the attitude of the false teachers, then by contrast declares his own. Whereas the false teachers sought the people in order to *"shut (them) out"* (to exclude them from Christ, from freedom in Christ, see v.17), Paul sought to help them to Christian maturity (*"... until Christ is formed in you,"* v.19). In the midst of this comparison, Paul signaled his distress and perplexity in verse 20, *"... for I have my doubts about you"* (v. 20)... we

could say, “ I’m at wit’s end.” “What I am hearing about you just doesn’t make any sense to me.” He cared deeply.

IV. A PRACTICAL RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH

The Galatians pulled back from the presence of truth and viewed its messenger as an enemy. From this study rises good counsel that needs immediate application.

2 Practical Pieces of Advice for Responding to Truth:

- 1. Consciously embrace your attitude, regardless of how much it hurts –** The truth is not always easy to hear or take. It may stir us, challenge us right where we are, step on our toes, make us uncomfortable. The question is whether we will choose to be teachable and changeable or not. As believers it is essential that we make a conscious decision to accept the truth of God’s Word regardless of how much it hurts or how hard to hear. Let me give you some practical advice regarding the truth...

Practical Advice:

- (1) If a messenger, tell the truth**
 - (2) If a listener, welcome the truth**
 - (3) If making a decision, seek the truth**
 - (4) If working through a conflict, uphold the truth**
 - (5) If hunting for the bottom of an issue, pursue the truth**
- 2. Guard carefully your attitude, regardless of how much you get to know a person –** Even false teachers can come along and win away our hearts with smooth talk, convincing arguments and sales pitches, stroking our own ego and giving shallow compliments and praise. Be careful!