

Galatians, Chapter Four, Lesson One

NEVER TURNING BACK Galatians 4:1-11

STIMULATE

** As we concluded our study of chapter three, we made a list of the truths for which we should be thankful. Before we begin a new chapter today, let's revisit that list.

From chapter 3, Vs.23-29...

- 1) I was not raised under the Law (V.23)
- 2) I was justified by faith in Christ (V.24)
- 3) I am taught by Christ, not the tutor (V.25)
- 4) I am a child of God (V.26)
- 5) I walk "clothed" in Christ (V.27)
- 6) I have union with all believers (V.28)
- 7) I am a joint heir with Jesus Christ (V.29)

Our sacrifice of walking in obedience to Christ and worshipping Him in "spirit and truth" each day, should be easy to give when we consider all that we have received from Him!

MOTIVATE

** As Paul now continues his defense of salvation by grace through faith (as opposed to salvation by works or the keeping of the Law), he begins to expand his thoughts here in chapter four. He not only defends the gospel, but he also paints a beautiful portrait for us of the pattern of living that will produce a fruitful and thankful heart. Over the next three studies he will teach us to live our Christians lives by...

- 1) *NEVER TURNING BACK* - Verses 1-11
- 2) *CORRECTING WITH COMPASSION* - Verses 12-20
- 3) *BECOMING CHILDREN OF PROMISE* - Verses 21-31

** Today we are going to see the apostle address one of the more subtle transgressions made by Christians as they try to live out their lives by the Grace of God. Please join me now in Galatians 4:1-11 to hear Paul encourage us to live our life in Christ each day by "Never Turning Back".

Read Passage (V.1-5) (V.6-11)

Opening Prayer

Never Turning Back

INVESTIGATE

V. 1 ** As Paul now continues his analogy of the Christian "child" growing into spiritual adulthood, how does that child compare to a household slave?

- 1) He "does not differ at all..." in that he is under those who are in authority in the home.
- 2) He is different in that he is the "owner of everything" in the home through his inheritance.

** Before we go any further, let's remind ourselves of the characters in this analogy...

From chapter 3:23-24, who does the "child" represent?

The Elect, before placing their faith in Christ.

When does the child "mature" in a spiritual sense?

When we trust Christ for salvation. (Galatians 3:25)

V. 2 ** Ok, then what does Paul mean by saying that the child is "under guardians and managers"?

Guardians were responsible for the child's care and specific daily needs, while the managers (stewards) were responsible for running the estate of their master, to the benefit of the children.

cf. Matthew 24:45-46

Remember, Paul was saying that before we were saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we were under the tutelage of the Law as children, to bring us to a saving knowledge of Christ.

cf. Galatians 3:24

** How long was the child, or heir of the estate, to remain like the slave?

"...until the date set by the father."

** Does our Heavenly Father have a date set for us to come to Christ in faith and no longer be enslaved under the Law?

Absolutely yes! cf. John 6:44 and 65

It was a date set in the mind of God from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).

V. 3 ** As Paul draws his analogy to a real life application, what loving touch does he add to his writing?

"So also we ..." The apostle graciously includes himself as one of the sinners saved by God's grace. Look back to chapter three with me and see how Paul repeatedly used the personal pronoun "you" when referring to the Galatian's spiritual condition.

Galatians 3:26 "..you are all sons of God.."

3:27 "..you who were baptized.."

3:28 "..you are all one.."

3:29 "..you belong to Christ.."

3:29 "..you are Abraham's offspring"

He is now humbly including himself as a sinner who was once "kept in custody under the Law".

** How does Paul describe the "child's" condition before acquiring faith in Christ?

We (Paul, the Galatians and us) were "...held in bondage under the elemental things of the world."

As unsaved, slaves of sin, we stumbled through our lives under the venomous influence of humanistic religion and philosophy. That is why Paul warned the Colossian church to avoid all such humanistic influence. cf.

Colossians 2:8

V. 4 ** "When" did God solve our dilemma?

"...when the fulness of the time came..." God knew exactly when He was going to resolve the hopelessness of man's condition. It would be when "the" time was fulfilled in His eternal will!

cf. John 7:6 and 7:8, Matthew 26:18

** What human agency did God use to bring us His Son?

A woman!

** Why did Paul mention that specific detail?

Because it "fulfilled" prophecy!

cf. Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:22-23

** Was this to be any particular kind of woman?

Yes, it had to be a woman "born under the Law" or "Jewish", which is why Paul told the Romans that God's Son "...was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh..." (Romans 1:3).

V. 5 ** Besides fulfilling prophecy, why is it important that Jesus was "born of a woman, born under the Law"?

"...in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law..."

He became a man to be a substitute for us, and was born "under the Law" so He could keep it perfectly. When Christ fulfilled the Law, He became the perfect sacrifice for our sins!

(cf. Matthew 5:17, Philippians 2:6-8)

** Back in chapter three and verse 13, we discussed what it means to be redeemed. Do you recall its meaning?

Redeemed [exagorazo] means "to buy up" and is used figuratively saying, "to rescue from loss". Remember, Jesus "bought" us not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with His own precious blood (1Peter 1:18-19).

** Now that we have been purchased by Jesus Christ, what have we received?

"...the adoption as sons." We went from less than a slave, to a position of high honor and reward, all at Christ's expense!

V. 6 ** Since we are God's sons, where did He send the Holy Spirit?

"...into our hearts..." That is why the apostle prays for us, in his letter to the Ephesians, "...to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..." (Ephesians 3:16-17).

** As the Holy Spirit "settles down" [dwell] in our heart, being made comfortable by our obedient spirit, what impact does that have on our relationship to the Father?

He makes it an intimate relationship, in which we cry out to God through the Holy Spirit, "Abba! Father". cf. Romans 8:15

V. 7 ** Now that we are no longer slaves, what two things have we become?

Both sons and heirs of all that God has to offer through faith in Jesus Christ!

** What does Paul mean when he says that we have become heirs "through God"?

You may want to check your Bible's marginal note on this one, what he is literally saying is "through the gracious act of" God you have become an heir of the kingdom!

V. 8 ** Paul shifts gears in this verse to remind us of what we were like before we were saved. What was our big problem?

We "...were slaves to those which by nature are no gods." This is Heathenism, the worship of gods who are not real, but rather a figment of our own imaginations. For an example of this type of society, look with me at Acts 17:16-23.

Read passage - This very practice is the reason for God's judgement against men, as stated by Paul in Romans 1:18-23. Let's stop there on our way back to Galatians. Again, read passage.

V. 9 ** Now back in Galatians 4:9, what is significant about Paul's self-corrected statement?

While it is true that we have come to know God through our faith in Jesus Christ, it is far more significant that He has come to know us and love us as our personal God and Savior!
cf. John 10:14 and 2Timothy 2:19

** Given this wonderful and personal relationship between the Galatians and the one true God, what shocking observation does Paul make?

They were willing to "turn back" again to the elemental things that made up their non-Christian forms of worship!

** What two adjectives does Paul use to describe the effectiveness of those things?

"weak and worthless" That is why the apostle would say to the Philippians, some 15 years later, that he put no confidence in the flesh. cf. Philippians 3:3

V.10 ** What were some of the "things" they were doing?

Observing days, months, seasons and years. This was legalism to earn salvation to the max!

This would include keeping the Law, Sabbath days, Days of the New Moon, Festival Seasons, Sabbath and Jubilee Years. By contrast, we must live our lives in the grace of God each day, "Never Turning Back" to the old religious efforts designed to show us to be "good people" while all the time falling short of the glory of God!

V.11 ** Paul is staggered by the possibility that his beloved children in the faith (the Galatians) might be leaving the simplicity of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, to return to a works oriented righteousness. Do you suppose Paul labored very hard for the souls of the Galatians?

Absolutely! It is of little wonder that he would express his fear on their behalf.

**** How is it that he might have labored in vain?**

If the Galatians depended on their own works for salvation and had only pretended to embrace the gospel, their salvation would be doomed and Paul's labor would have produced nothing for their souls.

EXTRICATE

**** What was the Galatian's error and the subtle transgression made by Christians today, as they try to live out their lives by the Grace of God?**

Not depending totally upon that grace at all times, but thinking you are good enough to make it on your own.

DELINEATE

**** What have we seen today that will keep us from that same error?**

The Lord "redeemed" us and adopted us as sons!(V.5)

EVALUATE

**** For how much of that transaction can we take credit?**

Absolutely none of it, it is all by His grace!

ACTIVATE

**** Let's thank the Lord now for His marvelous grace and commit to live our lives "Never Turning Back" to our old lifestyles, but to give Him the "gift" of our loving obedience everyday.**

Closing prayer