

## 18. Galatians 3:28-4:11 Paul's Timely Arguments

September 28, 2008

Having studied the law of God for the past three weeks by examining its purpose, its origin, and last week, its duty, we return to our study of Galatians and the battle Paul waged against the legalists or Judaizers. And while we almost finished our look at chapter 3 of Galatians, I will remind you again that the chapter break between 3 and 4 seems a little out of place. So while we will be examining the last couple of verses of chapter 3, for all intensive purposes, this morning's lesson is our first venture into chapter 4. As I personally examined chapter 4, what I see is the Galatians having an identity crisis as they are in a spiritual tug of war between the Judaizers and Paul. So this chapter encompasses not only their loss of identity, but also Paul's valiant effort to try to restore their identity. This morning, as we look at the identity crisis of the Galatians, I want us to look at three ideas: adoption, redemption, and celebration.

For the sake of context, I would like us to begin our reading in verse 25 of chapter 3 even though we have already covered through verse 27.

*3:25-4:7 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. 4:1 ¶ Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. 8 ¶ Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 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? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*

To begin this morning, I want to look at what this passage says about adoption. Just as the Roman son and his pedagogue's relationship dramatically changed when the master of the house – the father – determined that the son was mature enough, so too, we receive our adoption when God the Father is pleased. This is well demonstrated in 2 Cor 4:6, which says "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*"

This is exactly what is conveyed in the first 2 verses of chapter 4. After being under a pedagogue, tutors, and governors, the son is transformed. The key phrase in verse 2 is "until the time appointed of the father." Instantaneously, a boy becomes a man and in our situation, an enemy of God is made a legitimate heir.

In Rome a man could not only determine when his son was a legitimate heir, but he could also go to the slave market in any city and buy a slave that he could then not only set free but also make his legal son. This is the process of adoption that Paul lays forth before us in our text this morning. We are that slave.

And at this point, let me back up and briefly discuss verses 28 and 29 which also show us the transformation that takes place.

Verse 28 says there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female but what does that mean? This verse is highly similar to Colossians 3:11 which says *“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”* If you examine each couplet in Galatians 3:28, you will find one side being more qualified for worship than the other. Only a freeman could choose to go to the temple to worship. A slave would be restricted by their master’s whims. But only Jews could enter into the temple beyond the court of the Gentiles. And only Jewish men could go past the court the Gentiles and the Court of Women. But in Christ, we are all one. And in Christ we are all the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, that in him all nations would be blessed. And through Christ, we all have access to the throne of grace. As I made reference to last week in quoting John Brown, in Christ we see that middle wall of partition of Ephesians 2 being torn down before our very eyes.

And now we come to the identity crisis. Paul begins to ask the church at Galatia to decide whether they are children or sons. And while it may not seem obvious, there is a massive difference between being called children and being called sons. These aren’t just 2 different words in Greek and English. These are two different ways of existence. And to confuse the matter further, in chapters 3 and 4 of Galatians there are two types of children – the children of promise and the children in bondage. I believe that the children in bondage are unregenerate while the children of promise are regenerate. And I believe that in verse 3 of Galatians when it mentions children in bondage to the law, these are referring to the Galatians prior to being regenerated in Christ. Moving past this thought, the idea of a child must convey to us the absence of rights. A child in the Roman culture had absolutely no right to the estate of the father, but sons did. This bondage to the law was the very legalism the Judaizers were trying to call the Galatians back to. But the word elements or elementary principles in origin refer to basic fundamental principles, for instance the ABCs. And on this very thought Warren Wiersbe provides an interesting perspective that I would like to share now.

*“Legalism, then is not a step toward maturity, it is a step back into childhood. The law was not God’s final revelation: it was but the preparation for that final revelation in Christ. It is important that a person know his ABCs, because they are the foundation for understanding all of the language. But the man who sits in a library and recites the ABCs instead of reading the great literature that is around him, is showing that he is immature and ignorant, not mature and wise. Under the law, the Jews were children in bondage, not sons enjoying liberty.”*

In other words, when the Judaizers were leading the Galatians back into legalism, they were leading them not only into religious bondage, but also into moral and spiritual infancy and immaturity. But that is not the way Christ intended.

While only just beginning his discussion of adoption, in verses 4 and 5 Paul transitions briefly to the idea of redemption. According to John Brown, the reason for this is because in order to be adopted “it was absolutely necessary that the believers under the law should be ‘redeemed’ from it”. But as you well know, this is not his first pass at this topic in the book of Galatians since in fact he began discussing our redeemer as far back as the fourth verse of chapter 1 of this book. Verses 4-5 again say:

*4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

On these verses, I liked so much what Martin Luther had to say. In fact on verse 4, his encouragement is also my encouragement to you. He said “Mark here how carefully Paul defineth Christ. In these words he comprehendeth both the person and the office of Christ.” As I read this quote again this past week, I was struck by the similarity of Spurgeon’s antidote in chapter 1 – holding forth Jesus before eyes tempted to revert to the past.

But before we look at Christ in this verse, notice what this verse says about when Christ came. Jesus Christ came into this world at the fullness of time exactly when God planned. In other words as we all know, Jesus came exactly when God had designed for Him to come. All history preceding the incarnation was orchestrated to that very time. And not only was the timing ordained, but so was the means. Verse 4 continues by telling us Jesus was made of a woman. While a few commentators suggest that made of a woman, as opposed to saying made of a man, indicates the virgin birth, most of the Greek experts and John Brown’s commentary say that this phrase “made of a woman” simply indicates the humanity of Christ.

But Jesus did not just come as a human. As Paul terms it He was “made under the law.” By this Paul teaches that Jesus was not only a descendant of Abraham, but also a descendant of Isaac and Jacob. Also implied in this phrase is what is laid out in Luke 2:21-24. *21 ¶ And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; 23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) 24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.*

In accordance with Jewish tradition and the law (Exod 13:12, Lev 12:6), Jesus was named and circumcised and redeemed as the firstborn all within the first 40 days of His life. And commentators suspect that one of the arguments of the Judaizer’s was Jesus was under the law and yielded obedience to it, so you should also.

But you have to ask did Christ’s obedience to the law intend to bring the Jews out from under the law or did He intend to bring the Gentiles under it. It obviously cannot be both. But Paul leaves no doubt. God orchestrated all of these details, including Jesus being made under the law, so that Jesus could be our Redeemer. And this is exactly what Luther writes about so well in his commentary. Remember, this is the Christ we must see. Luther says:

*“But how, by what means hath Christ redeemed us?... ‘He was made under the law.’ Christ, when He came found us captives under tutors and governors, that is, shut up in prison under the law. What doth He then? Although He be Lord of all, and therefore the law had no power or authority over Him (for He is the Son of God) yet, of His own accord He maketh Himself subject to the law.... Yet the law was no less cruel against this innocent, righteous, and blessed lamb, than it was against us cursed sinners, yea, it was much more rigorous. For it accused Him as a blasphemer, and a seditious person; it made Him guilty before God of the sins of the whole world; it so terrified and oppressed Him, with heaviness and anguish of spirit, that He sweat blood; and, briefly, it condemned Him to death, yea, even to the death of the cross.... Now, therefore because the law did so horribly sin against God, it is accused and arraigned.... Here, the law, which had before condemned and killed all men, when it hath nothing wherewith to defend or purge itself, is again so condemned and vanquished, that it loseth its whole right, not only over Christ, (whom it so cruelly handled and killed) but also over all them that believe in Him.”*

When I read this section from Martin Luther, the thought that went through my mind was – Our hope lies in the fact the law gave its all, but still lost. This shows the superiority of Christ.

And it is through this superior redemption by Christ's blood that we receive the adoption of sons. Again, this is not the adoption of a young child but the process of making a child a son. This is what allows a child to not just be a part of the family but rather now they can enjoy being a part of the family as a legitimate heir. We are no longer slaves to the law, but rather we are sons of God.

This is why we opened this morning with **Hymn 487 – Now I Belong to Jesus**.

As the first and last verses of this hymn state:

*Jesus, my Lord will love me forever,  
From Him no pow'r of evil can sever,  
He gave His life to ransom my soul;  
Now I belong to Him;*

*Joy floods my soul for Jesus has saved me,  
Freed me from sin that long had enslaved me  
His precious blood, He came to redeem,  
Now I belong to Him;*

When I read Wiersbe's commentary on Galatians, he provided five simple thoughts that show the dramatic difference our redeemer makes. Because of the adoption of sons that we have received from the work of Christ we can know these things with confidence. Wiersbe points out:

The son has the same nature as the father, but the servant does not.

The son has a father, while the servant has a master.

The son obeys out of love, while the servant obeys out of fear.

The son is rich, while the servant is poor.

The son has a future, while the servant does not.

Do you see your changed nature? Do you obey out of love and not fear? Do you see the riches in Christ Jesus? And do you see your future? And finally, do you have a Father or do you have a master?

The answer to the last question can be found in verse 6 of our text. Because we are sons, we have the Spirit and the Holy Spirit cries forth Abba, Father or Daddy! And no servant could ever say Daddy to his master. This is an intimacy we could not know if it were not for the price Jesus paid on our behalf. And amazingly verse 7 provides a great summation of the believer. We are not slaves any longer we are sons. And as sons we are heirs. But every aspect of it is because of what the Father and Jesus Christ have done. The Father sent the Son and the Son redeemed us out from under the law. But one other important point from verse 7 is the change in Paul's speech from plural to singular. This act of the Father is a personal privilege conveyed to individuals, not to a group of people.

When I read this 7<sup>th</sup> verse, my mind immediately turned to Ephesians 1:3-5 which I will remind you says: *3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

Just in case someone wonders, the phrase "adoption of children" in the verse 5 in the KJV is the same Greek word as the "adoption of sons" in Galatians 4:5.

Now we turn our attention to verses 8-11 and we will come to the theme of celebration. But first we need to know that once again the Apostle Paul takes off the kid-gloves and gets very blunt with the Galatians. But as we will look at Lord willing next week, he does this out of love for them. In verses 8 through 11, we find Paul again pouring out his heart, yearning for the Galatians to repent of their ways and trying to break the spell that has them bewitched. And his fervor is best demonstrated by verse 11. *11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*

As John MacArthur said about this section – “No wonder this is such an impassioned epistle. The thought of all that effort being void compelled Paul to write as he did.” And according to Martin Luther these words breathe tears because of the magnitude of the labor Paul had bestowed on the church at Galatia. But this is not conceit on Paul’s part. He’s not sorry that he spent so much time with them. He wants them to come back. This is well demonstrated by verses 8-10. Paul reminds them of their past, then warns them about their present. Paul is perplexed at how someone can know God and be known of God and yet turn away their eyes from Jesus Christ and instead gaze back to the law. It reminded me of Luke 17:32 “Remember Lot’s wife.” The Christian life is not a life of temporarily looking to Jesus and then going back to do our own thing. It is an eternal change. But the Galatians had turned back to the weak and beggarly. These two words are very significant. And I think Wiersbe put it best: “They were giving up the power of Gospel for the weakness of the law, and the wealth of the Gospel for the poverty of the law.”

So what was the proof of their dereliction of duty? They were celebrating. But I am not trying to say this morning that celebrating holidays is inherently wrong. So is this the end of the world? No, but it is enough for Paul to care. As several commentators point out, the Galatians had not progressed to the point of practicing circumcision on Gentiles. But there must have been some considering it. But what they were actually doing was observing days, and months, and times, and years. But what does that mean. Gentiles in the churches at Galatia were beginning to observe days (i.e. the Sabbath), months (referring to the new moons), times (referring to the annual festivals of Leviticus 23 such as the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles), and years (meaning the Sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee). And the word “observe” is important as it denotes careful, scrupulous observance – as if their eternal lives depended upon it. This is part of the temptation of legalism in that the law enables people to “do” things and measure external results. And this is pleasing to the flesh. Wiersbe on this point says “But all of us must beware of that legalistic spirit that caters to the flesh, leads to pride, and makes the outward event a substitute for the inward experience.”

According to John Brown, Paul “did not consider it as unlawful, so long as they viewed them not as means of justification, but merely as institutions originally of Divine appointment, and in their estimation unrepealed”. Similarly Warren Wiersbe wrote “If we observe special days like slaves, hoping to gain some spiritual merit, then we are sinning. But if in the observance, we express our liberty in Christ and let the Spirit enrich us with His grace, then the observance can be a spiritual blessing.”

This all comes down to the question – is there something missing in Christ? If you need the observance of holidays for salvation, then you are enslaved as were the Galatians. And we know this enslavement is still present today within Roman Catholicism.

While I won't get too deep into this topic of celebrations, we should recognize from Acts 20:16 and 1 Corinthians 16:8 that Pentecost, the feast of Shavout, was still a holiday that had some level of significance to Paul.

And in two other epistles Paul addresses holidays.

*Col 2:16-17 ¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

*Romans 14:5-6 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

I hope this morning you can better appreciate that the outward deeds are not what the Lord is pleased with. He is pleased with His Son and He is pleased with the redemption that His Son renders in order that we might receive the adoption of Sons. It has been several weeks since the seventh answer, but this morning we have found the 8<sup>th</sup> way to finish Wiersbe's sentence. **If I want to be a really good Christian, I must be an adopted son and not a child in bondage.** For that makes all the difference for eternity.

## 19. Galatians 4:12-31 Thank God for Preachers Like Paul

October 19, 2008

Let me begin by thanking you all for your indulgence in my not teaching the past two Sundays and the sporadic nature of this study in the book of Galatians. But I can tell you that in hindsight I am convinced the Lord sovereignly ordained this delay as there are some aspects of this morning's study specifically shaped by recent events and this lesson would definitely not have been the same if I had taught them even three weeks earlier. The last time I taught, we examined the end of chapter 3 and the first 11 verses of chapter 4, but this morning it is my intention to finish our look at Galatians 4. I contemplated spending more time on this second half of chapter four, but I believe that the last 10 verses of this chapter are very straight forward, and therefore they can be easily understood, and I believe also quickly covered. In fact there is a chance we may even end a little earlier than I usually do, but I'm not making a promise about that.

Throughout our study of this book two of the themes we have seen repeatedly are detecting and defending against errors and also Paul's attempts at restoring those in error – in this case the churches at Galatia. This morning I believe we will continue seeing more about both of these two themes as we continue examining the identity crisis that the Galatians were experiencing in the earlier portion of chapter 4.

For the sake of context, I want to begin reading at verse 8 of Galatians 4, but we will actually be picking our study back up at verse 12.

*Galatians 4:8-31 ¶ Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 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? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. 12 ¶ Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. 13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 14 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. 15 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. 16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? 17 ¶ They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. 18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. 19 ¶ My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, 20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. 21 ¶ Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 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. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 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. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

In this morning's lesson we are going to look at what I see as two related topics, but it may not seem obvious to you right now. In verses 12 through 20 Paul gets very personal with the Galatians and reminds them of their past together but then in verses 21 through 31 we will find a spiritual allegory that started close to 4,000 years ago and has been lived out for almost the past 2,000 years. So let's start by looking at verses 12 through 20.

Even though Paul began his letter to the Galatians without any commendation or without even a lot of affection, here in chapter 4, Paul gives a lot of effort to show his love for the Galatians. At this point I will say that you may choose to disagree with me, but in the past couple of weeks, I have come to believe that in Galatians 4:12-19, Paul lays out something important that we at Covenant Baptist Church need to hear. In this passage, Paul shows us the mark of a good preacher of the gospel as he continues to shepherd the flock that he brought the gospel to. If you will indulge me, I believe in this passage we will find not only a tribute to Pastor Brown, who God has seen fit to bless this flock for so many years, but also I believe we will find some of the criteria that we must be looking for in a new pastor.

In verse 12, Paul begins by asking the Galatians to be like him. A good Gospel preacher is a good example to his flock. Now Paul talks about imitation in several letters including 1 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, but here in Galatians is a little different. In Galatians he tells them he wants their imitation because he knows "I am as ye are". In one regard Paul recognizes that they are just as valuable in the sight of God as he is (after all Christ paid the same price for them as He did for Paul), but I believe there is more to it than that. Paul knows their struggle with the flesh and with legalism because of his own past. The law was everything to this former Pharisee but Christ has given him liberty from the yoke of the law, and that is exactly what Paul wants for the Galatians to experience – Liberty in Christ. And at this point I must point out that Paul once again provides us a beautiful example as he declares the Galatians have not "injured" him at all. No matter what Paul may have heard, no matter what accusations were made about his apostolic authority, he holds no grudge against them. He shows them continual love for the brethren. This has been the pattern established by Paul, continued in Pastor Bill Brown, and I believe must be the pattern of any future pastor we may have.

Next, starting in verse 13, Paul takes a walk down memory lane with the Galatians. He leads them back to their relationship when he first began preaching to them. But in this context, in verses 13 through 15 Paul also uses three important phrases: "infirmity of the flesh", "my flesh", and the idea of giving up their eyes. All of these have led many commentators to believe that when Paul preached to the Galatians, he had some form of physical ailment. Because of the mention of eyes, ailments suggested have included migraine headaches, malaria, epilepsy, and others chronic ophthalmia (an inflammation of both eyes that can result from trauma to one eye – perhaps from being stoned). But regardless of what infirmity Paul had, physical or otherwise, it made no difference to the Galatians. The rest of the world might have rejected Paul because of his infirmity, but not the Galatians. And so we would do well to be cautious about judging the physical infirmities of a man God has called to preaching. When Paul preached the truth they did not despise him, they didn't reject him but as verse 14 tells us they received him as an angel or messenger of God, and even more so, they loved him like they came to love Christ. Our love in receiving the message of God's Word must be a guiding principle in the search for our next pastor.

Unfortunately, because of the influence of the Judaizers, the love didn't remain. The relationship between the Galatians and Paul was strained such that in verse 16, Paul asks "Am I therefore your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

We would all do well to remember for a moment just how important the truth really is. The truth must be defended at all cost. If you don't have the truth, you don't have anything. And as I studied verse 16 initially, my mind went to *Proverbs 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."*

Recently, we received such a faithful wound, that I want to remind you of this morning. Just three weeks ago, Pastor Brown preached the last sermon in his series on John 17 entitled Jesus Prays. I want to read you an excerpt that I took from audio recording on the church website that I believe demonstrates well the love for the truth that Paul wanted for the Galatians. Pastor Brown asked us about the Word of God: *"Does it live in your mind? Does it abide in your heart? Do you think about it? Does it nourish you? Does it strengthen you? Does it encourage you? Or is it just a matter of indifference? There was a time when a man if he were preaching on one of these magnificent chapters, like John 17, it would have elicited in the hearts of the people a sense of anticipation so that they could hardly wait til Sunday morning, because they would know that the pastor was going to be preaching from this magnificent section of the Word of God. And they would have moved heaven and earth rather than to miss the opportunity to hear the pastor read a section of this tremendous chapter and then focus the interest of the people and direct their concern, their minds, and their hearts to the truth that is depicted in this marvelous chapter."*

*Now a lot of the failure falls on the hands of the pastor. He is supposed to be interesting. He is supposed to be spiritual. He is supposed to be challenging. He is supposed to be loving. He is supposed to be humble. He is supposed to be considerate. The pastor carries a tremendous weight of responsibility as he reads the Word of God and as he has prayed over it in the previous week and prepared his mind and his heart and his soul and perhaps even his tongue to bring the message of the Word of God. But of course I can only do what I can do. And I can only be who I am. And I can only use the skills and the abilities that God has given to me. But hearers have a tremendous responsibility to listen to the Word of God and not when they walk out the door just assume they have fulfilled the responsibility of a hearer."*

This morning I publicly declare that I for one am so thankful to our Heavenly Father, that Pastor Brown does what he does. That he is who he is, and that he uses the skills and abilities God has given to him. But as a congregation examine our motives for coming here Sunday after Sunday. Does the spiritual food God sends us through our Pastor live in our minds? Does it abide in our heart? Do we think about it? Does it nourish us? Does it strengthen us? Does it encourage us? This is not a game that we are playing. We must be hearers and doers of the Word or else we will fall into the same traps the churches at Galatia did. We need a Pastor who places the truth of God's Word as a priority and we need to be a congregation that gratefully receives it.

Paul was more than a friend to the Galatians; he was their brother in Christ and he was the preacher who brought them the gospel and that was why he went through so much effort to try to bring them back. And Paul believed, as Scripture records it, that they were worth all of his effort. This is the mark of a good preacher – a devoted love for his people.

On this section of Galatians in his commentary, John Brown points out that Paul's argument to the Galatians is this: if Paul hasn't changed, why have the Galatians stopped loving him? What they used to love about Paul now they hate, but why? They had compromised the truth, and that led to this division. On this point, John Brown points out something else very important for us. John Brown wrote, "it is very difficult for a minister to do his duty in a right spirit to a people when he has reason to think they have little or no attachment to him, and it is all but impossible for a people to derive spiritual advantage from a minister whom they do not respect and love." Even though we may not completely understand why now, our love for Pastor Brown must help lead us to our next Pastor, and that new Pastor must have our respect and love in order to ultimately be a benefit to us.

With all of that said, in verses 17-19 Paul's gaze turns back to the Judaizers. Paul again shows himself to be a good shepherd. He reminds the Galatians that the Judaizers wanted followers for themselves but Paul is not looking for personal followers – he is looking for faithful followers of Christ. That must be a mark of all good pastors. In fact Paul describes his effort as laboring or travailing in birth in order that Christ be formed in them. While I cannot say from personal experience, I am convinced that the life and work of a pastor is a struggle, but it should be a struggle of love. A love for his flock and a love for Christ.

Now before we move on to the next section of this chapter, let me quickly discuss verse 20 as it may be a little controversial to some. In the KJV verse 20 says "*I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.*" The NIV, ESV, and NASB all translate this last phrase "I am perplexed about you!". Paul is not questioning their salvation, he is simply stupefied at how they could take their eyes off of Jesus and become bewitched by legalism.

This being entranced with Christ was why I asked for **Hymn 326 – More about Jesus** to be sung this morning. As the first stanza says:

More about Jesus would I know,  
More of His grace to others show;  
More of His saving fullness see,  
More of His love Who died for me.

I believe these lines are consistent with the struggle of Paul and I believe they are also the heart of our Pastor.

With that said, let's look at verses 21-31. While it may seem like there is a drastic shift in verse 21, having studied this passage the past few weeks, I am convinced that verse 21 is another of Paul's attempts at convincing them of one thing: how much he loves them. He shows them the deep truth of Scripture but conveys it in very clear language. This is another sign of a good Pastor and one that I believe we have had the privilege of partaking of with Pastor Brown.

Now to cover these verses, I am going to do it a little differently. Because this is so straightforward, I want to sketch these verses out on the board in a 2 column diagram.

22 For it is written, that Abraham had **two sons**, the **one by a bondmaid**, the **other by a freewoman**. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born **after the flesh**; but he of the freewoman was **by promise**. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 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. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 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. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

According to verse 24, verses 22 through 31 are describing an allegory. And the best way to cover these verses I think is to put a diagram up on the board taken directly out of the text.

#### **Two Sons (v.22) // Two Covenants (v.24)**

<u>Ishmael (v.22 – two sons)</u>	<u>Isaac</u>
Hagar (bondmaid) (v.23 two women)	Sarah (freewoman)
Born after the flesh (v. 23)	Born by promise
Mt. Sinai – the law (earthly Jerusalem) (v.25)	Jerusalem, which is above (v.26)
Bondage (v. 25)	Free / Grace / Liberty (v.26)
(unspoken Judaizers v.29)	Represents the believer (v.28)
Persecutes the child/children of promise (v.29)	Is persecuted ***** see below***
Not the chosen heir (v.30)	The chosen heir

(Verse 27 – Quote from Isaiah 54:1)

\*\*\*\* John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.  
 1Thessalonians 3:4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.  
 2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

This morning, I hope that I have managed to show you the great love that Paul had for the Galatians, to remind you of the great love that our own Pastor has demonstrated in this local body, and the great love we should be seeking in our next pastor. When we hold fast to the truth, truly we are free. And this thought provides us with the ninth way to finish Wiersbe's sentence: **If I want to be a really good Christian, I must be a free child of promise who casts away the bondage of the flesh.**