

Value Your Freedom

Galatians 4.8-20 ~ June 26, 2011

➤ 4-part Structure

- **Verses 8 – 11** ~ Galatians (*were lost, then saved, now confused*)
- **Verses 12 – 16** ~ Paul (*was honored by them, now rejected*)
- **Read v17** ~ Judaizers (*court them to reject them ~ why seek to please*)
- **Verses 18 -20** ~ Galatians (*Paul expresses love and concern for them*)

➤ **PART 1** ~ Galatians are Lost, Saved then Confused

- v8 ~ *“you served those which by nature are not gods”*
- **Acts 13 to 14** tells of first visit to Galatia
 - They visited Cyprus, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe
- Healing of crippled man in Lystra (**Acts 14.8-18**)
 - In Lycaonian the people said Zeus and Hermes had come down to them
 - They brought oxen & garlands intending to sacrifice to them
 - Shortly afterwards they stoned Paul and left him for dead

➤ v9 ~ *“you have known God, or rather, are known by God”*

- Our joy should not arise from within us . . . (mood, circumstances, wealth)
 - Stormy Waves ~ Our joy is anchored far beneath them
 - We are joyful because God knows and loves us ~ not we Him
- In **Luke 10.17** the disciples said, *“Even the demons are subject to us”*
 - *Jesus replied, “... do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”*
 - Our joy is founded upon a fact – an objective truth – our salvation
- *“If your joy can be lost because of your mood or your circumstances then your anchor is not holding fast ~ you’re adrift from God . . .”*

➤ How can you desire bondage?

- **Read verse 9** ~ simplification is . . .
- *“Having tasted God’s freedom, how can you desire bondage?”*
 - Especially bondage to *“weak and beggarly elements”* - see **v3b**
- **v10** ~ Bondage defined
 - *“You observe days and months and seasons and years.”*

Xition: We must clarify what Paul is saying . . .

➤ **“What does Paul mean in verse 10?”**

- v10 ~ “*You observe days and months and seasons and years.*”
- “**To whom is Paul writing?**”
 1. **former Jews** ~ who are used to keeping ceremonial laws
 2. **former pagans** ~ who are used to superstitious practices
 - Such different peoples – but whose fears are similar
 - Each approached their religions in superstitious ways
 - Each allowed outward ceremonies and rituals to prevail over God
- Paul addresses a common failure of all religion ~ works righteousness
 - Superstitious observance of rituals
 - Quid pro quo behaviors ~ People earning God’s favor . . .
- Paul warns the Galatians about this type of thinking
- Christian life is not about superstitions

➤ **PART 2 ~ Paul Reminds them How they Treated Him**

- Become like me because I became like you
 - Paul once lived a life of bondage as they’re now courting . . .
 - Paul had been superstitious in his service towards God
 - He described himself as “*more zealous*” than all his brethren
 - At that time he didn’t realize the weight of those bonds . . .
 - Until Jesus relieved him of them on the Road to Damascus . . .
 - “*Take my yoke upon you. My yoke is easy and my burden is light.*”
 - Martin Luther
 - The harder he worked the more miserable he became . . .
 - There was no happiness or joy or true peace down that road
 - Ill: Matrix ~ Trinity says “*you’ve been down that road Neo . . .*”
- Let’s back up to the end of **verse 11** for a minute
 - “*I’m afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain. . .*”
 - Paul knows that true faith frees people from bondage
 - These people are not acting free . . .

➤ **Paul’s Condition**

- v13 ~ “*because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you*”
- Paul’s condition afforded him the opportunity to preach to the Galatians
- It was something offensive or embarrassing ~ but they accepted him
 - “*though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me*” ~ESV

Xition: They had loved and accepted Paul . . .

- **They had loved and accepted Paul . . . But why? (v15)**
 - Paul says, “*you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me*”
 - Before that he’d asked, “*What then was the blessing you enjoyed?*” (v15a)
 - I.e., They would have given him their eyes only for good reason
 - They’d loved Paul because they’d loved his message . . .
 - So Paul reasonably asks, “*Why the sudden change?*”
 - And he proposes an answer . . .
 - **v16** ~ “*Have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*”

- **PART 3 ~ The Judaizers do not treat the Galatians well (v17)**
 - “*they zealously court you*” ~ “*but for no good*”
 - “*they want to exclude you*”
 - The Judaizers seek them out to tell them they don’t belong
 - They seek them out to shun them
 - Why do they shun the Galatians? ~ “*that you may be zealous for them*”
 - This seems like reverse psychology or marketing
 - People want to go to the club that it’s hardest to get into
 - Then if you’re allowed in you must be something special

- **But Paul allowed them in very easily . . . maybe too easily . . .**
 - People expect to work for something valuable
 - Not just have it given to them . . .
 - “*Perhaps what they’d been given wasn’t all that valuable . . . ?*”

- **PART 4 ~ Paul Expresses Love and Doubt**
 - He wants to stir them up, remind them of what they’d had with him
 - But he cannot be there with them ~ **Read verse 18**
 - They must learn to live by faith
 - And so must we . . .
 - **If every time we opened the Bible . . .**
 - a burst of light sprang forth
 - angelic voices serenaded us
 - God’s love filled our heart
 - Then we’d always have it open . . . We’d never let it go closed . .
 - We’d have Bibles sitting open in every room of our house . . .
 - Spiritual Potpourri

➤ **Xition: But it doesn’t work that way does it . . . ?**

➤ **Our love grows cold without our efforts**

- In **2 Tim 1.6** Paul told Timothy “*stir up the gift of God which is in you*”
- **Hebrews 10.24-25** says, “... *let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another.*”
- Love cannot survive without this stirring up . . .
 - Between husband and wife ~ parents and children ~ families
 - This is true of our loving one another or our loving God
 - We must work at it . . . It doesn't just happen . . .
 - We must persist in reading our Bibles through dry spells . . .
 - We must persist in praying our prayers through dry spells . . .
 - We must persist in good works despite our hearts going cold . . .
- **2 Peter 1.10-14** ~ “*Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ... I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.*”

➤ **Sermon Title: “Value Your Freedom”**

- Paul is accusing the Galatians of abandoning their spiritual freedom
 - He tells them they are submitting themselves to bondage ~ willingly
 - They're walking into the prison and saying, “*Put 'em on! Lock me up!*”
 - “*Why would anybody do this . . . ?*” ~ **FEAR . . .**
 - They were comfortable with the shackles of works righteousness
 - GRACE (*in contrast*) makes them uncomfortable
- We Americans are throwing off freedoms for which our forefathers died
 - “*Why do we do this . . . ?*” ~ **FEAR . . .**
 - We're afraid of having to care for grandma and grandpa . . .
 - Let the **STATE** do it . . . They have far more resources than us . . .
 - We're afraid of many things . . .
 - Instead of retaining our freedoms and praying for
 - ◆ strength and courage to face our challenges . . .
 - We instead offer ourselves to the STATE and abandon our God . . .
- As Paul said, “*I have doubts about you . . .*”

➤ **LET'S PRAY . . .**