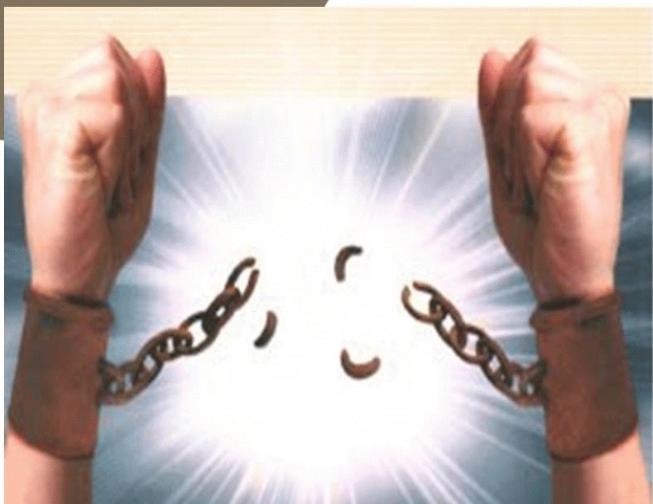


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ALIVE IN CHRIST

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Letter to the
GALATIANS

WEEK 8

Day 1

Study: Galatians 4:13-20

Reading: Ephesians 4:11-16, I John 3:14-19

Memory: James 5:2

Though it seldom happens, there have been a few times over my years in pastoral ministry that I have been accused of speaking directly to a person in one of my messages. On occasion, I have been confronted by a person who thought I was speaking directly to them or picked a certain passage just for them. I often find this a little humorous since I try to preach verse by verse through the Bible and am directed by what that passage says rather than what I think a specific person needs to hear.

Today, we are going to be reminded about the importance of accepting the truth about ourselves. When we listened to the Bible with open hearts and minds, it will be a great catalyst for spiritual growth.

What Does the Bible Say?

By believing what the Judaizers said about Paul, the Galatians were rejecting him and what He had taught them. Paul was puzzled at this because they eagerly accepted him and the Gospel when he first met them. In fact, the first time Paul was in the region, he was sick (vs 13). Paul felt that the Galatians treated him in a wonderful way. They didn't look down on him or reject him because he was sick, but listened to his message and cared for him (vs 14). Paul asked the Galatians what happened to their kind hearts and the blessings that they showed him. He thought that they would be willing to sacrifice themselves to help him out. The phrase "you would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me" has led many commentators to believe that the illness that Paul struggled with had something to do with his eyes (vs 15). At that time, the Galatian churches had a great love for Paul, but now he felt that he was becoming their enemy. He asked them if they were rejecting him because He stood up for the truth (vs 16).

The false teachers had eagerly sought to win the Galatians over to their way of thinking. The false teachers wanted to take them away from

the grace of God and make them obey the law (vs 17). Paul wanted them to know that he also eagerly sought to win them, but he did it with the truth of the Word of God. He didn't care about making a name for himself like the false teachers did because he cared for their souls (vs 18). Paul loved the Galatians like a parent love his children. He was not going to quit on them until he knew that they were mature in the faith (vs 19). Paul desired to be with the Galatians in person so that he could show them how much he loved and cared for them. They were confusing him by turning away from God. He would have loved to write a letter of encouragement and love, but instead he had to write a letter that had a tone of correction because they had strayed from the truth (vs 20).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you get angry at people or reject them because they tell you the truth? When people tell you about something you need to change in your life, do you reject it or do you listen to them? No one likes to be told when they have messed up or when they have been wrong. We are prideful people and don't want to face the fact that we make mistakes. When someone points something out to you, they may not always be accurate, but there is normally some form of truth in the rebuke. Listen to the rebuke and criticism of others and use that to help you change to be more like Christ. The Galatians were rejecting Paul because he was the only one who was bold enough to tell them the truth. It is easy to get upset at pastors and Christian leaders when they tell you the truth about your life. Just as Paul didn't instruct the Galatians so that he would be glorified, neither do pastors and Christian leaders. They tell you the truth because they love you and want what is best for you. They know that your life will be far better if you follow the ways of God.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the truthful leaders He has given you.*
- * *Ask God to help you accept the truth about your life.*
- * *Praise God because He is always truthful with you.*

Thought for the day

Day 2

Study: Galatians 4:21-31

Reading: Genesis 16:1-14, 9-21

Memory: James 5:2

The book of Genesis relayed how Abraham had a child with Hagar. That child was named Ishmael and God described how he was going to become a father of a great nation, but God also said that Ishmael would be like a wild donkey and would cause continual conflicts. On the other hand, the son of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, would be blessed abundantly, and his descendants would cause others who showed favor to them to be blessed. These promises are still at work today.

Today, we are going to see how Paul uses Ishmael and Isaac to explain the difference between the law and grace.

What Does the Bible Say?

The Galatians were putting themselves back under the law, so Paul asked them if they were sure if they knew what the law really said. Genesis, which was part of the law, described the life of Abraham (vs 21). The Galatians thought that if they put themselves under the law they would be able to secure the blessings that were promised to Abraham. Paul reminded them that Abraham had two sons, one of them was born from Hagar who was a slave to Abraham and the other was born of Sarah who was a free woman (vs 22).

Paul used the two women to illustrate the difference between the law and grace. Ishmael, the son of Hagar, was born when Abraham didn't trust God and tried to fulfill God's plan on his own. Isaac, the son of Sarah, was born by a supernatural act as a fulfillment of the promise of God (vs 23). Hagar illustrated the covenant that God had made with Israel on Mt. Sinai in Arabia after they had left Egypt. The Jews end of the covenant was that they were supposed to keep the law (vs 24). Paul also stated that Hagar represented the 1st century city of Jerusalem. Not only were they enslaved to the Roman government, but they were also enslaved to the law that was taught to them by the religious leaders (vs 25).

Paul also talked about the “Jerusalem above.” This referred to the city that God had prepared for an eternal destination. In this illustration, true believers were the children of Sarah and are free to serve God (vs 26). Paul quoted Isaiah 54:1 to relate how Sarah was barren. It took a miracle of God for her child to be produced, just as salvation took a miracle of God (vs 27-28).

The descendants of Ishmael still persecute the descendants of Isaac today. In Paul’s illustration, he described how those who want to remain under the law still persecute those who have been saved from the law (vs 29). After Sarah had observed Ishmael mocking Isaac, she asked Abraham to remove him from the house. Paul used this to tell the Galatians that they needed to remove the Judaizers from their church in order to have peace (vs 30-31).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you try to work things out on your own, or do you trust God to take care of you? God has promised that He will provide for your needs when you trust in Him and His leading. It is easy to get impatient and take matters into your own hands. When you do this, you will cause tremendous problems for yourself. Abraham and Sarah made a huge mistake when they chose to try to have a child through Hagar. Their descendants are still facing the consequences for that choice today. God will reveal to you what He wants you to do in different situations. He uses His Word, circumstances and godly counsel to lead you in the right path. Trust Him to help you. He will do it and will do it right!

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for doing what is best for you.
- * Ask God to help you to trust Him and wait upon Him.
- * Praise God because He knows what is best.

Thought for the day

Day 3

Study: Galatians 4:12-15

Reading: Matthew 18:1-6

Memory: James 5:2

What did Paul challenge the Galatians to do (vs 12)?

What did he mean by this?

****Paul wanted them to be like him and live in Freedom, just as he, being a Jew, found freedom in living like a Gentile who did not have to keep the Old Testament Law.*

What had the Galatians not done (vs 12b)?

****When Paul first arrived to share the Gospel, those who believed had welcomed him with open arms and treated him with love. Those who did not believe had persecuted him. Now, through the influence of the Judaizers, their affection for Paul had slightly turned.*

What had Paul been struggling with when he first preached the Gospel to them (vs 13)?

****There has been great speculation about what sickness Paul had experienced when he first arrived in Galatia. Whatever it was, we know that the Galatians chose to overlook his illness and heed the message he was delivering.*

How did Paul describe his condition (vs 14)?

What was he thankful to the Galatians for (vs 14)?

What question did Paul ask in verse 15?

****They had been so gracious to Paul when he first came to them, but instead of growing in this, they started to become hardened to Paul and*

his teaching.

What did Paul say the Galatians would have been willing to do (vs 15)?

****Many people believe that since Paul makes reference to the eyes, that the ailment that Paul struggled with had something to do with his eyes.*

Matthew 18:1-6

What question did the disciples ask Jesus (vs 1)?

Who did Jesus use to illustrate his answer (vs 2)?

What did Jesus tell the disciples they needed to become like (vs 3)?

****A child in those days was looked at as one of the least in society. Children were not valued in those days in the same way they are valued today.*

Who would be greatest in the kingdom (vs 4)?

****A child was naturally in the state of humility because he couldn't depend on himself.*

What do you think verse 5 means?

****Because children were often viewed as possessions and unimportant in society, taking time to love children and help children wasn't valued. By choosing to value what the society deemed unimportant, they would be choosing to value what Christ valued.*

What warning did Jesus give to those who would harm a child (vs 6)?

Why do you think Jesus gave such a stern warning?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply those things you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 4

Study: Galatians 4:16-20

Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-18

Memory: James 5:2

What did Paul feel like he had become (vs 16)? Why do you think he felt this way?

What were the false teachers eager to do (vs 17)?

****The Judaizers wanted to win the favor of the Galatians so that they would believe them instead of the Gospel that was shared to them by Paul. They had given many compliments to the people and made the people feel special.*

Did Paul say it was wrong to make others feel important or special (vs 18)?

****The Judaizers would try to combat what Paul was teaching by paying extra attention to the people when Paul was around or when Paul was planning to come. Paul was wanting the Galatians to see that the actions of the Judaizers was not based in real love.*

How did Paul express his agony for the Galatians (vs 19)?

What was Paul's ultimate goal (vs 19)?

What do you think it means to have Christ formed inside of you?

What did Paul wish he could do (vs 20)?

Why was Paul perplexed about what was happening to the Galatians?

****It was difficult for Paul to fully express his desire for the Galatians when he was such a distance away from them. He had been amazed by*

their departure from the truth and was attempting to say whatever he could to get them to turn back to the truth.

2 Corinthians 3:1-18

What had the Corinthian believers become (vs 1-3)?

What was Paul confident of (vs 4-6)? Why was he so confident?

What was Paul referring to in verse 7?

****Paul was referencing how the law was given to Moses.*

What point was he making in verses 7-8?

How was Paul attempting to get the Corinthians to see that what they had in Christ through the Holy Spirit was far better than the law (vs 9-11)?

How was the veil that Moses wore compared with the law that he had been given (vs 12-16)?

What does verse 17 express about the Spirit of the Lord and freedom?

What do you think this means?

What does it mean that we look at God with an unveiled face (vs 18)?

****Because we have the Holy Spirit, we have God himself living inside of us. We don't have to have the true image of God hidden from us.*

How are we being transformed (vs 18)?

How can we allow ourselves to let the Holy Spirit transform us into the image of Christ?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply those things you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 5

Study: Galatians 4:21-27

Reading: Isaiah 54:1-10

Memory: James 5:2

What question did Paul ask the Galatians (vs 21)?

What illustration did Paul use (vs 22)?

Why was one child an attempt of the flesh and the other a fulfillment of the promise (vs 23)?

What two women did Paul use as an illustration of the two covenants (vs 24)?

****Paul was comparing that attempt to have a child through Hagar to those who sought salvation by the law. He then compared the fulfillment of the promise through Sarah to salvation that comes through faith.*

What did Hagar and her child represent (vs 24)?

****Mount Sinai represented the law and the law did not bring freedom but slavery.*

How was Jerusalem like Mt. Sinai (vs 25)?

****Jerusalem was the capital of the false worship that was taking place. The leaders in Jerusalem emphasized keeping the law that was given at Mt. Sinai. This emphasis trapped people in their sin.*

What did Sarah represent (vs 26)?

****Sarah was the mother of the Jewish nation. She was not represented as the Jerusalem which focused on the law, but she was compared to a heavenly Jerusalem. A Jerusalem which is free and full of rejoicing. Sarah was not physically able to do anything about her barren condition.*

It was only by God fulfilling His promise that she was able to have a child and was able to rejoice.

In verse 27, Paul quoted Isaiah 54:1. Why do you think he quoted this?

****The woman who was barren and miraculously bore a child would rejoice in a greater way than a woman who had many children. The joy of the believer does not come from his ability to deliver himself from sin, but it comes from the fact that there was nothing he could do to deliver his sinful soul from death apart from the miraculous work of Christ.*

Isaiah 54:1-10

****This passage was written to describe the Jews who were exiled in Babylon after Jerusalem had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.*

How was a barren woman compared to the state of the Israelites (vs 1)?

****They were in captivity and it seemed impossible for them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild it once again.*

What would God cause to happen to the Israelite nation (vs 2-3)?

What promise did God give to Israel (vs 4)?

How is God described in verse 5?

What do verses 6 and 7 show us about the great love of God?

What had God done for a short period of time (vs 8)?

Why is God called the “Redemer” (vs 8)?

How was this compared to the days of Noah (vs 9-10)?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply those things you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 6

Study: Galatians 4:28-31

Reading: Genesis 16:1-16, Genesis 21:1-21

Memory: James 5:2

How did Paul say the children were like Isaac (vs 28)?

Who was Isaac and the children of promise being compared with (vs 21-27)?

What did Ishmael do to Isaac (vs 29)?

What was taking place in Galatia (vs 29)?

What did Paul say the Scripture said (vs 30)?

What was Paul encouraging the Galatians to do (vs 30)?

How did Paul describe the Galatian believers (vs 31)?

Genesis 16:1-16

What did Sarai tell Abram to do (vs 1-2)?

What did Abram do (vs 3-4)?

What happened between Abram and Sarai after Hagar became pregnant (vs 5-6)?

What did Sarai do (vs 6)?

What did the angel of the Lord tell her to do (vs 7-9)?

What did the angel promise her (vs 10-12)?

How did God show His love to Hagar (vs 13-16)?

What can you learn about God from this narrative?

How old was Abraham when Ishmael was born (vs 16)?

Genesis 21:1-21

What happened to Sarah (vs 1-2)?

What did Abraham do to Isaac (vs 4)?

How old was Abraham (vs 5)?

Why did Sarah laugh when she heard she would have a child at such an old age?

How had the birth of Abraham been a miracle (vs 6-7)?

What did Sarah see (vs 8-9)?

What did she want done (vs 10)?

What did God make clear about Isaac (vs 12)?

What did God say about Ishmael (vs 13)?

What did Abraham do to Hagar and Ishmael (vs 14)?

What did Hagar think was going to happen (vs 15-16)?

What did the angel say to Hagar (vs 17)?

How was God going to keep his promise to Abraham (vs 18)?

What did God do for her (vs 19)?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply those things you have learned to your everyday life?

Bible Memory

James 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. 11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? 13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— 14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

James 5:1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten.