

Galatians – Part 8 | 11/10/18

- Paul's appeal to the Galatians | Galatians 4:12-20
 - **Read Galatians 4:12-20**
 - In this section Paul is appealing to the Galatians by showing them his affection for them. Previously he had very forcefully rebuked them, but now he is appealing to them by reminding them of how he feels about them and how they also once treated him.
 - This is because the people of Galatia had turned from the truth and were even rebuking the Gospel that Paul had taught them because they had turned away to the legalism of the Judaizers.
 - Paul reminded them that he had once been just as they were.
 - In Paul's appeal he tells them that just as they had been drawn to the legalism so had he. In fact, Paul much more so was he drawn in.
 - Acts 26:5
 - "They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee."
 - He understands their position and why there is a draw to this legalism, but it isn't the way to Christ.
 - **This is a reminder of how our life experiences can be used by God to help others.**
 - Paul knew exactly why they were drawn to the legalism, he could appeal directly to this as he had been in their shoes.
 - Paul's ailment
 - Interestingly here Paul refers to a bodily ailment that he was enduring.
 - We do not know what this was exactly, scholars believe it could have been malaria or something to do with his eyes as it could be referring to in verse 15.
 - It was likely related to his thorn in the flesh.
 - 2 Corinthians 12:7
 - "So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited."
 - This ailment though wasn't minor, and it certainly impacted his life and those of the people of Galatia.
 - **He even stated that his condition was a trial for them.**
 - Galatians 4:14
 - "and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus."
 - It certainly made it more difficult for him to do the will of God and he mentions it at other times in other letters.
 - **God will keep us humble**
 - **While this may not be a popular opinion, I think the Scriptures make it clear that we will always have something in our lives to keep us humble.**
 - God will bless and provide, but we will never live a "perfect" life in this lifetime. That is saved for our life of eternity in Heaven.
 - **Even though Paul was doing exactly what God wanted him to do he still had health problems to deal with.**
 - **One might think well God surely would have made it so that he could have preached the Gospel unhindered, but we find this is not so.**

- In fact Paul asked God to remove it but He would not.
 - 2 Corinthians 12:8
 - “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, **My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.**” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
- **God allowed Paul’s thorn to keep him humble. To remind Him that God’s grace is sufficient and that the power of God is shown in our weaknesses.**
 - We would do well to remember this key truth ourselves.
 - How often do we find ourselves in this same position as Paul?
 - 1 Peter 5:5b-6
 - “...God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,”
 - **Let us never forget that God will keep us humble, and we should be joyful for this because God gives us grace!**
- **Just as God used Paul’s thorn to keep him humble, so will God make sure that we are as well.**
 - What this looks like is going to be different for each person, but we can be assured that if we are becoming too proud God just might allow something in our lives to humble us.
 - **Why do you think that God keeps us humble? Why does God not allow everything to go perfectly even when we are obeying the will of God?**
 - **How is God’s power made perfect in our weakness?**
 - **What impact has humility had on your life? What benefits have you seen because God has kept you humble?**
- Before the influence of the false teachings of the Judaizers they had embraced Paul and the message of truth that he taught them. They saw him as an “angel of God”.
 - In the beginning when Paul had brought the message of the Gospel to them, they had openly received him as an angel of God.
 - They had truly embraced this message of truth.
 - **Even though Paul was suffering with a bodily ailment they still accepted his message and would have done anything for him even gouging out their own eyes.**
 - Galatians 4:15b
 - “...For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.”
 - This shows how much they cared about Paul and more importantly the message of truth that he taught them.
- **Now however because of the influence of the false teachers, they have turned against Paul and he was seen as their enemy.**
 - Instead of embracing Paul’s teaching they have allowed the false teachings of the Judaizers to cloud their minds.
 - **Instead of openly embracing the truth that Paul taught they saw him as their enemy.**
 - Galatians 4:16
 - “Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?”
 - He even told them of how they were just being used by the Judaizers, they were not doing it to benefit them in anyway.

- This was certainly quite a turn, those who once openly embraced the truth and embraced Paul have now let a lie turn them away.
- **Hostility towards the truth of the Gospel**
 - The reaction of the people of Galatia to the truth is certainly is not unique or something that rarely happens.
 - **The world today shows significant hostility towards the Gospel, towards what is the absolute truth.**
 - The Scriptures are truth regardless of what the world may say.
 - **Regardless of our own personal views on the world or our “feelings”, what the Scriptures proclaim is the absolute truth from God.**
 - If the Scriptures happen to be **politically incorrect** it doesn’t matter, they are not changed or made to conform to the world.
 - What the Scriptures say is what has been revealed to us by God, it is the absolute pure and holy truth.
 - **To “testify to the truth” is why Jesus came into the world.**
 - John 18:37
 - “Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”
 - **Jesus had told His disciples that to abide in the Scriptures (His word) they will know the truth and be set free.**
 - John 8:31-32
 - “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 - **The complete opposite of the truth is a lie, which is what Satan uses to turn the world against Christ.**
 - John 8:44b
 - “...He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
 - **When the world today is confronted with the absolute truth from the Scriptures, many turn hostile towards it.**
 - Those who are hostile to the Gospel see it this way because it **points out their sins** and tells them where they have gone wrong.
 - And people who embrace their sinful and selfish nature do not like to hear this.
 - They want to believe, say and do what seems right to them so the Scripture pointing out their faults and telling them how to live their lives completely contradicts the desires of their selfish sinful nature.
 - **This is why we such hostility towards the Gospel in our world today.**
 - **One would think that a message of perfect truth, one of love, one of forgiveness and one of grace would be joyfully accepted by all.**
 - But we find this is not the case, we see a world that hates the Gospel that hates and despises the truth.

- The world loves themselves, they love their sinful nature and when confronted with the truth there is hostility.
 - Romans 8:7
 - “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.”
- Those who reject the truth are condemned
 - A very important truth that we must understand is that anyone who rejects the truth of the Gospel is condemned.
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10
 - “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, **because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.**”
 - Satan does everything that he can to influence the world so that they will refuse the truth and therefore be condemned.
- What does it mean to you if you believe that the Scriptures are the absolute truth? What impact does this have in all aspects of your life?
- Why is it when we are confronted with our sin or wrongdoing that it can bring hostility?
- What are examples where people today have become hostile or “offended” by the Gospel?
- What is the proper response of a Christian when they are confronted by the truth and it “steps on our toes” or calls out something that needs to be corrected?