

Galatians 4:8-20 Study

OPENING QUESTION:

SERMON DISCUSSION: How were you impacted by the sermon? What new thoughts or lessons did you discover? In what ways did you find yourself challenged and/or encouraged?

READ GALATIANS 4:8-20

NOTE: *“The Galatians thought they were making progress in the Christian faith when they embraced the teaching of the Judiazers. Paul saw them as essentially reverting to the lives they had led before they become Christians. The basic teaching of the gospel he preached was that Christ’s death took away all the sins of those who trusted Him. The lives the converted live they live as their response to what Christ had done for them and not as a way of acquiring merit in the sight of God, The Galatians had evidently lost sight of this and saw the conformity to the laws that the Judiazers taught them as a wonderful advance in the Christian way.”* (Galatians/Paul’s Charter of Christian Freedom by Leon Morris)

1. After saying “to know God”, Paul corrects himself and says, “or rather to be known by God.” What is he trying to convey about our relationship with God? In what ways does this address the issue of works and righteousness? (Romans 3:11; 1 Corinthians 8:3; 1 John 4:19)

2. What were the Galatians doing that caused Paul to ask what had become of their blessedness/joy and to cause Paul to be afraid? (Personal question: Do you find you have lost some of your sense of blessedness and joy that you once had? What should you do?)

3. Describe some of the “worthless elementary principles” evident in the world. How have you struggled with putting your trust in worldly principles rather than in God? Share methods you find to be effective to help you believe what God says above what the world says?

NOTE: The exact nature of the bodily ailment Paul refers to is not known. “Whatever the disease was, it evidently had unpleasant and unsightly symptoms. It seems to have disfigured him in some way. Further, if we read verse 15 in its context, it appears that his illness affected his eyesight, so that, if it had been possible, the Galatians would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. And, indeed, there is other evidence in the New Testament to suggest that Paul may have suffered from some form of ophthalmia.”
(The Message of Galatians by John R. W. Stott)

4. What was Paul’s circumstance that allowed him to preach the gospel to the Galatians? What lessons about suffering and thwarted plans do you find from this, Job 42:2 and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10)? Have you learned any of these lessons from personal experience?

5. Describe the relationship between the Galatian believers and Paul during his previous time with them (vs.13-15). What impresses you about their relationship?

6. How and why had their relationship had changed (vs. 16)? What warnings do you find that could apply to you?

7. Share the evidence you observe regarding Paul’s affection and commitment for the Galatian believers.