

# Galatians 4:8-20

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# The Argument

- If you were *slaves* but now you have been made *sons*, why on Earth would you **be willingly** to go back to being slaves?
- In other words, if you were in *bondage* BUT NOW you have been *set free*, why on Earth would you **be willing** to go back to being in bondage?

# Desiring vs. Deserving

- The “folly” of the Galatians is that they have been tricked (“bewitched”) into *desiring* to be enslaved to “weak and beggarly elements”
  - **Jews:** the Law
  - **Gentiles:** other Pagan religions
  - **Both:** – works-based, external righteousness
- Prodigal in Luke 15 – “I don’t *deserve*”
  - Not worthy to be called your son
  - Make me like a slave

# Legalism's appeal

- **Perceived authority** – Charming, convincing arguments based on Scripture
- **Cultural pressure** – No one wants to be an outsider. We want to belong and/or fit in
- **\*Nit-picking** – Strict adherence to God's laws gives us the “right” to hold claim to our status as “sons”
- **Superiority** – A sense of pride of doing things “better” than other people/groups

# Paul's appeal

- **Become like me**
  - Forsaking institutional righteousness in exchange for righteousness by faith in Christ
  - “count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” – Philippians 3:8
- **Why should they listen?**
  - Because Paul became like them

# Paul's approach

- “In seeking to win other people for Christ, *our end* is to make them like us, while *the means* to that end is to make ourselves like them. If they are to become *one with us* in Christian conviction and experience, we must first become *one with them* in Christian compassion.” – John Stott

# Paul's confusion

- You did me no harm (v. 12b)
- Did not reject me, even though I was sick (v. 14a)
- Received me as an angel of God (v. 14b)
- Would have plucked out your own eyes for me (v. 15)
- **Am I now your enemy?** (v. 16)
- **Did I labor in vain?** (v. 11)

# Judaizers vs. Paul

## FALSE TEACHERS

- They do not want what's best for you (17a)
- They want you keep you from me (17b)
- Treat you based on whose around (18)

## PAUL

- I want to see Christ formed in you (19)
- I want to be present with you now (20)
- I labor in birth pains again (19)



# Concluding thoughts

- **Knowing and being known by God**
  - Intimacy (i.e. a reciprocal love relationship) with God is the essence of eternal life
- **Truth comes from God, not men.**
  - Galatians turned on Paul once they did not like his message
- **Christ is our preoccupation**
  - False teachers want you to be preoccupied with them. Paul wanted the Galatians to be preoccupied with Christ

# Reflective Questions

- **Were are you vulnerable to legalistic thinking?**
  - How *have you* or how *might you* be tempted to turn towards “weak and beggarly (i.e. elementary, miserable, useless) principles?”
- **What are you zealous for?**
  - What occupies your energy, effort and/or excitement?  
Is there spiritual value in these things?
  - What do you treasure and how do you know?