SERIES: GALATIANS BOOK – FREEDOM IN CHRIST
GNC 10/27/24
GAL.4:8-20

- **Galatians 4:8-20** – Paul's concern for the Galatians. Paul loved the people that he led to Christ; he was like a Spiritual Father to them. When I look at my own life, I'm very thankful for those who served in the capacity of a Spiritual Father to me. They loved, they cared, they lived what they preached, and they spoke the truth in love to me even when it hurt. Paul was the pastor of the Galatians and he, more than anyone, cared for them.
- Here in this portion of the Scripture, we see him pointing out something that had the potential and it was in fact robbing them from their Freedom in Christ.
- It is also something that has the potential and unfortunately has in fact robbed us from the blessings that we have in Christ.
- **Galatians 4:8** – *"Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.*"
- All of us have been there right! We all have a "before and after Christ life". Even my wife Rachel who was saved from the womb has a before and after life in Christ. I'm kidding!
- It is that life when we did not know God, and we were enslaved to those who by nature are not gods.
- The message Bible puts it this way: *"Earlier, before you knew God personally, you were enslaved to so-called gods that had nothing of the divine about them."*
- We all had our own so-called gods (not gods) that we served and treasured. Which ones were yours? Fame, money, self, sexuality, pornography, own righteousness, sports, over drinking, overeating, smoking, working, idols, identity, entertainment, comfort, phones, jobs, marriages or friendships, impact or significance in the world,

Satan. A candidate! Ouch! These can be very powerful making us their slaves to serve their wishes.

- These are gods that had nothing of the divine about them, but that for sure occupied the center of our lives, heart and mind for a time and season of our lives and exercise a pretty good control of it whether we admit it or not.
- And as we know now, there are only <u>one true God</u> and everything else are not gods, or so-called gods. Scripture tells us so.
- **John 1:17** – "*Now this is eternal life: that they know you, <u>the only true God</u>, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*"
- We have all been there in one way or another.
- But thank God for Jesus Christ that came to set us free. To give us a new beginning, a new focus and identity in life.
- **Galatians 4:9** – "*But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again*."
- But now that you know the real God or rather since God knows you. And the later actually caused the first.
- **1 John 4:19** – "*We love because he first loved us*." We know him because He first knew us. He knows us way before we get saved and know anything about him.
- **Jeremiah 1:5** – "*God knew you before you were even formed in your mother's womb*."
- **Psalms 139** (you can read it later) says that God knows you inside and out V.1, he knows your every move V.2, he knows your thoughts V.2, he knows the path we are on V.3, he knows the words you speak V.4. He knows everything about you and me and still loves me, still loves you and made a wonderful plan to redeem you to himself.
- **Oh yes, He is indeed the <u>only one true God</u>!**

- Going back to **Galatians 4:9** - "*But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again*."
- How can you possibly subject yourselves again to those tiny gods? To which we say: God you are right! You have a point! How damned we are! Let me get right with you!
- While I wish it was always like that and so easy like this! But the truth is that most of the time it is not! It's hard to agree with God and God's truth in his Word about our trust, practices and behaviors.
- The longer our journey in the Christian faith the more susceptible we can be to follow back under the control of those false gods by forsaking our first love. Even though I don't think that was the case for the Galatians.
- In the case of the Galatians, **V.10** reveals to us some of the things that they were putting in the center.
- **Galatians 4:10** – "*You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!*"
- They were observing traditions, taboos, and superstitions associated with special days and seasons and years.
- They were observing the Jewish calendar with its Sabbaths, its festivals, and its seasons and trying to find favor with God by legal observances. They were succumbing to Jewish observances as a way to find favor or justification with God. And that was the problem here.
- **Galatians 4:11** – "*I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you*."
- In other words, I'm afraid that my hard work towards you has gone up in a puff of smoke!
- Remember, Paul loved the Galatians, he was their Spiritual Father, and he cared for them.
- **Galatians 4:12-16** – "*I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong.* ***13*** *As you know, it was because of an*

*illness that I first preached the gospel to you, **14** and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. **15** Where, then, is your blessing of me now? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me.**16** Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth*."

- So, Paul had been a Jew under the law. Now, in Christ, he was free from the law. So he says, "***Become like me*** *– delivered from the law and no longer living under it*."
- The Gentile Galatians had never been under the law, and were not under it now. So, Paul says: "**I became like you**". I, who was a Jew, now enjoy the freedom from law which you Gentiles always had."
- The Galatians, turning away from Paul to false teachers were not so much hurting Paul personally but hurting the truth of God and thus hurting their own selves and faith. You did me no wrong said Paul. You are doing wrong to yourself and the truth of the gospel.
- Supposedly Paul was in really bad shape when he first preached the gospel to the Galatians, maybe because of the persecutions that he suffered for the gospel, or maybe it was something in his person, or manner of speaking, which might render his ministry less grateful and acceptable to them. We can see this in:
- **2 Corinthians 10:10** – "*For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing*." Or
- **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** – "*Or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. **8** Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. **9** 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 about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. **10** That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong*."
- But whatever it was, it seems it made no impression on them to his disadvantage. They didn't despise nor reject him on the account of it, but, on the contrary, received him as an angel of God, or even as Christ Jesus himself had preached to them. They

esteemed Paul very rightly. They would have taken and arm and an eye and given to him, so to speak. They loved him.

- **Galatians 4:16** – "*Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth*."
- Isn't it interesting how the truth can offend and make some enemies? We can all be friends, just until we talk about the convictions of truth that we have from God and his Word. Then we become weird! That guy is weird! That lady is weird! Did you hear what they said, I can't believe he is so dogmatic and believes those things!
- But the fact is that we all need to be challenged by the truth of Gospel of Jesus Christ! Even when it hurts or offends us.
- Now, we are all called to speak the truth in love, like I believe Paul did here with the Galatians.
- **Ephesians 4:14-15** – "*Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church*."
- That is a beautiful goal in following Jesus Christ.
- **Galatians 4:17-20** – "*Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them.* ***18*** *It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you.* ***19*** *My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,* ***20*** *how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.*"
- The false teachers were zealous in their efforts to win the affections of the Galatians, but their motives were not sincere. They wanted to exclude them. The Judaizers wanted to cut the Galatians off from Paul and from other teachers. They wanted a following and sought to form a sect to get it.
- In **V.19** - Paul's desire now was not for their salvation, they were already saved, but rather that Christ might be formed in them. That they could grow in Christ.
- Christlikeness is God's full objective for His people.

- **Ephesians 4:13** – "*This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ*."
- **Colossians 1:28** – "*He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ*."

- In closing, I would like to go back to **Galatians 4:9** – "*But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again*."
- Because I now know and I am known by God, I don't really need other gods.
- Through God's amazing Grace, and God's directing Word inspired by the Holy Spirit, I have the power to say NO to all those gods.
- **Romans 8:11** – "*And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you*."
- It's amazing, what I thought was impossible to win over, or have victory over, is now possible through the power of the spirit of Jesus Christ in us.
- Think about this: You are known by God and He loves you and He will help you to live in victory even when facing those powerful but still non-gods, so-called gods, with nothing of the divine in them.
- And don't believe anything contrary to that! If you fail or miss the mark (we all do), look up, take his hand, shake it off and keep on following him because your labor in Christ is not in vain! **1 Corinthians 15:58.** And that is GN today!