

Who Wants to Volunteer for Slavery? Galatians 4:8-20

Charles Erdman: "Ritualism is baptized heathenism" (paganism)

What do you suppose he meant?

Legalism is pagan religion,
dressed in Christian clothing!

When we try to live by rules, we imitate principle of all world religions: *"I'd rather do it myself!"*

Purpose of law:

protect children until we grow up!

Until we're mature enough to take care of ourselves.

Goal: TO GROW UP!

–learn to live as mature adults

***We have to "grow up"
before we can be free!***

Privileged child's little different than slave 'til he grows up & receives right to make his own decisions.

People in Christ

are no longer slaves.

In Christ we're mature/adult sons/daughters

In Christ we enjoy adult privileges! =freedom

Illogical position:

Why would we want to be a slave?

The change in us 7-9 *"So you're no longer a slave, but a son, & since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. ⁸Formerly, when you didn't know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. ⁹But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak & miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?"*

To show how foolish this is, Paul uses **3 contrasts** between our former & present condition.

He compares *pagan* condition to position in Christ:

1. Our Status 4:7, 9b

Our status has changed!

Before: We were slaves.

Now: We're adult sons.

Finally we're free!

Why would we want to go back?

2. Our Worship

Before: They worshiped unreal gods—gods that aren't gods at all —gods made in man's image!

Now: We worship the one true God

—the *only* real One

—Maker of heaven & earth

Why go back to system based on human imagination?

3. Our ability to know God

Before: We didn't know God

Our intellect was fallen;

we were unable to know God.

Before: We didn't even know about God—

We had no *intellectual* concept of the true God

Now: We know God personally

In Christ, *we can know Him!*

2 different verbs

Now we have a **relationship**

—He's personal friend

*Why go back to old state,
isolated from God?*

*Why go back to ignorance;
unable to know Him?*

Different level of knowledge

Before: I didn't know God

Now: God knows Me! Personally!

Contrast reminds us about important people we know.

D. Pentecost/Charles Ryrie

–World renowned teachers

Now with the Lord

But if you had met them, & greeted them for me, they'd
have asked about me, and about Helen

Chuck Swindoll/Carl Henry/Tom Landry

Have been acquaintances of mine

I knew Chuck's mom & dad,

& his sister Lucy.

We've shaken hands & talked;

have mutual friends

They wouldn't remember having met *ME*.

Mention my name,

they'd give you a blank stare.

Other famous people, like Billy Graham; never met.

We're brothers; I don't know them

– nor them me

Others I won't recognize if I see them on the street.

Where *important* people are concerned, we *might* know them;
they probably don't know us.

What's *incredible*:

we have intimate relationship

–personal friends

–with **God of the universe!**

Why would I want to go back to "stranger" status?

Why would we go back to slavery?

OUR RESPONSE TO CHANGE 9-11 “Now that you know God—or rather are known by God—**how is it that you are turning back** to those weak & miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? ¹⁰You are observing special days

& months & seasons & years! ¹¹ I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you."

After concluding the description of the change in us,

Paul raises logical question:

"Why go back?"

In middle of ? =>

4 (Negative) characteristics of law

1. **Law is weak** It has no power.

It **defines** sin,

but can't **free** us from sin.

It can **diagnose** our problem,

but it can't **cure** us.

2. **Law is worthless** – "poor" – Doesn't have resources to "buy" anything we need. It's *bankrupt!*

3. **Law is elemental** –

"Miserable principles of the world" = elementary, rudimentary principles => the basic principles the world runs on

= imitates basic principles of world

It's what small child learns in 1st grade.

"Just tell me what to do, and I'll do it!"

"I can do it!"

Like small child, wants to know the rules

Nothing wrong with this level,

but it's childish.

We must grow up to become mature

> perhaps doing many of the same things rules prescribe

But motivated by a different standard

We need ethics based on love for God & neighbor.

Seeking to please God and serve our neighbor.

4. **Law's enslaving** –

Robs us of adult privileges;

forces us to obey kids' rules

Sometimes Jr Highers say:

"I don't want to grow up"

–prefer security of rules, w/o resp. of making decisions.

They're *afraid* to become independent.

BETTER TO MAKE MATURE DECISIONS THAN IMMATURE DECISIONS BASED ON RULES

Living by *rules* is infant stage.

Rules are for people who don't yet know how to behave

We don't become mature by obeying rules.

We mature by evaluating options & making decisions

Maturity leads to discernment

–knowing what pleases God

Consider changes God made in us through Christ's work

How should this change affect our attitude & lives?

Who would volunteer for slavery?

WE would!

It's illogical

–No one in right mind would want to.

Yet we try all the time!

We prefer security of rules!

THEIR INITIAL RECEPTION OF PAUL 4:12-20

[How do WE react to people in *DOCTRINAL* error?

Paul fears they'll turn back;

his efforts will be wasted.

He sets example by how he treats them

when he tries to return them

to the way of truth:

- 1. He distinguishes between false *teachers* & followers 1:7-8** –doesn't handle people *influenced* by false teachers same way he handles false teachers!

2. We want to argue & criticize.

Paul shows same tendency, especially when he defends truth.

But **he doesn't end that way.**

3. Paul shows pastoral, caring interest in them

That's what surfaces in this part:

love & care for them]

THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD PAUL 4:12-16

He comes now, based on how they received him on 1st visit.

No doubt

about his person or message.

He came to them sick 12-13 *"I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. ¹³As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you"*

They didn't reject him with contempt 14 *"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."

**They welcomed him
as messenger from God.**

**They welcomed him
as Christ Himself**

Who changed?

They were willing to sacrifice their eyes if that'd help
15 *"What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me."*

Seeing how they responded, he wouldn't deceive them

16 *"Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?"*

Previously they thought of his visit as a great privilege.

What happened? He hasn't changed.

Why'd they change attitude; all he's done is tell truth?

PAUL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THEM 4:17-20

Contrast between his attitude & Judaizers, shows what *they're* after.

His desire to repay their kindness to Him compared to Judaizers' desire to get something for themselves.

Judaizers want Galatians to be dependent on *them*

Paul affirms their *liberty*;

Judaizers want to *enslave* them.

Judaizers try to win them over,

but only until they've won them over.

They act like man trying to take woman away from boy friend, but only 'til he wins her over. Then loses interest!

That's what Judaizers are up to.

They offer them the world,
but in bad faith.

They want to make them dependent slaves. **17** *"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 be zealous for them."

Paul's jealous for them;

from *pure* motives

His interest is to see Christ manifested in them **18-19** *"It is fine to be zealous,*

provided the purpose is good, & to be so always & not just when I am with you. ¹⁹My dear children, for whom I'm again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you"

His example shows us how to treat sheep God gives us
when they're persuaded by others

Lessons for US to learn from his attitude:

1. He invests hard work for their benefit 11

"I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you."

2. He identifies with them 4:12 "I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you."

He wants them to reciprocate,
with same attitude.

3. He speaks truth, even if they don't want it

4. He seeks their good 17-18

**5. He loves them as parents love their children
and seek *their* best interests. 19a**

6. He suffers to see kind of life he wants to develop 19

He wants to see **Christ's life formed in them.**

*"19 My dear children, for whom I'm again in the pains of childbirth until **Christ is formed in you**"*

Labor pains are an illustration of his concern for them.

Like mother suffers pain, to see fruit of her labor,

Paul works hard & suffers greatly.

Result of his pain isn't going to be a *new* life.

They have that.

He desires transformed life—nature of Christ in us.

Like a mom, His personal concern makes him willing to suffer pain, to see desired result in us

**7. In spite of pain,
he wants to be with them**

20 *"How I wish I could be with you now & change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!"*

He's sure his presence could turn the problem around.

He's desperate to do *something* to keep them.

Attitude of true "Good Shepherd" revealed in him.

He's willing to pay price for His lost sheep.

His followers display same attitude toward lost sheep.

How should we show our love for one another?

Paul's priority:

To help us understand, we're free!

Spares no effort to be sure we understand! *Do we?!!*

Christ died to free us from bondage to sin AND law

People who trust Jesus

=> certainty of *eternal* life

=> enjoyment of *abundant* life

=> life that pleases God

Are WE enjoying *New Life*? (Trust Him!)

Are we walking by power of Spirit=>living to please Him