



"Faith's Expression" (Galatians 4:8-5:6)

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I. A PERPLEXING PATH

A. Their Former Slavery

* 4:8-10 The Galatians worshipped idols before coming to faith in Christ...their particular pagan worship would have included the worship of star deities who they believed controlled human destiny. It is no different than people today who look to the signs of the zodiac. Also, they believed in observing special days, and that there were seasons when the gods would grant special blessings for fertile crops, etc.

B. Their Present Path: Legalism/Pharisaism

* They were now striving for righteousness instead of from righteousness; spiritual pride was inevitable; they would become condemning of others not like them; they would be exclusive in fellowship (refer to Gal.2, Peter), loss of the attitude of a servant, & loss of joy. Legalists do not reflect the joy of the Lord.

C. The Path Paul Is Trying To Lead Them To

* 4:12 Though Paul was a Jew, when with the Galatians, he did not maintain a kosher diet, or seek to keep Judaistic religious traditions. He was free, and he wanted them to be free.

* 4:19 Paul wanted Christ formed in them. What does a person look like when Christ is formed in them?

- Christ was a friend of tax collectors and sinners/the legalist would not associate with tax collectors and sinners.

- Christ repeatedly broke the religious rules & traditions of the day/the legalist sought to keep all the religious rules and traditions. (fasting, the ceremonial washing of even eating utensils...)

- Christ was accused of being a drunkard and a glutton; His first miracle was turning water into wine.

- His greatest conflicts were with the religious elite of His day.

- He overflowed with joy (Heb.1:9)

- He never compromised truth, yet He was not condemning but rather compassionate & merciful, was not exclusive but rather welcomed all who came to him, was not spiritually proud but sincerely humble...

II. FURTHER PROOF OF THE TRUTH: THE ABRAHAM ALLEGORY

A. The Story (4:21-23)

* At age 75, God called Abraham, then promised him many descendants. At age 85, still no kids...enter Hagar, Ishmael is born. (Gen.16:1ff). At age 99, God again promises Abraham that he will have a child through Sarah, and he is to name him Isaac (Gen.17-18). At the ripe old age of 100, Abe becomes a daddy. See Gen.21:1-5, 8-21; On the surface, this seems like just one big family problem.

B. The Allegory (4:24-31)

* An allegory is a story or an event that has a hidden meaning.

* It's incredible to realize that there really is another world that I cannot presently see...

* John 6: 38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

* See John 14:1-6

* Rev.3: 12 (Philadelphia) Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

* See Rev.21:2-5; Heb.12:18-24

* v.28 Born from above; see Eph.1:3 (notes); Col.3:1-4; I am not striving for heaven, I'm already a citizen of heaven!

* 4:30 Law and grace, faith and works, promise and commandment can never live in the same household...there is no place for my attempting to accomplish through the flesh what only God can accomplish from heaven.

III. PAUL'S MAIN POINT (5:1-6)

A. You Were Born Free, Live Free! (5:1)

B. You Cannot Mix Law & Grace (5:2-4)

* 5:4 "Fallen away" = 1601. ekpipto, ek-pip'-to; from G1537 and G4098; to drop away; spec. be driven out of one's course; fig. to lose, become inefficient:--be cast, fail, fall (away, off), take none effect.

* If you are going to add ANYTHING connected to the law to the message of the gospel, then you have to take the rest of the law with whatever it is you are adding...

C. The Perfection You Find Yourself Striving For Will Come One Day - By Faith! (5:5).

D. In Christ, There Is Only One Thing That Counts (5:6)

1. Faith

* Faith in the promised "seed" (Christ)

2. Faith expressing itself

* James 2: 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

3. Faith expressing itself through love

* 26. agape, ag-ah'-pay; from G25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence; spec. (plur.) a love-feast:--(feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love.

* The evidence of my faith is not my striving for righteousness through works of the law, following church tradition, religious rituals, or even faithful church attendance (even at church that believes in and teaches the truth), but rather the love of Christ that has been shed abroad in my heart...

* This would be a shocking (and offensive) statement to the legalist. It meant that their twice a week fasting, meticulous tithing, faithful synagogue attendance, gifts to the poor (done for men to see), disassociation with publicans and sinners, regular religious routine...meant NOTHING!

E. What This Looks Like

* See Matthew 22: 35-40

* Isaiah 58:5-8

* Jeremiah 31: 33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.

* II Cor.5: 14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

* I obey, not because I am commanded, but compelled...I forgive, not because I am commanded, I offer sacrifices, not because I am commanded, but compelled...

* I John 4:7-12; 3:16-20

* Luke 10:25-37

* Luke 6:27-36

* We see this love spring up in Zaccheus...in the sinful woman who wets Jesus' feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair...in the woman caught in adultery as, rather than condemning her, Jesus shows her grace and mercy, & opens the door for her to be free from her life of sin...in Stephen, and they are pelting him with stones & he cries out "Lord do not hold this sin against them"...we see it in Abraham, as he is willing to leave family, friends, and familiar territory and embark on a journey of faith that will one day lead him to a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We see it when there is quarreling between Lot's herdsman and his own, and he humbles himself by letting Lot choose first...we see it in Abraham rescuing Lot from the kings of the east, even though Lot would not have been taken into captivity had he not been dwelling near Sodom...we see it in Abraham giving Melchizedek a tithe...in him interceding on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah (where Lot was now living!)...and of course we see it in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac on Mt. Moriah...

CONCLUSION

* Can you identify the expression of your faith?

* See Rev.2:2-5 (love here is "agape") ; Their agape would be restored if they would begin to do the things they did at first - serving, sacrificing, saying no to self...