



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Galatians

Lesson 39-Hold on to the Gospel

Galatians 4:12-20, *Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all. ¹³ You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. ¹⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? ¹⁷ They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. ¹⁸ But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. ¹⁹ My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.*

Apostle Paul as a theologian. We have seen him mastering the reasonings of theology.

Like a lawyer he is defending his case.

Like a Bible scholar expounding the Old Testament.

For only one reason that is salvation is faith alone!
Until this part of the letter to the churches in Galatia, there has not been one personal comment, note or even an introduction.

Straight Paul went into defend the Gospel.

Now Paul is exposing his gentle side! Which is very rare in his epistles?

Paul uses a word that he never uses any other time in thirteen Epistles!

V 19: “Teknion”, “my little children.”

John uses this word frequently.

The Greek word ‘**teknon**’ means “child.”

He likes to call himself as a mother here but generally he likes to call himself as a father. Paul likes to address himself as the father so that he is the authority over those in the church.

Here Paul pictures himself as a woman in labour “until Christ is formed in you.”

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, *But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.⁸ So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives,*

because you had become dear to us.⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Words of tender affection, care, and compassion.

Paul as a father spelling out the theology, demands, commands, and the mandates.

2 Corinthians 10:1, *Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.*

Paul himself refers to the gentleness and meekness of Christ, the gentleness and meekness of Christ.

What has caused Paulk to show this side of his character?

They had begun well in the Spirit but some Judaizers had bewitched them.

The Judaizers told the Christians that faith was not enough, you had to have circumcision and adhere to all the rituals and customs of the Mosaic law.

There are no scriptural arguments here in this section, no more great heights of logic. A tender call to the people that he loves like a mother loves her own offspring.

There are three pointers Paul wants them to know.

1. Appeal,
2. Remembrance, and
3. Warning.

1. Appeal

Verse 12: *“I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are.”*

Now this is strong: “I beg you/ urge/ plead.”

He is begging now. It’s not so much the father commanding as it is the mother begging and pleading.

“I beg of you, brethren,” – he identifies them first as brethren. In verse 19 as children.

“become as I am.”

Now what do you think he means by that, “become as I am”?

Free from the Mosaic law.”

Galatians 2:19, *“Through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I’ve been crucified with Christ.”*

He has been delivered from, severed from the Mosaic customs and rituals.

Not from morality, not from the divine nature and the definitions of righteousness which are forever but from the Mosaic formulas namely the externals.

When you come to Christ you have been delivered from all those ceremonial laws. You are no longer have anything to do with them. You have been set free from them.

- Now you live free in Christ.
- You live under grace.
- You live in union with Christ.

What you could not do through the law because of your weakness in the flesh, you can now do through Christ who is strengthens you. We have been disconnected from all that old Mosaic religion.

So, Apostle Paul says to them, “Become as I am. Disconnect yourself from those false teachings.”

Paul then he adds this: “For I also have become as you are.” “Look, when I came here, when I came here to minister to you, I became as you are.”

1 Corinthians 9:19-23, *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;²¹ to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.²³ Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.*

When Paul came to the Gentiles, he stepped into their culture and their world, but didn't bring Jewish traditions. Paul had none of those constraints on his life.

As a Jew he had followed all the legal requirements and he followed and observed every one of them. When he came to know Jesus on Damascus road, he understood the forgiveness of sins, righteousness and most of all the freedom from all legalism.

Philippians 3:4-11, *though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh,*

I more so:⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul arrived in Jerusalem and met with the elders of the church there and James who is the head of the church, and he told them the work among the Gentiles. He reported from his missionaries' journeys.

Acts 21:19-21, *When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law;²¹ but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses,*

saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

Please do remember that God's moral law, which is eternal.

Paul had set aside the religious structure and those external things. But the Jews had come to believe, in doing them you earned your salvation.

- Paul had abandoned the ways of Jewish people.
- Paul had abandoned the tradition of the fathers.
- Paul was no longer living under the religion of Old Testament Judaism.
- Paul was no longer observing ceremony and ritual.

The believers in the Galatians who are Gentiles, they never had anything to do with the Mosaic religion, are being told they must go back to the Mosaic religion if they expect to be saved from their sin and judgment.

The gentile believers were never under Jewish ritual law. Now they have fallen into the hands of these Judaizers who are trying to put them under that law from which Paul has been set free.

So, Paul says, *"Become as I am, for I also have become as you are"*

- Paul came to Galatia as one free from the law
- You also need to become free from the law, as I am.

As a Jew all the Jews were taught to follow the laws of Moses to be right with God, that including Paul. So, Paul was also taught the same as Pharisee before he became a believer in Lord Jesus Christ.

I walked blameless before the law as a very proud legalistic Pharisee until I was exposed to the grace of Lord Jesus Christ. The grace of Jesus Christ set me completely free from the law which I could never satisfy its standards.

Now you Galatians do you want to go back to that?

Please be like me- Apostle Paul's plea to them.

Galatians 3:28, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Now everything is new. All the Old Testament was all shadow and illustration. Now the substance, the reality has come, and that's Jesus Christ.

- ✓ You are no longer under the law but in Christ.
- ✓ You are no longer under the Mosaic law but in Christ."

Paul is appealing to them "Don't go back. Don't go back to something you never had. I have left it all and they are all rubbish."

2. Remembrance:

V 12, *“You have done me no wrong.”* He was looking back

For a moment he moves to the past. Paul remembers the very first time he came on that first missionary journey. He came to Galatia, and he preached the gospel in these various cities, and at least four of those churches were formed.

He said that they have not done any wrong. They accepted him did not reject. They didn’t harm or hurt, or he was not persecuted like in other places.

What happened when Paul came to Galatia?

Paul was preaching the gospel in the region of Galatia and established the churches.

Acts 13:44-52, *On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”*

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Paul recollecting what took place at his first missionary journey, the Jews were very furious, and they hated it. But you heard it, believed on the messages and received it wholeheartedly and you were saved.

Acts 14:19, *Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. The Jews were furious enough to try to kill him.*

The church was begging for more teaching and earnest to hear more truth.

When Paul was behaving like a Gentile and the Jews were calling him as a blasphemer. At the same time the gentiles didn't bring any trouble to Paul but now they are bringing in some trouble.

This broke the heart of Paul. This is why now Apostle Paul showing his soft side to them.

Hosea 11:8-9, *“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. ⁹I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror.*

God tried to win them by taking care of them. God did everything that He could. But they were unfaithful to God.

Jesus cried looking at Jerusalem.

Matthew 23:37, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*

Ephesians 4:30, *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Not only does God express sorrow and Jesus express sorrow, but the Holy Spirit even grieves.

It's little wonder then that a pastor could be heartbroken over people who welcomed him once and now are somehow attacking the very man they once affirmed.

So, Paul reminding them that they accepted him when it was a very hostile environment with the Jews, neither they didn't oppose him nor any wrong.

V 13, *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.*

The region of Galatia was on the plan for the first missionary journey. Paul was there because he was sick, so he spent the time in Galatia. If Paul was not sick, then they would not have heard the Gospel through him.

In God's providence somehow, Paul contracted illness.

Could it have been a malarial sickness?

This region was little bit more elevated than some of the lowlands of Pamphylia. Some suspect that maybe there was an epidemic of mosquitoes and malaria in the lowlands.

Could be or not but we may not know for sure.

Perhaps it was malaria that he had somehow contracted, but it was enough to keep him in one area so that he couldn't go

anywhere else. Still he had enough strength to be able to do the ministry that he did while he was there.

V 14, *And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

Why was it a trial to them?

Paul's illness was a trial to them.

Because he was not able to do all the things, they wanted him to do.

Maybe it kept him away from them a lot of the time when he had piercing, torturous headaches and pains.

More than physical as it is theological, because in those days, if somebody claimed to be a prophet of God, and particularly if somebody claimed to be the one who represented the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he had chronic physical problems, this would be a way certainly to discredit his claims.

They didn't think of Paul as nothing, so Paul says that you didn't spit me back out, even though I had this illness, which was a trial or a temptation to you.

Why was it a temptation?

The Jews, first of all, believed that if you had an illness, this is the judgment of God.

Job's friends – Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

Job chapters 4, 8, and 11.

They come to Job and they say, "Job, you have all this trouble because there's sin in your life. You are under judgment; God is punishing you!"

That was longtime Jewish theology.

John 9:1-2, *Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.² And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

This is not just the theology of Jewish, but it is the Gentiles had the same theology.

Acts 28:3-4, *But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.⁴ So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live."*

Same theology of Job's friends. If someone is in trouble or going through trial, then they make that as they are under the judgment of God.

Paul was discredited by both Jews and Gentiles since he was a representative of God but was with a physical illness or infirmity.

In spite of all this but the Gentiles at Galatia did not despise or loathe, thinking nothing of Apostle Paul. As per the theology they held in those days should have made them to declare that Paul was under the severe judgment of God.

Rather they accepted him and received him as an angel of God.

- ✓ That shows the works of the Spirit of God on their hearts.
- ✓ They received him,
- ✓ They didn't yield to some temptation to judge the messenger,
- ✓ They did not despise the message by Paul's outward appearance,
- ✓ They received him as an angel from God, or Christ Jesus Himself.

Do you remember those days?"

V15, *What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.*

What happened?

How did it sink to this?

They were so happy with him.

They were rejoicing and were full of joy.

Disciples were multiplying as gospel proclaimed.

Where is that sense of satisfaction you had? How can you change?

A pastor/ minister invests their time and energy on someone the most and then they see their life is been changed and their response for the call and purposes of God it's very exciting and very satisfying. But somewhere down the years when they that person lose their salvation and they have walked away from God its very very painful to bear.

It's a deep sadness, it's part of ministry, that those who loved you and lifted you up and admired you and sought your presence, for some strange reason turn on you and become an enemy.

This is so concerning to Paul.

V 11, *“I fear for you, that perhaps I have laboured over you in vain.*

Was all this wasted?

This work is not easy!

But originally, do you remember how devoted you were to me?”

V15, *What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.*

“I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.”

Transplants weren't possible!

Deuteronomy 32:10, *“He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.*

To guard someone like guarding someone as if he were the apple of your eye.

Out of all our body external parts eye is a very important one.

Perhaps something had attacked his eyes, some eye infection that would be everywhere in the ancient world.

People think Paul had eye problem based on this.

Galatians 6:11, *See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!*

Why is he writing in large letters?

Possibly because those are the only ones he can see.

V 16, *Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*

How can that possibly be?

The only thing he can conclude is, “You don’t want the truth anymore.”

It was for the truth that they have loved Paul. It wasn’t because of his personality or his appearance.

They loved him for the truth, and he was so precious to them.

Now suddenly by telling you the truth, Paul had become their enemy.

3. Warning:

V 17, They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.

That verse applicable to all false religion and all false teachers.

This is referring to the Judaizers teaching their Mosaic lies.

“They court you; they make a fuss over you to win you, favor you.”

“Eagerly seek” is to have a deep concern.

They, these false teachers, aggressively went after the Galatians.

That’s how it is with false religion, it is a seeking religion. They are aggressive. False religion is spreading like wildfire over the world today.

2 Corinthians 11: 14, *And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.*

Matthew 23:15, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.*

When you get into this false religion you are a double son of hell.

“They eagerly seek you,

- not commendably,
- not honorably,
- not honestly,
- not with any commendable purpose like all false cults, false teachers, false religions.

All they want to do is shut you out so that you will seek them.

Why do they want you to seek them?

Because they represent Satan’s kingdom, and they are in it for the money.

They do what they do for money. All false teachers do, according to Scripture.

They want to exclude them from the benefits of true salvation, and walking with Christ, and living in the power of Christ.

They want to exclude them from freedom in Christ.

They want to put up a barrier, and then they want you to turn and seek them.

Galatians 6:12, *As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*

They are making a good showing in the flesh to compel them to be circumcised. They are after them.

Paul's heart is really grieved here, really broken, because he's seeing what false teachers always do.

2 Peter 2:1-3, *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ²And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.*

They are exploiters.

It isn't wrong though to be sought.

V18, *But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.*

There was some sarcasm in that. False teachers wanted money.

They wanted converts to validate themselves and their false teaching, they wanted to make double sons of hell.

They wanted money.

Paul is making an offhanded reference to that when he says, "It's always good to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner. It right for those of us who preach the truth to come after you and to seek you, and not only when I am present with you."

False teachers did their seeking when they were present because they wanted to get their hands on the treasure, on the money, on the possessions.

Paul sought the Galatians, not for his own advance, but to secure them to Christ. As long as he was there, he was doing it. Even when he was gone, he would still do it.

Even though an enemy had moved in and the alienation of affection had begun almost breaking Paul's heart, despite this situation he still seeks them for Christ and not for himself.