

Galatians 4

- All of chapter 4 is dedicated to contrasting bondage and freedom in Christ
- since the Galatian believers are starting to fall back into legalism, Paul wants them to understand that the law only brings bondage

V.1-2

- A good example of this is the older son in the story of the prodigal son

- he is still young and works for his father as a servant

- Luk 15:29 "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and *yet* you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends;**

- so his father has to remind him:

- Luk 15:31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.**

- he is under the control of his father until he is old enough or until his father dies

- this passage also brings up a subject that many Christians don't like to talk about

- slavery in the bible

- some people will go to great lengths to try and tell you that the bible doesn't really condone slavery

- whether it condones it or not, it was a real part of life back then

- the problem is that when we think of slavery, we automatically think of the type of slavery that the US was involved in from the 1600's to 1865.

- and it becomes a very racial and political issue

- This is not the type of slavery in the bible

- slaves or servants came to be slaves by different means

- some were slaves because they couldn't pay the debt they owed so they were sold as slaves in trade for the debt they owed

- others were enemies captured in battle

- instead of slaughtering the prisoners of war, this was seen as a more merciful way to deal with them

- being a slave back then would be better compared with a soldier enlisted in the military today

- being legally bound to an employer and to a job that one cannot simply "quit" at will,

- not free to leave without permission, subject to discipline if one disobeys

- yet we know that the daily life of a good soldier is not especially hard

V.3

- this is how we were before Christ came

- we were in bondage under the law

- we were still God's children but we were like a child under the guardianship of his father

V.4-5

- Paul reminds the Galatians that God not only sent His son, but that He was born of a woman

- this was to fulfill the first prophesy about the Messiah

- talking to the Devil, God says:

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

-Jesus was also born under the Law in order to redeem those under the Law

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.
-it is extremely important that someone has credibility in order to accomplish their goal
-have you ever sat through a class or a teaching where you knew that the one teaching had no personal experience with what he was teaching about?
-like a childless man teaching a class on effective parenting
-or a newlywed couple teaching others about marital advise
-or having someone leading a class on personal finance when you know that their financial situation is a disaster
-you have to have credibility in order to relate to others who are struggling
-this is why Jesus was born under the Law

V.6-7

-Although he refers to "sons", that doesn't mean this is for men only
-the word "sons" means "immediate kinship", not necessarily male or female
-if you are a believer, you have His Spirit in you
-this is hard for me to grasp
-not only does God love us and call us friends, but He actually resides inside us
-we have the Spirit of the God that created all things living inside us!
-we are no longer slaves to the law, but sons; immediate kinship
-and being members of this family has great privileges
-not only are we members of a family, but we are heirs to a royal kingdom
-this sounds like fairy tale talk but it's true
-No matter what your parents plan on leaving you when they pass on, it won't compare to the inheritance you have waiting in heaven
1Pe 1:4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,
1Co 2:9 but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

V. 8

-before we were believers, we were serving someone or something besides God
-everyone worships something
-humans are created to worship
-even those who claim they are agnostic or atheists worship something in their lives
-it may be their career, money, physical pleasure, their own image
-it's amazing what people will do to try to fill the void in their life if they don't know God personally
-I know some people who are obsessed with working and acquiring wealth only to buy more expensive toys they never use only to impress other people

V.9

-then there are some people that come to know Christ but fall back into the worldly lifestyle they had before they knew God
-it would be nice if all the desires of the flesh just disappeared after committing our lives to Christ

- unfortunately that isn't how it works
- This world has been given over to Satan at the fall in the Garden of Eden
- Satan is "the Prince of the Power of the Air"
- during the temptation:

Mat 4:8 Again, the devil *took Him to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;

Mat 4:9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

-Although Satan is the father of lies, I believe all the kingdoms of the world were his to offer Jesus

-Jesus didn't deny that they belonged to the devil, but rather said :

"Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

V.10-11

-the group that Paul was talking to was falling back into their old lifestyle, which was the Law

-the Law is such a clever trap

-it seems so noble and good trying to live by the rules that God Himself gave to the

people

-**Rom 3:20** because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Rom 7:6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

V.12

-As believers in Christ, our goal should be that others become like us

-not in personality but in understanding the truth

-we should never be ashamed about the fact that we want others to be spared from hell

V.13-14

-this contains some things that should mess with the theology of many people today

-Paul says he had a bodily illness

-this isn't the only physical ailment that Paul had

-he also had the thorn in the flesh to deal with

-many people also believe he had poor eyesight

-this is important because there are many people who firmly believe that if you have genuine faith, you will never be sick

-this is part the prosperity gospel and is a dangerous teaching

-people who have fallen into this believe that God's main concern for their life is their physical comfort while they are here on earth

-although God wants good things for us, His main concern is our eternal comfort

-if anyone had enough faith to be healed, it was Paul

-but yet he struggled physically too

-the bible makes it very clear that we will have times of discomfort, especially if we follow Christ

1Pe 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

1Pe 1:7 so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

-the reason there is sickness and poverty in the world has nothing to do with anyone's lack of faith

- it is because we live in a fallen world
- this world has been given over to Satan when Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God
 - Mat 26:11** "For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me
 - Rom 8:22** For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
- it is all a result of the devil's influence on earth
- when Satan is bound for a thousand years during the millennial reign, then people will see the elimination of poverty and sickness

V.15

- do you remember the sense of joy and freedom you had when you were a new believer?
 - back when your faith seemed simple and life wasn't so complicated
 - you were so filled with love you would have done anything for anyone
 - but slowly life started to get in the way and now things don't seem as clear as they used to
 - that's what happened to the Galatians
 - they began to take their focus off of what Jesus did for them and started to focus on the law again
 - the law will rob you of your joy
 - it won't make you feel good about what you do but rather makes you feel guilty for the wrong things you do
- true freedom only comes in Christ
 - Joh 8:36** "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

V.16

- the truth isn't always easy to hear
 - many people don't want to hear the real truth because it will convict them or require something of them
 - many people are content with living a lie or ignoring the truth
 - because the ultimate truth is that the bible is true and God has a plan for your life
 - that interferes with the life many people want to live
 - after all, there are parties to attend, women to be chased, wealth to be accumulated, and pleasures of the flesh to be indulged
 - the messenger of truth is often times not the most popular person around
 - but if don't want to offend anyone all you have to do is say nothing, do nothing and be nothing.

V.17-18

- this is something that false teachers are good at doing:
 - they make their teaching sound like the popular position
 - if you really are somebody, you will believe their message
 - and if you don't believe it, then you are against them and they shut you out
 - but you don't need to be commended by people like that
- Seek commendation from Christ and people who are genuine believers

V.19-20

- the same way a father hurts for a sick child is how Paul is hurting for this group of people that is starting to walk away from the faith
 - He seems confused about what they are doing

- and it really is hard to understand
 - Once someone knows the truth about the gospel, why would they ever abandon it?
- there is hope in nothing else
- I honestly don't know how people make it through this life without a belief in God and spending eternity with Him
- what would the point be to life?
- what would stop people from just ending it all when times got tough if there was no afterlife?
- but Paul also says something interesting here
- he tells them that he wishes he could come to them and to change his tone
- sometimes this is what people need
- there aren't enough people who will tell you the truth these days
- most people don't want to make waves or risk offending anyone
- so they are content with just smiling and watching you coast off to hell
- sometimes a change of tone is what's needed to wake people up
- like my discussion with Aaron about homosexuality
 - No one else at work would even consider confronting him about his lifestyle because they didn't want to offend him

V.21

- When he refers to the law, he isn't only talking about the Ten Commandments
 - the first five books of the bible are called the law
- I think this is one of the reasons that God chose to use Paul
 - his knowledge and understanding about the OT is unmatched
 - now that he is no longer under bondage to the law, he can clearly see what the OT stories were pointing to

V.22-24

- the more you get to know the old testament, the more you realize that it is a huge illustration of things to come in the New Testament
 - here Paul refers to Sarah and Hagar
 - everyone knows who they were
 - Abraham's wife Sarah couldn't have kids so she told him to go into her servant Hagar and that would be their child
 - so Ishmael was born and now Sarah realized it wasn't a good idea
 - years later Isaac was born to Sarah
 - Hagar was a servant and so Ishmael represents the old covenant...the Law
 - Isaac was born through faith (in their old age) so he represents the New covenant...the Promise

V.25-26

- the resent Jerusalem Paul was talking about was the Jews who were still under the law and are represented by Hagar
 - but those who belong to the Jerusalem above (kingdom of God) are free from the Law and are represented by Sarah

V.27

- this is a reference from Isaiah 54
 - I believe what it refers to is that Sarah was the one who was barren and could have no kids till her old age

-but those that would come from her would be blessed and become a great multitude

V.28-29

-Ishmael was 13 years older than Isaac

- Apparently he treated Isaac poorly which was a picture type of the people of the Law persecuting those born of the Spirit

-even today, those who hold on to the law believe they are much better than those who live by faith

-they believe their works are something to brag about

V.30-31

-Just like in the Old Testament picture type, the son of the bondwoman was cast out

Gen 21:10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac."

-children of the Law will not be heirs with children of faith because the Law will not get anyone to heaven

-Jesus tells a parable about this:

-Mat 22:2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.

Mat 22:3 "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

Mat 22:4 "Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are *all* butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.'"

Mat 22:5 "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,

Mat 22:6 and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.

Mat 22:7 "But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

Mat 22:8 "Then he **said* to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

Mat 22:9 'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find *there*, invite to the wedding feast.'

Mat 22:10 "Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

Mat 22:11 "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes,

Mat 22:12 and he **said* to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.

Mat 22:13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Mat 22:14 "For many are called, but few *are* chosen."

-when He says that many are called, who is He referring to?"

Joh 12:32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

-and which are the ones that are chosen?

-Joh 6:47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

-Joh 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out

Joh 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Joh 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

-let's not get hung up on a verse that certain groups of people take out of context to suit their agendas

-the truth is this:

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

-that's the heart of God; that ALL people get to heaven

-He's not looking for an elite group, he wants us all, even your enemies

-and that's why Paul spends so much time explaining to the people in Galatia (and to us) that the Law will not bring them to heaven