

Galatians – Part 9 | 11/18/18

- Freedom we have in Christ | Galatians 4:21-5:1
 - **Read Galatians 4:21-5:1**
 - The illustration of Hagar and Sarah
 - Paul continuing his discussion of the differences between being under the law and being under grace, he uses an illustration of the Old Testament story of what took place between Abraham, Hagar and Sarah.
 - In this historical event Abraham had a child with both women, however only one was of God that brought about the child of promise.
 - **Hagar represents slavery to the law, while Sarah the promise which is grace and freedom.**
 - Paul uses this as an illustration to further differentiate being under the law and being under grace.
 - **The entire story though is a longer way of describing the truth and realization that Paul gives us in 5:1, that we have freedom in Christ.**
 - Allegory or illustration?
 - Depending on your translation in verse 24, if translated literally it will say “allegorically” (ESV and NASB), if not there were likely other words used here either “illustrations” or “symbolic”.
 - The Greek word is “allegoroumena” which is correctly translated into “allegorically”, however the intended meaning is not the same.
 - A true allegory is a fictional story that is used to convey a fact or truth, however the story of Abraham and Sarah was of course not fictional, and Paul certainly didn’t imply that it was.
 - This is why many translations will substitute a word to convey the correct sense or meaning so not to bring confusion to the reader
 - Hagar and slavery under the law
 - Hagar and her child (Ishmael) represent slavery under the law.
 - We see the two sons of Abraham being contrasted by the circumstances in how they came into the world.
 - **Abraham knew God had promised him a son** and thought that since Sarah was barren that he would **take matter into his own hands** to fulfill God’s promise.
 - He took Hagar and bore a son Ishmael.
 - **However, as the Scriptures tell us Ishmael was born according to the flesh, which means of sin.**
 - It was not of God for Abraham to do this, Abraham sinned by not trusting God (lack of faith) and doing something that was out of the will of God.
 - The covenant at Mount Sinai as a symbol for slavery under the law.
 - Paul uses Mount Sinai as a symbol for the law,
 - Which is fitting as that is where Moses received the ten commandments.
 - This is also where the descendants of Ishmael settled down.
 - Hagar is also an illustration of slavery because she was a slave of Sarah’s.
 - **Hagar represents the present Jerusalem who is in bondage to the law.**
 - The Jewish people were in bondage to the law and had to bear its weight.

- **This is what they were still struggling with, they were slaves to the law and trying to obtain salvation through it which was impossible.**
 - So present day Jerusalem was still forcing themselves as slaves to the law.
 - As the descendants of Ishmael (Arabs) persecuted Isaac (Jews) so now there is still persecution brought by the Judaizes and the unbelievers of the world.
 - There was and still is persecution of the Jews and Christians in the world today by the lost.
- **Paul is conveying that to live under the law as a way for salvation is to live under it as a yoke of slavery.**
 - The Judaizes saw the law as a way of salvation and its requirements as something they could meet.
 - But of course, they could never do so. They were missing out on the purpose of the law which was to reveal our sin and to show that we need a Savior.
 - **They were as slaves to the law, always under a heavy burden they could never fully bear themselves.**
- **Slavery to the law as a way of salvation was the will of man not of God.**
 - God never intended for slavery to the law as a way of salvation, this was what man had desired.
 - **Just as Ishmael was born out of the will of man, so was salvation through the law.**
 - **They saw salvation as something they could earn through their own good deeds, their own good works, their own power, their own abilities.**
 - Salvation by our works is impossible.
- **The yoke of slavery under the requirements and penalty of the law are a heavy burden.**
 - Paul said not to submit to the yoke of slavery because this is the effect of one who ignores the grace of God and seeks salvation through the requirements of the law.
 - **The law will only continue to serve its purpose which is to reveal one's sin which continues to show that one has "spiritual bankruptcy".**
 - That they have failed to keep God's holy and righteous commands and are therefore burdened under the guilt.
 - If this is all one has then the burden of one's sins and its punishment are severe, and one becomes a slave to it.
 - **This is a yoke so burdensome that no one can bear it.**
 - Acts 15:10
 - "Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"
 - No one can live a perfect life, no one can live without sin or do anything on their own to redeem themselves from the penalty of the law.
 - **Martin Luther's experiences with this give us an idea of what living a life as a slave to the law can be like.**
 - Before he understood what it meant to be saved by faith, he lived his life for works to please God. His response to this can be seen in his later writings where he recounted events from his earlier life.

- *Martin Luther – 1545 @ Wittenberg Germany: Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, “As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!” Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience.*
 - In this passage Luther revealed the struggles and burden he had while trying to live a “perfect” life for God. He realized he could not do it and he was angry with God.
 - Later though he realized that Salvation did not come through works, but through faith in Christ (Romans 1:17) This changed his life forever and also helped give birth to the protestant reformation.
 - Romans 1:17
 - “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, The righteous shall live by faith.”
- *Martin Luther – 1545 @ Wittenberg Germany: Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.*
 - **The law must not take the place of Christ**
 - Paul did not want them to put the law in place of Christ.
 - **The law as we have studied before is holy and good, it has a significant purpose. But it does not take the place of our faith in Christ.**
 - **What might it look like for us today if we are putting ourselves under the yoke of slavery (under the law), if we are concerned with only the legalistic requirements?**
 - **If you yoke yourself to living in perfect obedience to the law, will you feel freedom or slavery?**
 - **(--Trying to be perfect that I can earn salvation because of my works, or thinking that God will not accept me because of my sins, allowing myself to bear the guild of my sins, to not embrace the forgiveness and mercy of God.--)**
 - Sarah, Isaac and the promise of freedom.
 - In contrast to Hagar and Ishmael, the child (Isaac) that came through Sarah was from God, it was the promised child that was in the will of God.
 - Ishmael was conceived by human will and desire, it was not of God.
 - Isaac was conceived because of the will and desire of God.
 - **Isaac was a miracle**, his birth was only made possible by the **grace and mercy of God**. It was only possible because Sarah and Abraham had **faith** in God.
 - Hebrews 11:11
 - “By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.”
 - **Romans 4:18-22**
 - **Just as Isaac was born through a promise of God and the faith of Abraham and Sarah, so is salvation through faith and the grace of God.**
 - Unlike Ishmael, Isaac came because of the promise and will of God. This was not Abraham and Sarah forcing or “helping” God.
 - **He only came because it was God’s will, because God brought forth a child when it was humanly impossible.**

- This reflects us having faith in God for our salvation.
 - Romans 4:16a
 - “That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring...”
- **Salvation is impossible for us to do alone**, we do not save ourselves. It is **only through Christ** and God’s grace that we can be saved.
 - We cannot force God’s hand to save us, or work for it as a reward. It is only because of His grace and through faith in His promises.
- **Because of Christ we have freedom.**
 - Galatians 5:1 (HCSB)
 - “Christ has liberated us to be free...”
 - **Unlike one who is burdened by the law who has become a slave to it, In Christ being under His grace we have freedom.**
 - **We are free from the burden of sin.**
 - There is no question that when one sees the law and the commandments of God that our sins are revealed to us.
 - This sin when we realize it, we see the burden it puts on us, we see that we cannot save ourselves from our transgressions.
 - **But with faith in Christ that burden is lifted**, He has forgiven our sins and we are made free.
 - Romans 8:1-2
 - “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”
 - Acts 13:38-39
 - “Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.”
 - **We are free from the guilt**
 - Guilt comes because of our sins and we can all attest to the burden we feel from it.
 - But with forgiveness from Christ this burden is removed.
 - Isaiah 6:7
 - “And he touched my mouth and said: Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”
 - **We are free now to live a life for Christ as His servant, to peruse righteousness.**
 - Romans 6:22
 - “But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.”
 - Being free does not mean that we live a life of sin doing what we want, it means we live our lives for Christ as His faithful servants
 - 1 Peter 2:16
 - “Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.”
 - Galatians 5:13

- “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”
- The yoke of Christ is easy, and the burden is light.
 - In stark contrast to the burden of the yoke of slavery to the law, we find that the yoke of Christ is quite different.
 - Matthew 11:28-30
 - “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
 - The results of putting our faith and trust in Christ relieves the heavy burden of sin.
- **What does it mean to you to have freedom in Christ, to be set free?**
- **Why is it when a Christian is “set free” that they desire to serve God and not themselves?**