

## “Who Is In Control?” Galatians 4:8-31

Paul continues his argument that there are only two pathways for life - following the Spirit with confidence in Christ, or enslavement to the flesh because of confidence in self. Paul's appeal for Christ is both personal and passionate. It is also applicable to us today. Will we bend low, every day, and walk according to the humble example of the Savior? Will we find power in submitting our wills to the will of God, or will we continue with vain and foolish attempts to live independently from God?

Two pathways:

1. Following the Spirit; Your will
2. Enslaved to the flesh; confidence in self. My will
  - a. legalism
  - b. libertinism

Paul begins transition from doctrine/argument to exhortation.

### **I. Personal appeal: Become as I am – 4:8-12**

4:12 – First command. In what way had Paul become one of them?

#### A. Physical weakness - 4:13-15

What was Paul's affliction? SPECULATION

1. “Spit out” (4:14) = allusion to epilepsy
2. Malaria contracted in lower regions
3. Eye problems
4. Same as “thorn in the flesh”?

Galatians knew, so he doesn't talk about it.

Why might they have been tempted to “despise” Paul

- 2 Cor. 10:10
- 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Power is perfected in weakness

#### B. Power from God – 4:16

- Paul's style was not flashy
- Truth
- 1 Cor. 2:1-5
- Is. 53:1-2 – we did not esteem Him.
- Not by might, not by power

C. Deep affection – 4:17-20

- My children
- Plucked your eyes out; evoked reciprocal affection
- 1 Thess. 2:7-8, 11

D. Sacrifice for the gospel – 4:19

- Again in labor
- Persecuted in that region

2 Cor. 11:23b-30

- Benefit of others, not personal gain
- 1 Cor. 9 – not demanding rights

E. Renunciation of self – Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:7

- Personal righteousness
- Personal accomplishments
- Personal gifting

Become as I am. Power perfected in weakness. Confidence in Christ. Paul's life is a model.

## II. Biblical illustration: Isaac and Ishmael – 4:21-28

“allegorically” speaking. Genesis account is not an allegory. Paul is using historical account as an illustration.

Opponents were arguing for physical descent. Gentile inclusion, not equality, by becoming as much like Jews as possible. Since they could not become racially Jewish, they would always be 2<sup>nd</sup> class. Paul uses their argument against them.

In new era, race is not determining factor. Race was never the sole determining factor for inclusion in the people of God

Rom. 9:6-8

A. Theological point

	<b>Hagar</b>	<b>Sarah</b>
<b>Covenant</b>	<b>Mosaic</b>	<b>Abrahamic/New (promise)</b>
<b>Mountain</b>	Mt. Sinai	Mt. Zion
<b>City</b>	Earthly Jerusalem	Heavenly Jerusalem
<b>Children</b>	Ishmael	Isaac
<b>Condition</b>	Slavery	Freedom
<b>Status</b>	Disinherited	Heirs through the Son
<b>Identity</b>	Judaizers/Judaism	Christians

Lower realities – confined to a particular time and place

Transcendent realities – all people, places and times

- Ex. 25:9 (tabernacle); 1 Ch. 28:19 (temple)
- Heb. 11:9-10, 16
- Law – a system to govern behavior for a time on earth
- Heb. 8:13

B. Lesson to be learned – Gen. 16:1-5

Sarah's plan; Abraham consented

Culturally acceptable; monogamy was most common in ANE

Servant had no status, but son of slave by the husband would have equal status

God had not yet explicitly said, Sarai will have a child. Implied

Impatient. Works a plan.

- People should take initiative. Didn't "seek the Lord."

Plan succeeds perfectly! Human initiative produced a child.

- Human initiative unguided by the will of God produced conflict
- Apart from me you can do nothing (implicit qualifier: of value before God).

WE do it all the time. Who wants to live in humility and weakness? What are you tempted to trust in? Where do you turn in crisis? Escape or manage?

- Foreign alliances – 1 K. 3:1; 11:1-8; Solomon; no mention of polygamy but of his heart.
- 1 K. 11:9-14; conflict in family; conflict with enemies.

Dt. 17:16-17; Exhortation – wives, horses, gold

Law had been set aside by God

- Choosing to live under law represented will of the flesh – independence from the will of God
- What is the alternative?

Heb. 2:18. What was the temptation faced by Jesus in His suffering?

- Find another way.
- Escape.
- Use power independently from the Father. Call legions of angels. Cp. temptation in wilderness. "I can do nothing on my own initiative."

You will always be tempted to rely on self

### **III. Final Exhortation: Cast out the slave – 4:29-31**

Two paths are mutually exclusive

Two paths are conflicting