

7-24-22

Galatians 4:8-20.

Proverbs 26:11, As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.

2 Peter 2:22, But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Have you ever done something completely the wrong way of how it was supposed to be done?

Or have you done something you knew you would pay for later? (Eat all that ice cream, got let those horses run in the V8, I am going to let that person know EXACTLY what I think of them, mom and dad will NEVER know!)

Have you ever done something that made no sense (borderline stupid) at all, and when someone points it out to you, you keep doing it, because you can. (There is video of me shocking myself with a stun gun I bought, shooting bottle rockets at Andrew and his friends, PSA, do not shoot a bb gun into your son’s bedroom while they have headphones on.)

I see that I am not alone. I am with my people! We consider ourselves risk takers, trend setters, fun, trail blazers... never mind what those around you call you.

In this morning’s text Paul is challenging the churches in Galatian to not get away from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Don’t turn your back on God. Don’t go back to living in slavery.

Read verses 8-11.

I. Be cautious the old man (flesh) seeks to rule over you.

- **Verse 8, “Formally, in the past, you did not know God, you were slaves to the gods that were not real.”**
- Paul is reminding the churches of what and who they were B.C. before Christ.
- **Acts 14:8-15** serves as a reminder of how Paul found the people in Galatia before they trusted in Jesus.
- They were so lost, they were looking for hope, answers, and desperate to worship.
- Paul said, **“you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,”**
- Back to **Galatians 4**, Paul points out that they were once lost and grasping at straw, looking everywhere they could to find meaning in their lives, serving, becoming slaves to things make themselves feel better.
- The Jews in the churches were looking to enslave themselves to the Mosaic law and traditions, which was never meant to save them, just point them to the need of a savior.

- The Gentiles in the churches were going to enslave themselves to the paganism, humanism that they were under before.
- Do we see this today? “Christians” who up and walk away from God. Or instead of applying God’s precepts, principles; His word in their lives they lean on their own ways, or the ways of a person that appears to know. What about in us? Ever see it in your life?

2 Peter 2:22, But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

- How about when believers are legalistic? Legalism appears to be righteous and godly, but that is all it is, appearance. Appear to be more holy, to be better, be closer to God, appear to be.
- **Verse 9, “But NOW you know the true God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly element to which you desire again to be in bondage?”**
- Your eyes have opened, you have seen the light, you have tasted the water of everlasting life. How is it that you turn back to garbage, useless rules worthless elementary principles of the world, which will enslave you again?
- Hold up! Not that you know God, but that He knows you! (Illustration of children in an orphan age)
- They had the “*desire*” to go back?!
- The best way I could think to drive this home, is when a Christian chooses to follow his own ways, man’s ways, to walk away from God, or follow the world’s ways, it is just like an addict coming out of rehabilitation and going right back to the addiction that had enslaved them.
- The old man desires to rule you. The flesh isn’t going down without a daily, hourly, minute by minute fight.

Romans 6:6, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Romans 6:11-13, In the same way, you should see yourselves as being dead to the power of sin and alive for God through Christ Jesus. 12 But don’t let sin control your life here on earth. You must not be ruled by the things your sinful self makes you want to do. 13 Don’t offer the parts of your body to serve sin. Don’t use your bodies to do evil, but offer yourselves to God, as people who have died and now live. Offer the parts of your body to God to be used for doing good.

Ephesians 4:22-24, You were taught to leave your old self. This means that you must stop living the evil way you lived before. That old self gets worse and worse, because people are fooled by the evil they want to do. 23 You must be made new in your hearts and in your

thinking. 24 Be that new person who was made to be like God, truly good and pleasing to him. ERV

- Why do you go back and put yourself back under bondage? We see this in the lives of Christian's, in us! When we don't teach our kids God's way, rather we show them how we do things. When someone does us wrong, we decide to get even, blow them out of the water. When a brother or sister in Christ notice that you are in danger of following the flesh, you get mad and start picking their lives apart... "Who are they?! I don't need their opinions! I can handle this my way!"

Counsel I have given that has turned non-followers and followers away with. God desires that you

- God desires that you have a marriage with him at the center. Put God first, how would God want you to respond?
- I am not sure if God's desire that you take that job that requires you to be away from His church, so soon after being born-again.
- You should love and cherish the things that God does, His Sons bride, the church.
- Are you sure you should date, or marry a non-believer? God's word has some warning on that.
- If you loved her the way God demands you do, you would love her as Christ loves the church. Christ would never lead the church into sin.
- Protect your home, allow God to rule over it. Be careful who you allow live in it and what you allow them to do. If it's a God honoring house, those that live with you should honor Him as well. The minute you let them live after the world, you are inviting chaos into you home.
- When God puts a man and woman together, they become one flesh, the husband is the head (position) and the woman is under his (spiritual) authority as long as he is honoring the Lord.

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- **Read verses 10-11.**
- The old man wants to make you feel better by following some kind of rules, things that are not God's ways.

II. Be on guard the old man (flesh) desires to change what you find joy in.

- **Read verses 12-15.**

- Previously, Paul had visited the churches with some physical ailments and the God's people didn't despise or reject him (Good thing he didn't have Covid). They relished the opportunity to take care of a minister of the gospel, rather than feel burdened by the situation.
- They treated Paul as if he were an angel of God, some as if he were Christ himself. Wow!
- According to **verse 15**, they felt blessed to be able to serve Paul, they felt blessed to have Paul with them, his physical ailments didn't cause them to skip a beat.
- Now he is asking them, "What happened to their joy?" They were so blessed and joyful before, but not anymore.
- **Verse 15** sums their prior spiritual condition. ***"For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me."***
- These churches in Galatia were demonstrating God's spiritual gift, the gift of mercy. This gift leads with love and compassion, when God moves upon his people, they are moved with compassion and the person afflicted issues becomes as it is theirs.
- They were God's conduit, (a means of transmitting or distributing) preferring others, finding opportunities as a blessing to do. What?!
- One of the first things to happen when a Christian is turning back or at the least becoming carnal is found in their serve of others, even their response to serving others.
- Of course, I am not speaking to any of you, this one is meant for me. (ha-ha) None of you have lost your duty to serve, none of you begrudgingly help others, the whole time mummering under your breath. Only me!

III. Be prepared the old man (flesh) will reject and discredit the truth.

- **Read verses 16.**
- **"Am I now your enemy because I tell you the truth?" ESV**
- Apparently, their attitude went from joy in serve to we hate you and close your pie hole, Paul!
- Another sign a Christian is wondering from God, God's will and ways are rejected, God's truth is rejected, discredited. The truth is tough, and it hurts, but it is supposed to show you that you are heading out of bounds and to draw you back in.
- The problem is too often when the truth reveals our motives, our heart, our condition, rather than embracing the suck, the conviction; we tend to reject it as false, dismiss it, discredit it, or decide its not for me and run.
- We are either obeying or disobeying God, there is no gray area. I try with all my stubbornness to make God uncertain with things, but that is me deceiving myself.

Remember Jeremiah 17:9, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"*

Matthew 9:4, *But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"*

Romans 8:27, *Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

- **Read verses 17-20.**
- Paul states that the “false brethren” want to use their passion but not in a truthful or good way. They want to divide the church away from Paul and the work of God.
- When someone walks away from God, their old nature will fill their zeal in another direction.
- Now let me take a moment and warn us, it is not our place to determine if someone else is born-again or not. Paul is talking to believers that are wandering away from the God that set them free. We are all guilty of that, sometimes daily. We can and are encouraged to check in on our personal salvation. Paul tells Christians to “**work out your salvation**”

Philippians 2:12-13, *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

- Paul does not say to “work for” your salvation but to “work out” your salvation. Scripture everywhere teaches that we are saved not by our works but by grace through faith in Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

- He is saying to work out this process of being made into the image of Christ. We often call this “sanctification”—the daily process of growing into the very image of Christ. What is this process? How can we daily pursue growth into the image of Christ?
- The reality is that God’s grace works in each one of us to grow spiritually, but for some it is without effect.
- Some instead resist the work of the Holy Spirit (**cf. Acts 7:51**). We must work with God in the process of sanctification—responding to his conviction, allowing him to empower us to accomplish his will for our lives.

Conclusion

Let none of find ourselves in **2 Peter 2:18-22**. They had the knowledge of the Lord, but they were never known by the Lord.

It makes me shiver and get goose bumps when I read **verse 21**, ***“For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them,”***

If you are not certain you are a follower of God, how about you take that step today?

Christians, I know that I am not alone, the old nature has derailed me all too often.

I have kicked Christ off the throne in my life, desiring to rule it.

I have given into my selfishness and served myself way more than I served others.

I have dismissed and avoided opportunities to bless someone in need. Or I have helped and complained in my heart the whole time.

I have rejected, disobeyed God's truth. I have justified my disobedience and covered up for a wickedly evil heart.

I have fought against God, and whomever He put in my path to correct me.

Will you join me this morning? Getting our hearts right with God, and that's done by giving Him the reigns.

Do you believe that God will hold back His blessings He has for a church because of a wayward pastor or leadership?

What about the body of believers? Could you be part of the reason God's blessings are being restrained?

Let's get it right today!