

# BOOK OF GALATIANS

## *“Have I Become Your Enemy?”*

Scripture Reading: GALATIANS 4:12-20

- ) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
- ) **SLIDES 7-9.** Read today’s Scripture text.
- ) **SLIDE 10.** Today we continue in our expository study of the Book of GALATIANS. This is message #31. I have titled today’s message *“Have I Become Your Enemy?”* (v16).
- ) After I graduated from high school, I attended a trade school called Penn Technical Institute in Pittsburgh. It was a 21-month course to which I would earn an Associates Degree. In the first three months we were taught the basics of electricity. One thing I remember the teacher saying was this: *“Electricity will always take the path of least resistance.”*
- ) Water has that same ability. It will also take the path of least resistance. One more example. People. Quite often people will take the path of least resistance. Let’s narrow that down even further. Quite often church people will take the path of least resistance.
- ) What we see here in GALATIANS 4:12-20 is the apostle Paul begging with the people in these churches to not follow the false teachers that are leading them right back into religious syncretism (old Mosaic Law practices).
- ) But sometimes it is so easy and convenient to follow the path of least resistance. And in this situation, following the false teachers is the path of least resistance.
- ) **SLIDE 11.** Let’s search the Scriptures. Paul had been to these churches about 5 years earlier and he gives us a little history in these verses.

- ) He's reminding them of his physical condition when he first preached the gospel to them. It appears he had a bodily illness of some sort and an eye problem. We don't know much about either one of these conditions but allow me to speculate.
- ) **SLIDE 12.** In the four cities in the area of Galatia, he wasn't received well in Antioch, they started to stone him in Iconium, and they did stone him nearly to death in Lystra (ACTS 14).
- ) So, could any of these beatings have led to his bodily illness or to his eye problem? Quite possibly. But the bottom line is that there were some who not only accepted him and cared for him in his physical condition, but these same people were very receptive to the gospel message he was proclaiming.
- ) And that caring relationship was very important to the apostle Paul. And that caring relationship went both ways. They cared for him physically, and he cared for them spiritually.
- ) **SLIDE 13.** And we can see here at the beginning of v19 that Paul refers to them as his children. He cares greatly for those who were converted under his teaching.
- ) **SLIDE 14.** Same verse different bold and underline. One thing that many people will never understand is when a preacher pours his heart and soul into a congregation and then they prefer to follow someone else—especially when that “*someone else*” is a false teacher. Paul's “*children*” have begun to follow the path of least resistance.
- ) As parents we understand this feeling. We raise our children in all the right ways and then sometimes we see them go down wrong paths and follow people and things that are not in their best interest. And our hearts ache. Our hearts ache because we love them and want them to be on the right path.
- ) **SLIDE 15.** And the ultimate heartache we see here in v16. Not only have the Galatians turned to false teachers, but now Paul is not on their good list. He has been deemed the enemy.

- ) He has been deemed the enemy because he has taught them the truth concerning the gospel. I've said it often in here, and I'll say it again. The truth isn't always easy, but it does matter, and it will set you free.
- ) How and why do false teachers do this? Why do they want to change the hearts of this Galatian congregation away from what Paul has taught (the truth) to a false gospel? It has something to do with taking the path of least resistance.
- ) The people in the churches at Galatia 2,000 years ago are no different than people in churches today. So many people like to take the path of least resistance. Here are four reasons why they do it today and why they did it back in Galatia.
- ) **SLIDE 16**. The path of least resistance means feeling more comfortable with what I believe is **TRUE** verses what the Bible says is **TRUE**.
- ) We all have our set of values, our beliefs. Somewhere along the line the Word of God will be contrary to those beliefs. But what is easier? Following this ancient questionable book that is over 2000 years old or following something that has been engrained in my mind for decades? The path of least resistance tells me to stick with what I know.
- ) **SLIDE 17**. The path of least resistance means following teachers who tell me **EXACTLY** what I want to hear.
- ) **SLIDE 18**. 2TIM 4:3-4. What is easier? Following sound doctrine that demands I change something about my life, or following teachers who tell me what I want to hear? The path of least resistance tells me to follow what I want to hear.
- ) **SLIDE 19**. The path of least resistance means following teachers who do not demand that I **CHANGE** my beliefs.
- ) In Galatia, the gospel proclaimed by Paul was something new and it was different. It was freedom in Christ and not demanding like the Law of Moses. Could this be right?

- ) **SLIDE 20.** GALATIANS 1:6-7. In come the false teachers after Paul and persuade the people that the Mosaic Law is still in effect. They won't have to change a thing. They want to earn the favor of the people. Just add Jesus into the mix. And they are OK with these false teachers.
- ) What is easier? Staying with this new teaching by Paul which eliminates the Law and my festivals and sacrifices, or reverting back to the old teaching with which I am comfortable? The path of least resistance tells me listen to that teacher who tells me not to change.
- ) **SLIDE 21.** The path of least resistance means **SUBMITTING** to teachers who make me feel bad about not complying to their teachings.
- ) **SLIDE 22.** GALATIANS 4:16. They want you to follow them by turning their back on you. It's like the husband or boyfriend who mistreats his wife or girlfriend in some abusive physical or verbal way, and then expects that woman to come crawling back. And too often they do.
- ) We know back in chapter one these false teachers have gained the favor of the people and the people with the teachers. But if you want to be commended by these teachers, you better comply with their teachings or they will turn their back on you.
- ) What is easier? Questioning and challenging the false doctrine taught and possibly make waves in the church, or be an obedient church person and keep your mouth shut out of fear?
- ) The path of least resistance means being ever faithful to these false teachers. And in many cases, they find themselves trapped in situations in which they cannot escape.
- ) In other words, to sum up these four points, as human beings we really want to remain faithful to what we want to believe. And that was where the Galatians were.

- ) They wanted to hold on to the Mosaic Law and these false teachers were more than happy to oblige. It was a win-win situation. And when all this happens, what is the result? In Galatia it was that Paul is now the enemy and no longer the good guy that we took care of just a few years ago.
- ) Let's turn the clocks to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- ) It is easy for good pastors and teachers of the Word of God to become the enemy. Teaching sound doctrine is not popular. It will never make one a celebrity pastor and they seem to be the ones getting all the attention, regardless of their doctrine. Sound doctrine is narrow and too many "*church*" people no longer want narrow.
- ) **SLIDE 23**. So, let's look at those four points one more time and see how they apply in today's church.
- ) 1) We live in a world today where everything is relative. Your truth is your truth, and my truth is my truth. But the true Christian believes in the absolute truths contained in the Bible. It's not your truth or my truth. It's God's truth.
- ) 2) We live in a world today where we have a thousand different opinions about the Word of God plastered all over churches, denominations, and the internet. A person will eventually find exactly what their itching ears are looking for. But the true Christian is receptive to what they NEED to hear and not what they WANT to hear.
- ) 3) We live in a world where no one searches the Scriptures for truth. Heresy is tolerated, and sin is condoned, excused, and even celebrated by churches. But the true Christian will want to change according to the Word of God.
- ) 4) We live in a world where some leaders demand your full obedience to them and their teachings. Just look at David Koresh, Jim Jones, and some sects of the LDS.

- ) Even local churches and church pastors can make one feel uncomfortable if you question the pastor or the doctrine.
- ) Have you ever been tempted to take the path of least resistance? I certainly hope not. GAL chapter 4:12-20. The apostle Paul wonders how a congregation that he loves so dearly could have turned their back on him so quickly to the point where he is now the enemy.

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