

# Let's Worship God

17th-22nd June 2024  
Galatians



# Galatians

## Monday - Galatians 4:1-11 - Don't Go Back

Paul makes a comparison between the once idol worshipping Gentiles, and the once outwardly religious Jews like himself and says - actually, we were both the same. Look at the connection between vs 8, 9 and 10. In v8 Paul reminds the Galatians that formerly when they didn't know God they were enslaved to those things that by nature are not gods. In other words, they worshipped idols. But then look what Paul says in v9. 'How can you turn back to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world?' And if we were to read that verse outside of the book of Galatians we would assume that they were being tempted to go back to worshipping their many gods.

But what was the big issue in Galatia? The temptation that they were facing was to start observing the Jewish ceremonial law, to add works to faith. And that's actually what Paul is referring to when he talks about the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world. We can be sure of that because in v10 he goes on to explain what he means - observing Jewish festivals.

On the face of it, the Galatians aren't being tempted to go back to their old way of life at all. They're being tempted to do Jewish religious rituals that they've never done before, but that these false teachers say are necessary.

But Paul says if you do that, if you start trying to follow the Jewish law, it will be just like going back to your idols. Because in both cases it's trying to please a God through outward rituals rather than through a real relationship with him.

False Christianity is little different from paganism. The sort of Christianity taught in churches where you just turn up, hear a nice moral story, pay in your money and go home unchanged has more in common with the religion of Hindu Temples than with the Bible.

## Questions

1. What is the similarity between idol worshippers and those outwardly religious?
2. What was the big issue in Galatia?

## Prayer Points

1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.  
Galatians 4:7

**Praise: Psalm 74 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## **Tuesday - Galatians 4:1-5 - What You Were**

How can Paul describe a law given by God as weak and worthless? Because it had served its purpose. As v10 makes clear he's thinking particularly here about the ceremonial law - sacrifice, holy days, new moons, festivals, and so on. Yes, they were instituted by God. But now they've served their purpose.

He explains this in vs 1-3 with an illustration from Roman culture. In Roman culture at that time, slaves were part and parcel of everyday life. The rights and privileges of slaves were, of course, very different from the rights and privileges of those who were freeborn. But although the heir in a Roman family had all these rights and privileges, until he was a certain age they were all in the future. And until that time there was very little difference in practice between him and a slave. Until the time arrived when he would be free, he was kept in place by the guardians and managers mentioned here in v2.

And in the same way, Paul says in v3, 'we' - that is, 'we Jews' - were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. Just as the son and heir in a Roman family was prepared for his future role by managers and guardians, so the Jews were prepared for the coming of Jesus by the ceremonial law. For hundreds of years it drummed the lesson into their heads that if they wanted to approach God, they would need to do so through sacrifice. That they couldn't come directly to God, but they needed a priest to come between them. They were taught that being God's people meant that they were to be different from all the nations around them. They got used to standing out as different. So like the guardians and managers, the ceremonial law of God had its place - but it was only ever meant to be for a limited amount of time. The son and heir of a family wasn't meant to still have guardians and managers when he was 50. Before Jesus came, the ceremonial law pointed to him and was good. But now that he has come, the ceremonial law will prove to be weak and worthless to anyone who tries to use it.

Paul reminds the Galatians what they were. They were pagan idol worshippers. And if they give up trusting in Jesus alone for outward religion, they'll be no better off than they were before they were saved. And so he urges them: Don't go back.

## **Questions**

1. What was the purpose of the ceremonial law?
2. What does Paul urge the Galatians not to do?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that we would not go back to our old ways.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.  
Galatians 4:7

**Praise: Psalm 75 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## Wednesday - Galatians 4:4-11 - What You Are

Paul has been using the illustration of a Roman son, who's the heir of everything in the family, but has to wait until a fixed point in time until he can inherit it all. When that day dawns, everything will change. And the spiritual equivalent of that one moment that changes everything is that coming of Jesus Christ. Look at v4. That's what the fullness of time means. It's the time that God's people had been looking forward to since the Garden of Eden, when God had promised to send someone who would crush the head of the serpent. It's what the ceremonial law had pointed forward to.

Jesus was born of a woman in v4 - so he could be like us. He was born under the law so that he could keep it where we had failed. In v5 he came to redeem us. To redeem something is to buy something back at great cost to yourself. Well we were once God's children. But we had become slaves to sin and Satan, but God has redeemed us through Christ. And what a price he had to pay. The reason that God redeems us is so that we might receive ADOPTION AS SONS. Salvation is not just forgiveness of sins and Heaven when we die - amazing as that is. It's being given all the rights and privileges of children of God.

Part of what it is to be adopted by God means that you have his Holy Spirit in your heart. He's described in v6 as the Spirit of his Son. The fact that you want to pray to him, that when you're anxious or unsure you turn to him. - that's all evidence that you're his child. The definition of a Christian as someone who just believes a set of doctrines or lives a certain way falls far short of what a Christian really is. A Christian is a child of God! This should change the way you think about yourself. Every morning you can wake up and say 'I'm the king's son!' 'I'm the king's daughter!' And one day I'm going to go to my true home and live with him forever. No-one escapes God's watchful gaze. But God knows you, cares for you and watches over you in a special way.

The Galatians are on the verge of walking away. What a tragedy that would be - to walk away from the privilege of adoption, to turn up their noses at the redemption Jesus had paid for them, to decide that being known by God wasn't worth it. You've been redeemed at a great cost. You're a child of the king! Don't go back. Rather keep on moving forward, by the power of his Holy Spirit.

### Questions

1. What does it mean that we are adopted into God's family?
2. What does redemption mean?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that we are part of God's family.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.  
Galatians 4:7

**Praise: Psalm 76 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



# Galatians

## Thursday - Galatians 4:12-15 - Remember Where You Came From

Paul is reminding the Galatian Christians of happier times. He's not looking back three years or five years or ten years, but just to the year before. That's when he had first preached to the Galatians, as far as we can tell. That in itself is a reminder that while often spiritual decline is a slow process, it can also happen very quickly. It doesn't take long for someone to go from being at church every week, to stopping altogether.

We don't know for sure what this bodily ailment was that Paul speaks of in verse 13. It's probably the same thing as his thorn in the flesh, which he talks about in 2nd Corinthians 12. Some people think it was an eye problem, based on the fact that he says in v15 that the Galatians would have gouged out their eyes and given them to him. But whatever the bodily ailment was, in v14 it was a trial to them. It was something that they could see, and it was something that they could have scorned or despised. Humanly speaking it's the sort of thing that could have put them off listening to him. But it didn't. Why? Because of his message.

In v14 they received him as an angel of God. The word angel is the same word as messenger. He brought them a message from God. In fact he goes on - you received me as Christ Jesus himself! It sound almost blasphemous. And yet Paul's simply taking what Jesus said in Matthew 10 seriously. 'Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me'. Ministers are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. They don't speak their own words - or at least they shouldn't. They speak the words he gives them to speak. So how you respond to a Biblically faithful sermon is exactly how you would respond to Jesus. Paul is reminding them of this as if to say: 'No human explanation can account for how you reacted to my message at the start. It's only because you could tell that there was something different about it - you knew it was a message from God'.

You may be finding it hard to be a Christian. Nobody's saying that it isn't. But the fact that it's hard doesn't change the truth of the message. So don't give up. You're not in this by yourself. Jesus is with you by his Spirit. You have brothers and sisters in Christ urging you on. You have the example of those who have fought the good fight and finished the race. Remember where you've come from. And don't give up.

### Questions

1. What might Paul's bodily ailment have been?
2. How was Paul like an angel?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the faithful preaching of God's Word.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.  
Galatians 4:7

**Praise: Psalm 77 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## Friday - Galatians 4:16-17 - Don't Make It About You

When someone leaves a church, it would be so easy to take it personally. But notice here that Paul doesn't. He calls them brothers in v12. He begs, urges, entreats - but he doesn't lash out. He says 'You did me no wrong'. And that's an amazing thing to say. Because they had done things that Paul could legitimately have held against them. They had accepted a false teaching which said that Paul was a false Apostle. That he had managed to mess up the true gospel that the real Apostles in Jerusalem were teaching. He could very easily have said: 'How dare you!'. But he doesn't.

Paul also does the same thing when the situation is completely different and people are trying to make him into a party leader and set him up against other preachers. In 1 Corinthians 3, some were saying: 'I follow Paul' and others were saying 'I follow Apollos'. And it would have been easy for Paul to say nothing. But what does he say? 'What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth'.

When he's being personally attacked, Paul says - it's not about me. You did me no wrong. And when he's being personally praised, Paul says - it's not about me. It's all about God, and the work he's doing in your lives through me.

It's also possible for the person who's considering walking away to make things personal that never were. We see that here in v16. The Galatians had begun to treat Paul as their personal enemy. Paul has simply told them the truth and they've made it personal. In effect they're saying: Paul, you're only saying that because you don't like us. You're saying that because you're jealous of these new people that we're listening to. In Galatia, the false teachers take advantage of these sinful tendencies. Paul says in v17: 'They make much of you'. They go out of their way to butter up the Galatians. They make it all about them. But as the verse goes on to say - it's for no good purpose. It's not out of a genuine care for their souls. It's not the sort of love that will say hard things when required. So the warning is: Just because someone tells you a hard truth, it doesn't make them your enemy. If people make much of you and tell you what you want to hear, it isn't necessarily because they have your best interests at heart. Don't make it about you.

## Questions

1. How does Paul respond to the Galatians' accusations?
2. How do the false teachers take advantage of the situation?

## Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would not make things about us but about God and what He says.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.  
Galatians 4:7

**Praise: Psalm 78 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## **Saturday - Galatians 4:18-20 - Remember The Goal**

Why do people walk away when the Christian life is hard? Often it's because they forget not just where they've come from, but where they're meant to be going. They forget the goal, which Paul describes in v19. Being a Christian is not ultimately agreeing with a set of beliefs. It's not ultimately living a certain way. It's Christ being formed in you. That's the end goal. The day we become a Christian is only the beginning of this process. It's one which will last as long as we're on this earth.

Paul describes himself as being in the anguish of childbirth until that happens. Childbirth isn't easy. It's a long, drawn-out process. Halfway through the mother might say: 'I can't do this'. But it's worth it in the end! The process isn't easy, but the result is glorious. And Christianity is the same. For sinners like us to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ isn't easy. It involves a rewiring of our minds, our wills, our desires. It's not easy - but it's worth it. If you remember the goal and remember that nobody promised the process would be easy, you'll not be so surprised when it's tough. And you'll see that it's worth it to keep going.

Remembering the goal also helps when we're tempted to take things personally. Remember, it's not about you. It's about Christ being formed in them. Or if you find yourself contemplating leaving because people are challenging your behaviour or saying hard things to you. Remember - they're not trying to enforce their likes or dislikes on you. They have this bigger goal in mind, of seeing Christ formed in you. Or if you're tempted to leave because your needs aren't being met. Remember it's not about your needs. It's about Christ being formed in you!

Be hopeful even when peoples' lives start going in a wrong direction. Paul had seen plenty about the Galatians that alarmed them. He writes them this strongly worded letter. And yet the reason that he writes it and doesn't give up on them completely is because he thinks there's still hope. He calls them brothers. So don't despair. Don't stand and point at the wandering sheep from the comfort and safety of the 99. But go after them urgently and yet graciously. And if by God's grace you bring them back, there will be rejoicing among the angels in Heaven.

### **Questions**

1. What is our goal as Christians?
2. How can we go after those going astray?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.  
Galatians 4:7

**Praise: Psalm 79 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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If you have any queries please contact - [rpchurchscotland@gmail.com](mailto:rpchurchscotland@gmail.com)