



## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS, 2023

Week 26: Galatians 4

### OPENING DISCUSSION

#### Upcoming Events

Family Sunday: Sunday, May 21; 10am combined worship service in Sanctuary. Breakfast afterward.

#### Highs and Lows, >10 minutes

In one or two sentences, have each group member share one good moment and one difficult moment from the past week.

### A READING AND QUIET MEDITATION ON GOD'S WORD

Similar to last week, we will read Galatians 4 section by section.

Note: Sometimes, the chapter divisions within our printed Bibles prevent us from reading and understanding a complete line of thought from an author. In Galatians, the first seven verses of chapter 4 are a continuation of Paul's argument from the last section of chapter 3. There, Paul was explaining that the Law of God exposes our sin and teaches us right from wrong.

### **GALATIANS 4:1-7**

1. In verse 3, Paul is talking about Jews ("we" language). However, he's making connections between the Jews who have become Christians and the Gentiles who have become Christians. According to Paul, how were Jews and Gentiles both enslaved?
2. Paul uses the word "redeem" to describe the work of Jesus Christ. To "redeem" is *to recover ownership of by paying a specified sum; to pay off*. So, Jesus redeemed us from slavery into sonship (heirs) as God's children. Explore further this important word, "redeem."
  - a. What was the specified sum that Jesus paid to purchase us, and why was this the price (remember Galatians 3:10-13)?
  - b. What does this communicate about the depth of God's love for you?
  - c. Who or what do you think we are being purchased from? (There could be several options.)
3. How are the three Persons of the Trinity working together in verse 6, and what is the result?
4. This past Sunday, Pastor Mark's sermon focused on Jesus' invitation to address God as our holy, perfect heavenly Father. How does further meditation on this kind of relationship with God impact your perception of him? How should this shape your time in prayer?

## **GALATIANS 4:8-20**

1. Galatians is an emotional letter. We have already seen Paul express his feelings of anger and frustration in the earlier chapters. How would you describe the emotions Paul feels in verses 8-11? What do these emotions reveal about the apostle Paul's relationship with the people of this group of people? What do they reveal about his passion for the gospel?
2. Have you ever felt like Paul in your own mentoring relationship— like your time and energy had been (potentially) wasted? If so, can you share what that experience was like?
3. So far, Paul has argued with Scripture and logic. In verses 12-20, Paul shifts his tone and approach yet again. Why do you think he does this?

*Interesting Note: Based on verse 15, what kind of issue/illness do you think Paul was having when he first encountered the Galatians? Can anyone recall Paul's story about his "thorn in the flesh" from 2 Corinthians 12:7-10? Could these two references be related?*

4. Paul proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Galatians came while they cared for him in his weakness.
  - a. What does this say about Paul?
  - b. What does this say about the power of the gospel?
  - c. **What does this say about our own call to share the gospel?**

## **GALATIANS 4:21-4:31**

"Paul offers a new picture to make his case about freedom in Christ. Back he goes to one of the least happy episodes in Genesis: the story of Abraham's wife (Sarah) and Abraham's concubine (Hagar) and their sons. God had promised Abraham a son, but rather than wait Sarah suggested that, according to the customs of the time, he should have a child through her slave girl, Hagar. Abraham agreed, and Hagar gave birth to Ishmael. Afterward, Sarah too became pregnant and gave birth to Isaac. Some time later Sarah became jealous of Ishmael, because of her son Isaac, and dismissed him and his mother. Ishmael became the father of the peoples of Arabia. Isaac became the father of the people of Israel.

"It is possible that Paul's opponents had been using the story of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah to reinforce their point that, though the Galatians might have come into God's people through believing the gospel, it looked as if there were now two families— both claiming to be Abraham's children. If that was so, they may have said, then the Jewish Christians must be the true free children, the descendants of Isaac; Gentile Christians, still uncircumcised, must be the children of Ismael, the outsiders, the foreigners."<sup>1</sup>

1. How does Paul apply this Old Testament illustration in verses 28-29?
2. Paul is so passionate about making sure the Galatians remain free in Christ. Therefore, what is he instructing the Galatians to do in verse 29?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*As children of God: take prayer requests, and close your time together in prayer.*

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians (N.T. Wright for Everyone Bible Study Guide)