**Galatians 4-6**

Today’s Summary: The Israelites were in slavery in Egypt, but God sent Moses to rescue them. But they fought Moses all along the way and wanted to turn back to slavery the minute things got hard. That’s what fear and the flesh and self-focus do, not what faith, the Spirit or a God-focus do. God sent Jesus to free us for real, for eternity, from all sin and to give us life abundantly, and how often do we turn back to slavery the minute things get hard. It is tragic. That is what Paul is saying to the Judaizers in the Churches of Galatia today. Pray about this and spend time being still today listening to God speak to you on how you are doing this and all the areas He is trying to free you in, that you are holding on to bondage and the lies of the enemy.

**4**What I am saying is that as long as an heir is a child (or a minor), he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. **2**The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. **3**So also, when we were a child or a minor, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. **4But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.** **6**Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, *“Abba*, Father.” **7So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.**

Paul’s Concern for the Galatians

**8**Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. **9**But now that you know God - **or rather are known by God** - how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? **10**You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! **11**I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

**12**I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. **13**As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, **14**and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. **15**Where, then, is your blessing of me now? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. **16**Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

**17**Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them. **18**It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you. **19**My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, **20**how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Hagar and Sarah

**21**Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? **22**For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. **23**His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.

**24**These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. **25**Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. **26**But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. **27**For it is written:

“Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud,  
you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.” *(Isaiah 54:1)*

**28**Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. **29**At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. **30**But what does Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” **31**Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Freedom in Christ

**5 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

**2**Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. **3**Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. **4**You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. **5**For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. **6**For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. **The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.**

**7You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?** **8**That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. **9**“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” **10**I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. **11**Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. **12**As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Life by the Spirit

**13You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”** **15**If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

**16**So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **17**For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. **18**But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

**19**The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **20**idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions **21**and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.**

Doing Good to All

**6**Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. **2**Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. **3**If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. **4**Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, **5**for each one should carry their own load. **6**Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

**7Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.**

Not Circumcision but the New Creation

**11**See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

**12**Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. **13**Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. **14**May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. **15**Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. **16**Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

**17**From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. **18**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.