

The Conflict & Clues of Legalism
Galatians 4:21-5:1
Pastor Jason Huffman
7/10/22

**Ever known anybody that didn't like religious people?
Last week we covered the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar.
...We talked about two ways...God's way and our way.**

**Our way is the flesh, our own power, wisdom, and plans.
His way is the spirit, His power, His wisdom, and His plans.**

**The flesh can seem easier, quicker and better...
a...but in time it brings bad fruit.
To walk in God's way requires faith, obedience, and patience...
... but it brings good fruit and blessings.**

Paul is using this OT story as a backdrop for his argument against the Judaizers trying to get the Galatians to follow the Law.

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic.

**Hagar is the bondwoman symbolizing the work of the flesh.
Sarah is the free-woman symbolizing the work of the Spirit.**

**Hagar, the bondwoman became pregnant according to the flesh...
...the result of fleshly scheming.
Sarah became pregnant according to the promise thru the Spirit.**

**For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—
-Hagar is like Mt. Sinai where the Law was given.
...Mount Sinai has transferred to Jerusalem where the Jews are still under the law and in bondage to it.**

26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written:

**“Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband.”**

**So Paul is using a quote from Isaiah 54...
This was originally about...**

...the hopeless state of the Jews sent into Babylon.

But now...

...it is being used about the hopeless state of Sarah...

...And really the hopeless state of all mankind.

The Jews were under the judgment of God...

...separated from the land because of their sin and rebellion...

Sarah was not able to enjoy the blessing of God...

...because of her physical inability to have a child...

AND both are like us...

We are all separated from God because of our sin and rebellion AND we are without the blessing of God because of our inability to keep the Law.

But the Jews were given a future and a hope in Exile...

Sarah was barren but bore a child as God had promised...

...AND we have a future and a hope and life not based on our own merit, but our faith in God's promise.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

1. We are children of promise.

Just as Hagar could conceive but not fulfill God's promise of life...

...So the Law keeps people working...

...but can't fulfill God's promise of life.

Abraham the man of faith combined with Sarah the woman of grace are a picture of faith and grace working together to fulfill the promise of God.

We were not born again according to the works of the Law...

...but by the promise of God...

...and so we are free from the Law.

The Law is for those that can keep it...

...But grace is for all those that will receive it.

And now Paul says something more about this relationship...

29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

Paul says, Remember how Ishmael made fun of the young Isaac?

That's what people in bondage to the Law do...Judaizers.

There seemed to be no problems with Ishmael until Isaac showed up...and ...the Law is fine until grace appears.

The Law demands certain things and people struggle and try.

...But then grace shows up...

...you don't have to struggle and try, it is free and available. ...And hard working people don't appreciate people getting it free

...*That is often where there is conflict.*

Do you remember when Jesus told the parable of the land owner that hired people in the morning for a certain wage?

Then he hired people towards the end of the day and paid them the same wage.

The ones who had been working longest were upset at the grace that was given to the others.

The same is true for the prodigal son, things were fine until the Father was gracious with the prodigal, that's when his brother really got upset.

Some people say grace is too soft, too easy,

...even dangerous, people will take advantage of it!

...BUT grace isn't dangerous, it is beautiful, it is amazing.

The real danger at church, we will call the religious legalist

They are accepted in the church...

...but they are actually an opponent of grace.

- **They seem spiritual, but they are actually fleshly.**
- **They look holy, but they are actually haughty.**
- **They seem to have vision, but they are actually blind.**
- **They set an example, but it is not one to follow.**

Jesus spoke his harshest words to the Pharisees.

Everyone thought they were "the most spiritual people alive"...

... but Jesus said they were dead.

2. We need to guard against religiosity.

... and instead foster real and right relationship.

Let's look at a few things Jesus said in Matthew 23 NLT...

7 Clues you are religious without real relationship.

V1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 "The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. 3 So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach.

They say the right thing, but they don't do it.

4 They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden.

They give heavy burdens, but they don't help people.

**5 "Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear robes with extra long tassels. 6 And they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues. 7 They love to receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi'
They like attention from people, but they don't love people.**

13 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces. You won't go in yourselves, and you don't let others enter either. They are exclusive, but they are also disconnected.

**15 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you cross land and sea to make one convert, and then you turn that person into twice the child of hell[f] you yourselves are!
They make converts, but they don't follow God.**

**23 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. 24 Blind guides! You strain your water so you won't accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel!
They major on the minors, but they totally forget the majors.**

**25 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence!
They care about the outward, but they give little attention to the inward.**

28 Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.

**This was the state of the Judaizers...
They were all about the outward laws...
They were all about the visible practices...
...But they rejected grace and inward development.**

**Just as Jesus had His harshest words for the Pharisees...
....Paul has his harshest words for these Judaizers.**

So many people have a bad taste in their mouth about religion or religious people...BUT so did Jesus and so did Paul.

Terry Crews interview...

No sports, no dancing, no movies but could watch movies on TV.

You might get left behind, you better be good.

Every reason was God told me...such and such.

This is the danger for any of us...

Instead of a repentance from the inside...

...we repent from the outside.

...We just go from outward sin to inward sin.

We go from outward hate to inward malice.

We go from outward sex to inward lust.

We go from outward gossip to inward judgement.

No one really knows, we seem good to everyone else.

It makes me feel good because people think I am good.

...But change hasn't really happened.

Sin isn't really dealt with... it is has just moved around.

...Like sweeping it under the rug instead of in the trash.

We need to honestly confess from our heart.

We need to actually repent from inside.

We need to admit our inability to save ourself and look to Jesus.

So what was the solution for those that add works to the gospel?

30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Paul says, cast out the bondwoman and her son.

3. We need to stop not add.

Stop listening to legalists.

A legalist needs a change of heart...

...not just a change of theological position.

They are not going to mix or mesh.

Stop adding works of the Law for your acceptance.

...Just as Hagar couldn't change her son...

...So the Law can't change our hearts.

Stop adding works of the Law hoping for heart change or spiritual growth.

There is no list of rules added to faith to help a heart change.

There is no works of the law that can be added to grace that will help you grow spiritually.

It is the unconditional love of God...

It is the kindness of God...

It is the truth of God's word that changes hearts and helps us grow.

5 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

You do not have to fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law.

You don't have to observe holy days and take part in rituals.

You don't have to be circumcised.

You are free in Christ, so stand fast, stay there.

Stand fast = to stay in the firm, fixed, and settled position

Don't be moved away from the liberty you have in Christ.

- **The position of grace by faith is firm.**
- **The position of Law is dependent on my obedience.**
- **I am only good with God as long as I am good for God.**

The position of grace by faith is fixed.

- **It doesn't move, it is fastened with nails.**
- **Trying to keep the law is a moving target.**
- **There are so many laws, so many rules, so many burdens to carry, I am all over the place.**

But my access to God by grace through faith is nailed to the cross.

His love doesn't change, my acceptance is secure.

- **It is settled.**
- **My standing with God is settled.**
- **The debt was paid in full even though I have more life to live.**
- **The account has been reconciled, past, present and future.**

So don't let the Law entangle you again.

If you are working with a bunch of rope...

...It is easy to get tangled up.

You get confused.

The more you struggle the more tangled you get.

**You know the rope is good...
...but you don't know what the rope is good for.
...So you just get "entangled".**

**You forgot that God has come to set you free.
...The rope wasn't to climb...
...It was just a line of hope to lead you to Him.**