

“Be As I Am”
Galatians 4:12-16

Introduction:

1. Please Turn In Your Bibles With Me Again:
 - To Galatians 4!
 - All Throughout This Chapter:
 - Paul Is Pointing Out A Significant Problem:
 - That Those Young Galatian Churches:
 - And Those Young Galatian Christians:
 - Were Facing!
 - The Problem Was This:
 - Instead Of Moving Forward:
 - In Their Walk With & In Their Relationship With:
 - The Lord – As Their Father:
 - Along With All The Privilege & Freedom & Joy That Comes With That Relationship!
 - They Were Turning Back:
 - In The Words Of 4:9 To:
 - “The Weak And Beggarly Elements” As:
 - Servants & Slaves To Their Own Flesh!
 - They Forgot The Truth:
 - That We Discovered In 4:7:
 - “Wherefore Thou Art No More A Servant, But A Son!”
2. In The Verses That We Will Look At This Morning:
 - Paul Continues To Show:
 - The Big Contrast:
 - Between What Things Were Like:
 - When They Were First Saved!
 - And What Things Are Like Now!
 - Let’s Read Together:
 - Galatians 4:12-16 - “Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. / 13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. / 14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. / 15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. / 16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”
 - In These Verses Paul Brings Out A Contrast:
 - And Even A Contradiction - That He Sees Going On In Their Lives!
 - A Contrast Between:
 - Their Past!
 - Their Present!
 - And Even Their Potential!
 - Are There Any Contrasts Or Contradictions:
 - In Our Own Lives As Christians:
 - Changes That Have Gotten In The Way Of:
 - Our Walk & Relationship With The Lord:
 - As Our Father?
 - One Way We Can Tell:
 - Is To Look At How Any Of Those Changes:
 - Have Affected Our Spiritual Feeling & Affections!
 - And This Is Why In These Verses:
 - Paul Asks All Of Us:
 - A Very Important Question!
 - This Question Is Not Meant Just For The Galatian Christians & Churches!
 - No - This Question Is Meant For Every Christian & For Every Church – For You & For Me!
 - We Find The Question In:
 - 4:15 - “Where Is Then The Blessedness Ye Spake Of?”

- Another Way This Can Be Translated Is This:
- “Where Is Your Blessedness?”

3. And It Is This Question:

- That I Want Us To Consider Together This Morning:
 - “Where Is Our Blessedness?”
 - Now - What Does This Mean?
 - Well - The Very Heart Of The Meaning Of Blessedness & Blessing Is:
 - Joy & Happiness!
- Remember The Great Beatitudes Or Blessings:
 - That Jesus Gave In His Sermon On The Mount?
 - In Matthew 5 - He Begins By Saying:
 - “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. / Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. / Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. / Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled!” - And He Continues!
 - But At The Very Heart Of Being “Blessed” Is:
 - A Deep-Seated Feeling Of Joy & True Happiness!
 - It Means That You Possess A “Joy Unspeakable And Full Of Glory!” (1 Peter 1:8)

4. Do You Know How The Galatians First Felt:

- When They Received & Believed In The Gospel:
 - That Paul Preached To Them?
 - They Felt Happy! They Felt Joy!
 - They Felt Blessed!
 - For They Were Blessed!
- In Acts 13-14 - We Can Even Read About The:
 - First Missionary Journey Of Paul & Barnabas:
 - And When They Went To The Galatian Cities Of Antioch / Iconium / Lystra / Derbe To Preach The Gospel Of Christ!
 - Acts 13:48 - “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed!”
 - John Gill - “They Were Happy Persons While Under The Ministry Of The Apostle; As A Gospel Ministry Is A Great Happiness To Any That Enjoy It! For This Is The Way To Find Eternal Life, To Have Spiritual Peace And Pleasure, Joy And Comfort, Light And Liberty!”

5. Do You Remember When You First:

- Heard & Received & Believed In The Message Of The Gospel?
- Of Course - There Is First The Feelings Of:
 - Conviction & Sorrow For Sin:
 - But After That - There Came The Peace & Pleasure, The Joy & Comfort, And The Light & Liberty:
 - That Is Promised Through The Gospel!
- But What About Now?
 - Are Those Feelings & Comforts:
 - Still There? If Not – What Happened To Them?
 - “Where Is Your Blessedness?”
 - The Truth Is:
 - Those Galatian Christians Were Miserable!
 - Why? Because They Were In The Process Of Turning Back!
 - Do You Know Why Your “Blessedness”:
 - Why Your Christian Joy – Is So Often Missing?
 - It Is Because, All Too Often, You Yield To The Temptation To Turn Back:
 - To Your Own Self!
 - To Your Own Sin!
 - To Your Old Enslavement!
- So - I Want Us All To Think About & Answer This Question:
 - In Our Own Hearts:
 - “Where Is Your Blessedness?”

* Especially When You Consider:

1. Your Past Condition!

- Your Past Condition - When You First Responded To The Gospel!
 - Which We See In 4:13-15 - “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. / And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. / Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me!”
 - Paul Wanted Them To Remember:
 - What Things Were Like & How They Felt About Things:
 - When They Were First Saved!
 - Especially:
- Their Reception Of The Gospel!
 - In 4:13 - Paul Reminds Them Of The Time:
 - When He & Barnabas Went To Them:
 - To Share The Gospel!
 - He Even Describes The Difficulty:
 - Of His Ministry Among Them:
 - “Ye Know How Through Infirmity Of The Flesh – Or Because Of A Weakness Of The Flesh – I Preached The Gospel Unto You At The First!”
 - There Was Some Physical Problem Or Pain:
 - That Paul Experienced - That God Used To Either Bring Him Or To Keep Him:
 - In The Region Of Galatia & To Preach The Gospel There!
 - Now - We Don’t Know What That Problem Was!
 - Some Think That It Had Something To Do With His Eyes!
 - Others Think That It Had Something To Do With His Stoning In Lystra!
 - We Don’t Know For Sure - But They Did!
 - And It Posed A Major Challenge To Paul:
 - But He Faithfully Brought The Gospel To Them Anyways!
 - And How Did They Respond?
 - 4:14 - “And My Temptation Which Was In My Flesh Ye Despised Not, Nor Rejected; But Received Me As An Angel – Or Messenger – Of God, Even As Christ Jesus!”
 - What A Response!
 - A Response Of Blessing!
 - Instead Of “Despising” & “Rejecting” Paul:
 - And His Message:
 - God Enabled Them To:
 - “Receive” Paul & To Welcome Paul:
 - As God’s Own Messenger!
 - Even Like A Messenger Sent By God From Heaven Itself!
 - But Even More:
 - They “Received” Jesus Christ Himself!
 - As The Message Of The Gospel!
 - Even As Jesus Said In Matthew 10:40 - “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me!”
 - They Responded By:
 - Welcoming Paul:
 - Into Their Homes! And By:
 - Welcoming Jesus:
 - Into Their Hearts!
 - Do You Remember This Taking Place In Your Life?
 - And It Was A Reception:
 - Of Great Joy & Great Blessing!
 - But Where Is That Blessedness Now?
 - “Where Is Your Blessedness?”
 - Paul Asks!
 - He Also Wanted Them To Remember:
 - Their Rejoicing In The Gospel!
 - 4:15 - “Where Then Is The Blessedness Ye Spake Of?”
 - “Where Is Your Blessedness?”
 - Where Is The Happiness & The Joy & The Enthusiasm That You Had:
 - When You First “Received” The Gospel?

- What Happened To It?
 - Where Did It Go?
 - How Was It Taken From You?
 - Why Are You So Miserable?
- This Is What Sin Can Do:
 - To A Christian!
 - This Is What Error Can Do:
 - To A Church!
- Now - Unfortunately - Sometimes A Christian:
 - Can “Feel” A Natural Kind Of Happiness:
 - When They Sin Or When They Are In Error!
 - But It Is A Fleeting & Not A Lasting:
 - Deep-Seated Joy & Happiness:
 - That Only The Gospel Of Christ Can Provide!
 - There May Be “Pleasure Of Sin” – But It Is Only:
 - “For A Season!” (Hebrews 11:25)
- Sin & Error Will Make A Christian Miserable!
 - For – “At the last [they] bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder!” (Proverbs 23:32)
 - We Need To Remember The True Joy & Blessedness That Comes Through Christ & The Gospel! Do You?
 - But They Also Needed To Remember:
- Their Relationship Through The Gospel!
 - 4:15b - “For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.!”
 - This Is They Kind Of Relationship:
 - That The Gospel Gave Them With The Apostle Paul!
 - A Relationship Of Sympathy:
 - Toward Paul & Certainly Other Christians!
 - A Great Love – And This Was An Example & An Evidence Of Their “Blessedness” From God! It Was Also:
 - A Relationship Of Service:
 - They Wanted To Help & Serve Paul:
 - In Whatever Way They Could!
 - They Saw How Paul Struggled & Suffered:
 - Even While He Served Them!
 - Even To The Point - 4:14 - That It Was A Temptation For Him!
 - They Wanted To Alleviate His Suffering:
 - And Encourage Him & To Help Him:
 - Through His Pain! It Was Also:
 - A Relationship Of Sacrifice:
 - They Were Even Willing – “If It Had Been Possible” – To Pluck Out Their Own Eyes:
 - And Give Them To Paul!
- This Was Their Past Condition:
 - When They First Came To Know Christ As Their Savior!
 - A Condition Of Blessedness & Joy & Happiness!
 - But What Happened?
 - Where Was Their Sympathy & Love?
 - Where Was Their Service & Encouragement?
 - Where Was Their Sacrifice?
 - These Kinds Of Christian Relationships:
 - Are Often The First Things To Go:
 - When There Is Sin Or Error In Your Life!
 - Where Is Your Christian Sympathy?
 - Where Is Your Christian Service?
 - Where Is Your Christian Sacrifice?
 - “Where Then Is The Blessedness Ye Spake Of?”
 - This Leads Us To:

2. *Their Present Condition:*

- So - What Was Their Relationship With Paul Like Now?
 - There Are Some Clues To This In A Couple Of Verses:
 - First - 4:12b:
 - “Ye Have Not Injured Me At All!”
 - Paul Wrote This - To Show Them That:
 - Even Though They May Not Have The Same Feelings For Him As They Had Before:
 - His Feelings For Them:
 - Have Not Changed One Bit!
 - Although - They May Now Have:
 - “Feelings Of Hurt” Toward Him:
 - They Did Not Hurt Him Or Harm Him:
 - In Any Way!
 - But - In Turning From The Truth:
 - Who Was Being Hurt?
 - Who Was Being Harmed?
 - Themselves!
 - They Were Only Hurting Themselves:
 - And Robbing From Themselves:
 - Their Own “Blessedness!”
 - But We Also See:
 - Second - 4:16:
 - “Am I Therefore Become Your Enemy, Because I Tell You The Truth?”
 - At One Time - Paul Was Their Close Friend:
 - And They Even Received Him As An Angel & As Jesus Christ Himself!
 - But Now - It Seems That They Considered Him To Be:
 - A Hateful & Spiteful Enemy!
 - But Was He? No!
 - He Never Told Them Anything Other Than The Truth!
 - When We Fall Back Into:
 - Error Or Sin In Our Lives:
 - These Same Feelings Can Cloud Our Minds & Hearts:
 - Feelings Of Hurt!
 - And Even - Feelings Of Hate!
 - And These Feelings Will Rob Us Very Quickly:
 - Of Our Old “Blessedness!”
 - So What Can Be Done?
 - What Is The Solution?
 - Think We Find This In:
- 3. *Their Potential Condition:***
- Which We Find In 4:12:
 - “Brethren, I Beseech You, Be As I Am; For I Am As Ye Are!”
 - We Find Here A Solution:
 - To All The Contrasts & Contradictions That We Might Find In Our Lives As Christians!
 - Paul Urges Us & Commands Us:
 - To “Be As He Is; For He Is As We Are!”
 - Now - What Can He Mean?
 - And How Can This Help Us Get Back To The “Blessedness” & The Joy That We Once Had?
 - Well - Paul Is Describing Something:
 - That They Have In Common As Christians!
 - And What Is The One Great Blessing:
 - That Paul Has Been Stressing All Throughout This Chapter?
 - Their Mutual Relationship With God:
 - As His Children!
 - 4:4-7 - “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, / To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. / And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. / Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but

- a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ!”
- This Was: The Principle Of Christian Adoption!
 - Both Paul & Those Galatian Christians:
 - Enjoyed This Great Privilege!
 - Which Is Why He Says:
 - “For I Am As Ye Are!”
 - They Have This Relationship With God:
 - In Common!
 - This Is Also Why He Calls Them:
 - “Brethren!”
 - They Have All Become Part Of The Family Of God:
 - Through Faith In Jesus Christ!
 - But What Was Missing In Their Lives?
 - What Is Missing In Our Lives?
- This - The Practice Of Christian Adoption!
 - They Were Not Living Their Lives As:
 - The “Dear Children” Of God That They Were!
 - They Were Wanting To Go Back As Slaves To The Law Instead Of Living As The Sons & Daughters Of God!
 - This Is Why Paul Tells Them & Us:
 - “Be As I Am!”
 - He Doesn’t Say This Out Of Pride, But Out Of Privilege!
 - He Wants Them To Enjoy Once Again The Fulness Of This Relationship With God As Their Heavenly Father!
 - So - In Principle - Every Christian Is A Child Of God:
 - But - In Practice - How Many Of Us Are Living:
 - According To This Truth:
 - And Enjoying The Fulness & The Blessedness Of This Relationship?
 - Ephesians :8 - “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light!”

Conclusion:

1. So - In Answer To The Question:
 - “Where Is Your Blessedness?”
 - The Answer Is To Be Found In:
 - The One Who Blessed You In The First Place!
 - Ephesians 1:3 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!”
2. We Need To:
 - Remember Our Relationship With God:
 - As Our Father!
 - And When We Stray:
 - Remember The “Blessedness” Of Our Relationship With Him!
 - The “Spiritual Peace & Pleasure, Joy & Comfort, Light & Liberty”:
 - That Comes From Our Heavenly Father:
 - Through His Son, Jesus Christ!
 - Are You Living Your Life:
 - In The Fulness Of Your Relationship With God:
 - As His Child?

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