

“No Turning Back!”
Galatians 4:8-11

Introduction:

1. As We Continue Our Study:
 - Through Paul’s Letter To The Galatians:
 - Please Head Back With Me To:
 - Galatians 4!
 - Last Week - As We Began This New Chapter:
 - We Were Reminded Of:
 - One Of The Greatest Blessings That God Gives To **Everyone**:
 - Who Comes To Him By Faith In Jesus Christ!
 - And That Blessing Is:
 - Adoption Into The Family Of God!
 - We Find This Truth Especially In 4:4-5:
 - “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!”
 - So - The **Redemption** Of Jesus Christ Makes Possible:
 - Our **Adoption** Into The Family Of God!
 - And This Is True For Everyone Who Believes!
2. And Yet – How Many Of Us:
 - Choose To Live Our Lives:
 - As Prodigals – Far Away From Our Father’s House?
 - This Is What Was Taking Place:
 - In The Lives Of Many Of The Galatian Christians As Well!
 - And So - In The Next Few Verses:
 - Of Galatians 4 – Verses 8-11:
 - Paul Calls On Them – And Us:
 - To Really **Think** About Some Things In Our Relationship With God!
 - If You Really Are:
 - A Child Of God:
 - Then Think About What This Relationship Means!
 - 4:8-11 - “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. / But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? / Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. / I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain!”
3. Paul Wants Them – And Us – To Know:
 - That When It Comes To Our:
 - Relationship With & Our Walk With God:
 - There Can Be No Turning Back!
 - **IE**: Just Like The Chorus We Sometimes Sing - “I Have Decided To Follow Jesus – No Turning Back! No Turning Back!”
 - And So - In Verse 9 - Paul Asks This Question:
 - “How Turn Ye Again?”
 - If You Have Been Delivered:
 - From Your Debt Of Sin!
 - If You Have Been Redeemed:
 - From The Prison Of Your Own Works!
 - If You Have Been Adopted:
 - And Have Become A Child Of God!
 - Then How Can You & Why Would You Ever Turn Back:
 - To What You Have Already Been:
 - Delivered & Redeemed & Adopted From?
 - To Paul – This Just Doesn’t Make Sense!
4. And If We Really Think About This:
 - It Won’t Make Any Sense To Us Either!
 - So - Let’s Think About Some Things:
 - That Paul Points Out To Us In These Verses!

- And As We Do - I Believe That We Too:
 - Will Come To The Conclusion That:
 - There Can Be No Turning Back!
 - No Turning Back – In Our Walk & Relationship With God As Our Good & Gracious Heavenly Father!

* The First Thing Paul Wants Us To Think About Is:

1. Our Past Captivity!

- Our Past Captivity – Which We Find In:
 - 4:8 - “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods!”
 - Although You May Be A Child Of God **NOW**:
 - Think About What Your Relationship With God Was Like **THEN** – **Before** You Were Saved!
 - You Were In Captivity!
 - Just Like Everyone Else In This World!
 - Even Though You Didn’t Realize It!
 - Again - Just Like Everyone Else In The World!
 - When Paul Tells Them & Us That:
 - “Ye Did Service” – He Uses A Word That Describes Someone In Bondage & In Slavery!
 - He Reminds Us That - Apart From God - We Were “Slaving Away” In Subjection To Other Masters!
 - We All Were In Captivity:
 - To Our Own Ignorance!
 - “When Ye Knew Not God!”
 - Now - This Does Not Mean That:
 - We Didn’t Know **ANYTHING** About God!
 - But - It Does Mean That:
 - What We **DID KNOW** About God, We Chose To Ignore Or Even Pervert:
 - And That Ignorance Kept Us From A **Saving** Knowledge & Faith In Him!
 - It Is The Same Ignorance That We Find In:
 - The First Chapter Of Romans - Verses 19-21 - “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. / For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: / Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened!”
 - All Of Us – At Some Point In Our Lives:
 - Were In Captivity To:
 - Our Own Willing Ignorance Of God And His Truth!
 - But We Were Also In Captivity:
 - To Our Own Idols!
 - Instead Of Worshiping & Serving The Creator:
 - What Do We Typically Do – As People?
 - In The Words Of 4:8 - We Do “Service Unto Them Which By Nature Are No Gods!”
 - We Serve & Slave Away:
 - Under Subjection To Idols Of Our Own Making!
 - This Is What Paul Was Also Confronting:
 - In Romans 1:22-23, 25 - “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, / And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. / Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever!”
 - Now - Our Idols May Not Necessarily Be Made Of Wood Or Stone:
 - But They Are Idols Nonetheless!
 - We May Slave Away Our Lives:
 - For The Idols Of Fame Or Power!
 - We May Slave Away Our Lives:
 - For The Idols Of Security Or Even Self!
 - But No Matter Who Or What:
 - We Are Slaving Away Our Lives To:

- They Are All - “By Nature No Gods!”
- They Are Not Divine! They Are Not God!
- They Have No Controlling Authority Over Your Life! Never Have! Never Will!
- So - The Lord Is Telling Us All:
 - To Think About This!
 - Think About What You Were In Captivity To!
 - And Think About What You Have Been Freed From – Through The Redemption Of Jesus Christ!
 - 4:7 - “Wherefore Thou Art No More A Servant / Slave, But A Son!”
 - And When You Really Think About This:
 - You Will Realize That: There Can Be *No* Turning Back!
 - No Turning Back From The One True & Living God To Those Things That “By Nature Are No Gods!”
 - Think About The Freedom You Have Found From Your Past Captivity!

* But Also - We Need To Think About:

2. ***Our Present Condition!***

-
- Our Present Condition – Which We Find In:
 - 4:9 - “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”
 - I Want Us To Focus On The First Part Of Verse 9 That Helps Us Understand Even More:
 - About Our Present Condition As A Child Of God!
 - “But Now” – As A Christian – You Have:
 - A Saving Knowledge Of God!
 - “But Now, After That Ye Have Known God!”
 - To Know God Is One Of The Greatest Privileges A Fallen Human Being Can Have!
 - This Does Not Describe:
 - Just A Knowledge Of The Facts About God!
 - Which By Themselves Are Amazing!
 - But This Describes:
 - A Knowledge That Includes A Personal Faith In God!
 - It Means That As A Child Of God:
 - You Know Him:
 - As A Real God!
 - Not Something Made Up Or Invented By Man! Living!
 - You Know Him:
 - As A Relational God!
 - One Who Is Personal & Created Man To Have A Relationship With Him!
 - You Know Him:
 - As A Redeeming God!
 - Who, Through His Son, Came To Seek & To Save That Which Was Lost!
 - Does This Describe Your Relationship With God?
 - Do You Really Know Him?
 - Not Just In The Facts – But In Faith?
 - If So - Then Why Would You Ever Turn Your Back On Him?
 - But Even More - As A Christian - You Have:
 - A Secure Knowledge By God!
 - In Verse 9 - Paul Is Inspired By God To Change His Emphasis:
 - From A Christian’s Knowledge *Of* God:
 - To A Christian’s Knowledge *By* God!
 - He Writes - “Or Rather Are Known Of God!”
 - So - The Greatest Privilege For A Christian:
 - Is Not Just That You Came To A Saving Faith & Knowledge Of God!
 - But That God Himself Knows & Has Known You:
 - From The Very Beginning!
 - This Statement Is A Statement Full Of Grace & Assurance:
 - For Those Who Are The Children Of God!
 - Not Only Does God Know You:
 - As Your Creator!

- But He Knows You & Has Known You:
 - As Your Redeemer & As Your Father!
- And This Knowledge **By** God:
 - Is A Christian's Assurance & Security!
 - 2 Timothy 2:19 - "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his!"
- Think About This!
 - If You Are A Child Of God:
 - And Know God By Faith:
 - You "Are Known Of God!"
 - His Knowledge Of You:
 - Is The Basis Of Your Knowledge About Him!
 - In Fact - His Knowledge Of You:
 - Is The Ultimate Cause Of Your Knowledge About & Faith In Him!
 - In 1 John 4:19 We Learn That:
 - "We Love Him, Because He First Loved Us!"
 - And Here - In Galatians 4:9 We Learn That:
 - "We Know Him, Because He First Knew Us!"
 - And When You Really Think About This:
 - You Will Realize That: There Can Be *No* Turning Back:
 - From The One Who Loves You & Knows You Eternally!

* But We Also Need To Think About:

3. ***Our Painful Charges!***

- Our Painful Charges – Which We Find In The Rest Of:
 - 4:9 & 10 - "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? / Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years!"
 - With All Of The Blessings & Privileges That A Christian Has As Child Of God:
 - We Must Really Think About What It Is We Are Doing!
 - Three Things That Paul Points Out In Their Lives – Three Painful Charges:
- First Charge: What Are You Turning To?
 - Many In The Galatian Churches:
 - Were In The Process Of Turning Back To Some Of The Same Things That They Were Saved From!
 - **IE:** Like A Ship Reversing Course / Not An Immediate About Face / But They Are Heading There / Rounding The Curve!
 - What Were They Turning To?
 - They Were Turning Again To:
 - "The Weak And Beggarly Elements!"
 - This Is A Further Description Of What We Find In 4:3 - "The Elements Of The World!"
 - The "Elements Of The World" Were Those:
 - Basic & Natural Impulses Of Fallen Man:
 - To Work Their Way Into The Favor Of Their God Or Gods!
 - Even To The Point Of Following All Kinds Of Rules & Regulations!
 - This Can Apply To:
 - How A Jew Kept The Law Of God:
 - As Well As How A Gentile Would Make Up His Own Religion & Regulations!
 - But What Was All Of Their Religiosity Like?
 - "Weak & Beggarly!"
 - Weak - Powerless & Feeble!
 - Whatever They Did Was Powerless To Accomplish What They Were Hoping For!
 - Beggarly - Poor & Useless & Futile!
 - **IE:** It Is Like Going To The Gym - Going Through The Motions - But With No Results!
 - We Must Never Turn Back:
 - To Those Things That:
 - Have No Power In Themselves!
 - And That:

- Have No Use By Themselves!
- What Are You Turning To & Trusting In?
- Second Charge: What Are You Desiring?
 - 4:9 - “Whereunto Ye Desire Again To Be In Bondage?”
 - It Wasn’t Just Their Actions:
 - That Was A Problem!
 - It Was Their Attitude:
 - Their Desire & Their Will!
 - After Being Presented With The Error:
 - That Had Crept Into The Church:
 - Many Christians Were Making A Conscious & Willing Choice To Go Back To “Bondage!”
 - Slaving Away To Things That Are Powerless & Useless In Establishing Or Enhancing Their Relationship With God!
 - Wonder: Why Would They Do This? Well:
 - Why Do We? Choosing To Be Slaves Again:
 - To Our Self & To Our Sin?
 - Instead Of The Freedom That Comes From Christ To Live As God’s Child!
- Third Charge - What Are You Observing?
 - 4:10 - Example Of Their Bondage - “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years!”
 - They Were Going Back To The Old:
 - Jewish Ways Of Thinking & Living!
 - To “Observe” - To Watch Over Something:
 - Carefully!
 - Constantly!
 - Even Critically! For Others Too!
 - And They Did This:
 - For Themselves!
 - Not For The Glory Of God!
 - Not Even For The Good Of Others!
 - Their Motive Was Selfish & Self-Serving!
 - So - Even The Gentile Christians:
 - Started Looking At The Jewish Calendar:
 - And Making It A Binding Requirement For Faith In & For Fellowship With God!
 - But This Was Never What Those Times Were For!
 - They Were All Shadows:
 - That Pointed To The Substance Of Jesus Christ & His Redemption!
 - The Weekly Sabbath – The Days They Were Observing:
 - Was A Shadow Of The Rest:
 - That Is Found In Jesus Christ Alone!
 - The New Moon Celebrations – The Months They Were Observing:
 - Filled With Sacrifices / Trumpets / God’s Word:
 - Shadows That Were Fulfilled In Christ!
 - The Jewish Festivals – The Times They Were Observing:
 - Like Feast Of Tabernacles / Passover / Others:
 - Shadows That Teach Us More About Christ!
 - Even The Other Times – The Years They Were Observing:
 - Like The Sabbatical Years / Jubilee!
 - Point To The Freedom That They Found In Jesus Christ!
 - We Can Learn Much About Christ Through The Jewish Calendar:
 - But It Is No Longer Binding On Those Who Are The Children Of God Through Faith In Christ!
- We Need To Think About:
 - What Charges & What Questions Can Be:
 - Brought To Our Own Attention?
 - Is There Anything Or Anyone Else We Relying On In Order To Have Faith In Or Fellowship With God?
 - We Must Never Turn Back:
 - From The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Instead - Must Keep - “Looking Unto Jesus The Author And Finisher Of Our Faith!”

(Hebrews 12:2)

Conclusion:

1. But There Were Many In Those Galatian Churches:
 - Who Were Staring To Turn Back!
 - And That Is Why Paul Adds This In 4:11 - "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain!"
 - **IE:** Ever Experience The Sudden Feeling Of Fear?
 - This Is What Paul Is Describing Here!
 - He Was Not "Afraid Of Them" - As If He Was In Danger:
 - But He Had The Same Kind Of Feeling:
 - A Feeling Of Shock & Alarm About What They Were Doing To Themselves & To The Church!
 - A Fear For Them & For The Glory Of God!
 - Yet - He Would Not Have This Deep Feeling Of Fear:
 - If He Did Not Care For Them Deeply!
 - Gill - "Love Is A Thing Full Of Care And Fear!"
 - He Was Expressing To Them The Very Heart Of God Himself!
 - And His Concern Wasn't So Much:
 - Because Of The Effort:
 - Of His Labor With Them!
 - Though He Did Work Hard - Even To The Point Of Persecution & Physical Pain!
 - No - His Concern Was For The Effect:
 - Of His Labor With Them:
 - He Didn't Want It To Be In Vain!
 - He Didn't Want It To Be Of None Effect & Them Remain In Their Sinful & Lost Condition!
 - His Labor Was To:
 - Preach & To Point Them To:
 - The Lord Jesus Christ!
2. The Lord Has Given Us Much To Think About This Morning!
 - We Need To Think About:
 - Our Past Captivity!
 - We Need To Think About:
 - Our Present Condition:
 - As Children Of God!
 - We Need To Think About:
 - Our Painful Charges:
 - What Are We Turning To?
 - What Are We Desiring?
 - What Are We Observing?
 - We Also Need To Think About:
 - God's Own Personal Concern:
 - For Our Souls!
 - We Need To Think About These Things:
 - Whenever There Is A Temptation For Us:
 - To Turn Back From The One Who Has Adopted Us Into His Family!
3. Let Us Respond To These Truths:
 - With A Renewed Love & Commitment:
 - To Our Heavenly Father!
 - No Turning Back! No Turning Back!

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com