

SERIES: LOOKING BACK – MOVING FORWARD

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Scripture: Galatians 4:8-11

TITLE: Continuing in Faith and Freedom

Regret. No one likes it. Regret is that joy stealing feeling that happens when you think you've made the wrong decision. But regret is experienced *after* the fact, *after* you've seen the result of a poor choice.

However, regrets can happen even when you've made the right decision.

Don't believe me? Listen to the Apostle Paul in Galatians 4:8-11.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

Did you hear what Paul just said in verse 10? Paul said, "I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain." That's regret. He's saying, I did the right thing. But you guys just don't get it."

What's Paul talking about?

What he is talking about is the whole theme of Galatians. It's the theme that we are free. We are truly free from our sins because of what Christ did. But just because we are free, we still must *choose* to be free.

So Paul is saying, "I gave you the true gospel. The gospel is that Jesus saves you from your sins, not based on who you are or what you can do, but rather by grace – a gift. You said you believed it. You acted like you believed it. But now you are going back to your old ways. You are living like slaves though you are free. It's like I wasted my time!"

This is the problem we struggle with today. We like religion. We like to have things to do to earn our keep. We like to know exactly how many prayers to offer up. We like to know how much money to give to make up for our sin. We like to know that if we go to at least 2 worship services per month, God won't whack us.

Paul says that kind of life and living is weak and worthless. It is of the elementary principles of the world. That's religion. That's slavery. That's a hopeless life full of frustrations.

Paul has been saying, "You know the truth. But you don't live that truth. Why do I waste my time with you guys?" Paul has a real regret of sharing the good news. That was his passion and purpose, but it pained him to see people he loved turn from the truth.

What about you? How are you doing with the truth of God? With the truth of the gospel? Are you living it out or are you claiming the name, but rejecting the benefits?

One commentator said, "Genuine conversion cannot be restricted to a onetime event in the past. Those who are saved demonstrate their new life by continuing in faith until the last day."

Friend, the grace of God can never become an excuse for license or legalism.

When we are free in Christ, we will live freely.