

Galatians Chapter 4

Verse 11

1. When Paul says, "***I am afraid of you,***" he simply means that the Galatians had given him cause for alarm.
2. Paul had spent a great deal of time and energy preaching the gospel and teaching these people the truths of God's grace. Now they were turning from what Paul had taught them, and it grieved Paul's heart.
3. Paul was afraid that he had spent labor upon them in vain.
 - In other words, the labor he spent upon them would result in failure.
 - **Illustration:** an officer spends weeks getting a group of recruits ready for battle, and as soon as they get into battle they all go AWOL.
4. Paul's converts were very special to him. He loved them so much and it grieved his heart to think of them turning from a walk by God's grace and following the flesh.
1 Thessalonians 3:5-8; 2 Corinthians 6:1
 - Matthew Henry said it well - "The labor of ministers is in vain upon those who begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh...Those will have a great deal to answer for upon whom the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ bestow labor in vain."

Verse 12

1. Paul beseeches the Galatians, "***Be as I am.***"
2. Paul was an apostle, but he isn't speaking of his position, he is speaking of his practice.
 - Paul lived his life by one means - the grace of God. **1 Corinthians 15:10**
 - The Galatians were attempting to live their lives by law.
3. Paul could readily identify with the Galatians.
 - They had come out of paganism which involved the observing of special days and months, ceremonies, and rituals.
 - Paul had come out of Judaism, which also was a religious system that included the same types of things.
4. Paul knew exactly where these Galatians were coming from but he admonishes them to, "***Be as I am.***"
 - In other words, live your Christian life by the same grace I live my life - the grace of Christ.
 - "***Be as I am***" (living by grace alone); "***for I am as ye are***" (once an enemy of God, but saved by grace).
5. When Paul says, "***Ye have not injured me at all,***" this appears to be a reference to the kindness and love that the Galatians had shown him when he initially had visited them and preached the gospel to them.
 - "Injured" means "to be unjust, to do wrong."

6. This will lead into Paul reminiscing of the grace that they had once demonstrated to him. As he challenges them to live a life of grace, he reminds them of the life of grace they once lived and the blessedness of it.

Verse 13

1. Paul apparently battled great physical pain and infirmity when he initially traveled to Galatia to preach the gospel there.
2. Nobody will ever fully realize the incredible price Paul paid to get the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul encountered intense opposition and deep, prolonged trials as he sought to carry the gospel of grace to the Gentile nations. **2 Corinthians 11:23-28**
3. Yet Paul gloried in his infirmities (**2 Corinthians 11:30**) and took pleasure in them (**2 Corinthians 12:9-10**).
 - When Satan stirred up opposition and weakened Paul physically, Christ's power was demonstrated through Paul in a greater way.
4. In this verse, Paul said that **through** his infirmities, he preached the gospel.
5. How it would break Paul's heart to see how the gospel has been watered down in America so that it won't be offensive to anybody.
 - Why are so many so-called "gospel preachers" so popular with the lost and pagan world today? Why do their books sell millions and why are they applauded by people who are lost in their sins?
 - It's because they preach a different gospel than Paul preached. They have conveniently taken the offence out of the cross (**Galatians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 1:23**), but thereby have removed the power from it.
 - They preach the love of God as a kind and gentle Jesus who died for them to make their life better.
 - The love of God is revealed **in the cross**, but the cross was **necessary** because mankind was alienated from God by wicked works. **Colossians 1:21**
 - If the true gospel is proclaimed, men are told very clearly that they have offended the righteousness of a holy God, they are sinners that are condemned to the lake of fire, the judgment and wrath of God is real, and their **only** hope is to embrace and believe upon the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who died for their sins.
 - Men are clearly told that if the gospel is not obeyed, Christ will punish them with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**
 - Guaranteed, this message will not endear you to a lost world, nevertheless, this message contains the power of the gospel to truly save those who believe.
 - The gospel always brings contention, not popularity. **1 Thessalonians 2:2**
 - Everywhere Paul went, he preached the gospel. He didn't preach it to become popular, sell books, or merchandise a product that would be palatable and non-offensive.
 - He preached Christ crucified in a manner that was offensive to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but wisdom and power to those who believed. **1 Corinthians 1:23-24**

- One popular author and pastor said, "You are never persuasive when you are abrasive." A quick review of Paul's life will reveal that Paul's gospel was abrasive wherever he traveled and preached. The gospel that is proclaimed in many books and churches today is non-abrasive for one simple reason - it is not the same gospel that Paul preached. It omits any serious discussion of sin, our alienation from God by wicked works, the necessity of the cross for sinful mankind, the need for repentance, as well as the future judgment and wrath of God against sin and sinners.
- This watered-down gospel that has been made popular may draw crowds, sell merchandise, and bring "decisions," but Paul's gospel results in true conversions.

Verse 14

1. Paul refers to a temptation which was in his flesh.
 - Many believe this to be an eye affliction of some sort (verse 15). This eye affliction appears to have left him partially blind. **Galatians 6:11**
 - Not only this, Paul infers that his fleshly malady was very grotesque to look at. If it was an eye disease, it could have disfigured Paul's face and been very unsightly.
2. The word "temptation" simply means "testing, adversity."
 - Paul refers to it as his "thorn in the flesh" in **2 Corinthians 12:7-9**. God had allowed Satan to inflict Paul in his flesh.
3. The Galatian believers had received Paul as an angel of God. The word "angel" simply means "messenger."
4. Paul went to Galatia as Christ's ambassador. He was representing Christ and the Galatian believers had received him as if it were Christ Himself.
5. Oh the love and appreciation they had for Paul. Paul's repugnant facial features didn't bother them. They were full of the grace of Christ and had shown it towards Paul.