

## Why I Keep Failing, Part 1 - Galatians 4:1-14– September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- Today's teaching will be part one of a series I've titled, "Why I Keep Failing."
- Here in the fourth chapter of this letter to the churches in the region of Galatia, the Apostle Paul confronts this very problem.
- Namely, that of why the Christians in the Galatian churches were riddled with such failure in living a victorious Christian life.

- Simply put, one of the main reasons they kept failing is because they were duped by the Judaizers to go back under the law.
- The problem with going backwards under the law is that it can only tell us what to do, but it fails in giving us the power to do it.
- What makes legalism so insidious is that the enemy will shift my focus from what God did for me to what I do for God instead.

- As we just read and are about to see, the Apostle Paul draws upon examples that the Christians in that day would understand.
- However, in order for us to better understand these examples in our day we need to sort of see them in a modern day context.
- What follows are four such examples that I hope will help us see the folly of what they had done by going back under the law.

1. To go back under the law would be like a freed inmate who served his time, going back into a prison cell again.
2. To go back under the law would be like a physicist with a doctorate, going back to the first grade as a student again.
3. To go back under the law would be like an heir to a billionaire father, going back under the employment of a cruel boss.
4. To go back under the law would be like a homeless man who now owns a mansion, going back to being homeless again.

- Sadly, this is what they were doing, but it doesn't answer for us why going back under the law, led to them constantly failing.
- Enter our text today, and with it, two of the reasons that trying to keep the Law of Moses will always be met with total failure.

### 1. I forfeit my freedom – (Verses 1-5)

1 What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. 4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

- What Paul is saying here is that when I forfeit my freedom in Christ I in affect subject myself to the laws and forces of nature.
- In other words, we're at the mercy of what's known as "cause and effect," in the sense that if you do good you will earn good.
- Conversely, if you do bad, you will deserve bad. The problem with this is that God's grace has freed us from slavery to this.

- For those of us in Christ, we're free because under grace, God no longer deals with us on the basis of what we really deserve.
- In other words, the good we do cannot justify us, nor does the bad that we do condemn us when under grace and not the law.
- However, when I forfeit the freedom under grace I by default bring myself back under the law of cause and affect unnecessarily.

### 2. I forget He's my loving heavenly Father - (Verses 6-14)

6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. 8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? 10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! 11 I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. 12 I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. 13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, 14 and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the greatest difficulties for Christians seeing God this way would have to be it.
- More specifically seeing God as a loving heavenly Father Who wants us to call Him, even cry out to Him as our papa or daddy.
- One of the reasons this can be so difficult for many is because of the unhealthy relationship they had with their earthly father.

- The question becomes one of why having such an intimate relationship with our loving heavenly Father is so important for us.
- I would suggest that absent this relationship, we're destined to fail because we still see God as a taskmaster and not a daddy.
- If He's a taskmaster, we're slaves and if He's our Father, then we are His sons and daughters and that will change everything.

One commentator explained it this way, "There is a beautiful progression. First we are set free from slavery. Then we are declared sons and adopted into God's family. Then, as sons, we are made heirs. ...Paul set a choice before the Galatians and before us. We can have a living, free, relationship with God as a loving Father based on what Jesus did for us and who we are in Him. Or we can try to please God by our best efforts of keeping the rules, living in bondage as slaves, not sons. Living that way makes the whole gospel in vain."

- I'll take it a step further and suggest that the Savior's example of this relationship with the Father is the key to our victory in Him.
- While the gospels are replete with examples of the relationship Jesus had with the Father, one in particular really stands out.
- What I'm speaking of is when Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane praying to the Father, knowing what's about to happen.

Mark 14:35–36 (NIV) — 35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."