

God's Adopted Children

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[0 : 00] Are you done work now? Are you through with working, Grandmama?! And if you're like most Bahamians, you probably observed the day and enjoyed the day with little or no thought about its significance.

But Emancipation Day is really a most significant day in Bahamian history. I would argue that in a sense, Emancipation Day is even more important than Independence Day.

And I say that because if we had not gotten independence before slavery was abolished, slavery, without a doubt, would have continued much longer in these chain of islands.

And so I think Emancipation Day is a most significant day. But we will never understand the significance of Emancipation Day until we have an appreciation for what we've been freed from. When I say we, I recognize we were not enslaved ourselves, but our ancestors were. And so in a sense, we can say that we were as well.

[1 : 45] So like many of you, I studied slavery in high school. I did West Indian history, so I studied slavery in high school.

But for me, the reality of the brutality and horrors of the Atlantic slave trade, the transatlantic slave trade, really never came home until I viewed an exhibition at the Pompeii Museum a number of years ago called the Henrietta Marie.

Henrietta Marie was a slave ship, and it sunk in the year 1700, right off the south coast of Florida. And it was about almost 300 years.

In 1972, they discovered this sunken slave ship. And as I walked through the museum looking at this exhibition, it was sobering and heart-wrenching to come up so close with what was considered to be the worst aspect of the transatlantic slave trade, which was the Middle Passage, the journey from Africa over to the Americas and the Caribbean.

Speaking about the wreckage of the Henrietta Marie, historian Dr. Colin Palmer stated, the story ends in 1700 for this particular ship.

[3 : 18] But the story of what the ship represented continues today. The importance of the Henrietta Marie is that she is an essential part of rediscovering the black experience, symbolically, metaphorically, and in reality.

I think those are very insightful words from Dr. Colin Palmer. Now, what do you think you would do, or how would you feel, if someone decided to start a back-to-slavery movement?

Someone decided that we should return to slavery, and there's this movement that they're trying to get going to advocate for a return to slavery.

I'm sure that although none of us experience slavery, we would be absolutely astonished, and we would do every single thing in our power to prevent that from happening. Well, in this passage that we have come to this morning in Galatians chapter 4, the Apostle Paul uses the form of slavery of his day to describe what it was like living under the law.

And slavery in Paul's day was nothing near what it was in the transatlantic slave trade, but it was so slavery. And in this passage, what the Apostle Paul does is he says to the Galatians, that returning to the law, or going to keep the law, keeping the law is like slaves returning to slavery.

[5 : 08] He said it's like a freed slave who is returning to slavery. Now why does Paul compare keeping the law, a return to keeping the law, to a return to slavery?

Let's consider why he does that in these verses that we have come to this morning. Galatians chapter 4, starting in verse 1.

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave. Though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

In the same way, we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. [6 : 30] So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir through God. 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'm afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

Let's pray. Father, thank you this morning for your word. Lord, what a privilege it is to have the inscripturated word of God.

And Lord, to be able to sit under the preaching of your word, I pray this morning that you would use your word to transform our hearts and lives and to build this church. God, cause us to hear the message that the Apostle Paul preached to the Galatians, helping them to see that any effort of trying to please you by what we do or by what we don't do is like a return to slavery.

[8 : 08] Lord, speak to our hearts and raise it. Only you can this morning. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. One of the communication skills that we all need to develop is the ability to say the same thing in different ways to help people to better understand what we're saying.

Teachers certainly learn to do that, but we should learn to do that as well because sometimes when we say something only one way, those hearing it don't get it.

Parents need to be able to do that as well. We tend to say the same things over and over again throughout parenting, but we need to learn to say those things in different ways so that people can get it, our children can get it, and they can be more effective.

The Apostle Paul demonstrates this skill in this letter. You'd remember that he is already likened living under the law to being in prison. He's also likened it to being under a guardian.

And in these verses that we just read, he is now likening it to being in slavery. And he does all this to keep the Galatians from going back to keeping the law, this effort that they are exerting in trying to make themselves right with God.

[9 : 37] He says, you're like freed slaves who are returning to slavery. He's already likened the return to the law as the freed prisoner who is returning to prison and the mature son who is returning to the guardian.

and now he is saying to us in verses 1 through 11 that when a believer is keeping the law in an effort to be justified, it is like a freed slave returning to slavery.

So Paul's point is simply this. Believers have been redeemed from the slavery of the law and adopted into the family of God.

believers have been redeemed from the slavery of the law and adopted into the family of God. In other words, he's saying since believers have been redeemed from the slavery of keeping the law in order to bring them to Christ and into God's family, a return to law is a return to slavery.

A return to law keeping is a return to slavery. And this is exactly what the false teachers in Galatians in Galatia, sorry, had enticed the Galatians to do.

[11 : 04] And so this morning I want to consider how Paul argues this point and with the Lord's help I want to do it under three headings and the first is the old condition. The old condition. Look at what Paul says in verse one.

He says, I mean that the heir as long as he is a child is no different from a slave though he is the owner of everything. Now Paul clearly is connecting what he is saying now to what he had said in the previous verses that we looked at the last time.

He's continuing the argument that being under the law is like a minor child being under a guardian. someone who commands him or even forces him to act in a certain way.

And his point is that although the child is actually the heir of the father's estate he is really no different from the slave who owns nothing.

Because being heir to something doesn't immediately give you the benefit of whatever that is. Paul says, so when you're a child, a minor child and guardians are over you, you have no access to the property to which you are heir that you will become an heir when you achieve the age of majority.

[12 : 28] He says, really, you're no different from a slave. Pastor and university president, Dr. Phil Riken points out that the English Standard Version is somewhat misleading in this verse, in verse 1 when it says that the child is the owner of everything.

He says, more accurately, it should read that the child is the heir apparent. He is lord over all, meaning that the father's possessions belong to him in title but they don't belong to him in reality yet.

so to say that he is the owner of all is kind of misleading on that particular point. So Paul says, until the day that the father has appointed for this child to attain what he is heir to, the child really is no different from a slave.

And here Paul is referring to the practice in the ancient world where there was a distinct separation between childhood and adulthood. There was a formal process at a set time to mark the movement from childhood to adulthood.

We don't have that but in cultures like in Judaism, in Roman culture and in Greek culture they had these ceremonies where a minor child would come to a day where he goes to a ceremony and he moves from being a child to being an adult and that's certainly what Paul has in view as he is talking about this child who is no different from a slave.

[14 : 09] Now notice in verse 3 that the apostle Paul makes a comparison and he says, in the same way we also when we were children were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

In the same way we also when we were children were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. Now what is Paul talking about in this verse?

What is it that we were enslaved to? And what are these elementary principles of the world? And you would notice that he not only uses this term elementary principles of the world here in verse 3 but he uses it again in verse 9.

Now there's a fierce debate among theologians about what this actually means and a lot of ink has been spilled on it in commentaries. And rather than bore you with all the different options and perhaps even confuse you with all the different options I think it's more helpful for me to just share with you my approach to trying to get to the heart of what Paul means in verse 3 when he says the elementary principles of the world.

Notice again what he says in verse 3. He says in the same way that the minor child was no different from a slave and under guardians and managers until the day set by the father we likewise when we were children were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

[15 : 41] Now if you notice in verses 4 and 5 he goes on and he says but when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Now in verse 5 Paul plainly tells us what we were redeemed from. We were redeemed from being under the law. So this clearly points back to verse 3 and what we were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

Whatever we were redeemed from is what we were enslaved to. So in other words we were really redeemed from the law.

We were redeemed from the law. We were enslaved to the law. So the elementary principles of the world is referring to the law. Here's how Dr. Philip Riken explains it.

He writes, perhaps then elementary principles of the world is another way of describing the law. The laws of God are indeed the basic principles of the world.

[16 : 56] In Greek basic principles means essential components or elementary things. the term was sometimes used to refer to basic teachings like the ABCs or the alpha beta gammas as they were called back then.

This is one good way to describe God's law. To study the law is to learn the alphabet of God's will. To study the law is to learn the alphabet of God's will.

But in seeking to understand what Paul is saying we must not overlook this important word that he uses in verse 3 and the word is enslaved.

He says we were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. So the elementary principles of the world is the law but Paul says we were enslaved to it.

Now we have to remember that God's law we have already seen this earlier in the letter and elsewhere in the New Testament that the law is not bad. The law in and of itself is not bad.

[18:06] There is no problem with the law. Remember the problem is with us. Because we are fallen people we can't keep God's law. The law is good. But Paul says we were enslaved to the law.

And when he is talking about our enslavement to the law I believe he is speaking about the law's oppressive effect on fallen people who could never fulfill its perfect demands no matter how hard they tried no matter how long they tried.

So it had this oppressive effect. It had this enslaving effect where you're going nowhere. It is just demanding and demanding and demanding until the day you die.

Now when you look at verse 10 I think we're able to see that Paul has a certain aspect of the law in particular in view when he talks about observing days and months and years.

And certainly you can see it broadly but especially I think we should see that he is talking about these the observation aspects of the law.

[19:23] These rituals these requirements to do certain things on certain days and to keep track of certain days and you can only imagine what that must have been like in a time when they didn't have electronic calendars and diaries and all this kind of stuff.

You had to keep track of all these days and there were penalties if you didn't observe them. days and months and seasons and years.

I mean they had like the year of jubilee and you had to keep track of it because there are requirements that if you were to sell land in the year of jubilee before that year actually came that there was a certain price that you couldn't charge beyond that price for it.

And you had to track all of these things. If you had to let those slaves go free. And so there was a very complex system that people were that the Jews in particular were under and which they were required to keep.

Paul says that was the old condition. We were on this treadmill of the law keeping the law and no matter how fast we ran no matter how long we ran we made no progress towards salvation and being accepted by a holy God.

[20:49] We stayed there repeating like a child who couldn't get out of first grade over and over and over and over again doing the same thing year in and year out and we got no further the next year than we were in the previous year.

This was the enslavement of the law. The law couldn't cause you to progress. No matter how long you stayed at it you were going to remain a slave.

And that's the reality of slavery. The reality of slavery was you were going to be a slave, you were going to die a slave! Unless and until you could be redeemed.

But the good news is that it was not our fate to stay on the treadmill forever. It was not our fate to stay on this impossible treadmill with impossible requirements of complete obedience and perfect obedience forever.

God had a plan. God actually put the treadmill in place. Remember we saw that earlier in chapter 3 that he had put the law in place in chapter 3 verse 19 until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made.

[22:12] And here he tells us again in verses 4 and 5 but when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of a woman born that we might receive adoption as sons.

And this brings me to my second point. The new position. That was the old condition under the law enslaved by the law making no progress and now we come to the new position because of what God did in the fullness of time.

And what Paul is saying here is that in the same way that the father of that minor child set a day for when that child is no longer going to be a minor he's going to come into his full possession he said God likewise set a day where no longer would we be under the law where no longer the law would be our guardian and our tutor but we will come from underneath that!

And that day he calls the fullness of time the day when God would send his son to redeem us from slavery to the law so that we might receive the adoption of sons and expressed in these two verses verses four and five is the sovereignty of God before the foundation of the world God determined the time that he would redeem men and women the time that he would send his son into the world and God worked through human history God worked through human history to coordinate and orchestrate the moment and the time when this would take place the exact moment when Jesus would be born of the Virgin Mary for one purpose to save his people from their sins God sent his son into the world in the fullness of time not a moment before not a moment after you know

I was thinking about this and if you've ever read the book of Judges if you've never read the book of Judges read the book of Judges it is one of the most interesting books in the Bible because of the things that you see happening because of the darkness that the people of God were in and I would have thought you know what I'm going to send my son it's so dark and it's so bad I'm going to send my son but God didn't and the reason God didn't was it wasn't!

[24 : 52] the time! the sovereign God of the universe had set a time and he was working all things to that moment in time when he would send his son and despite all the darkness and all the other things that went on God kept the time because it was the perfect time in the fullness of time God sent his son and I want to pause just to say this to us this morning those of us who put our faith in Jesus Christ and have received forgiveness of our sins we should draw hope from this truth this morning that God sent his son in the fullness of time if God can orchestrate and coordinate the sending of his son into this world with all the human factors all of the failures that we see of the people of

God in the Old Testament all that stuff God is able to bring that to pass shouldn't we be able to trust God with our lives and trust him with the details in our lives and not worry that because things are so dark and so bad that maybe God isn't going to do it anymore God is not going to fulfill the plans that he has for us the plans he has spoken things were dark but God had a time God said in the fullness of time I will send my son and so said to us this morning let us trust God with our lives if the God of the universe is able to do that he's able to manage human history and work in human history and nothing frustrates his plan he can do the same in our lives no matter how delayed things may look no matter how dark things may look no matter how bad things may look!

God fulfills way so the apostle Paul says that God like this father who set the time for his son to come into his inheritance!

That God set a time when he would send his son to redeem those under the law! But it's at this point that the analogy breaks down.

The analogy between the father who has set a date for his son to come into adulthood and God who has set a date that he would send his son to redeem those who are under the law!

[27 : 40] It breaks down at this particular point because the minor child just needed to twiddle his thumbs and go along with the program and on the set date he would go through the ceremony He would have the rite of passage the guardians will be dismissed and he will come into his inheritance but in our case it was not just a matter of time time when the fullness of time came God did not look at us God didn't look at us to see whether we had matured enough under the law to be able to transition from under the law he didn't look at us he knew that we couldn't he knew the law couldn't do it he put the law there he knew the law could not prepare us to be redeemed!

from under it and so instead he didn't look to us he looked to his son the one whom he ordained before the foundation of the world to be our redeemer and he sent him into the world and he came not as an exception he came into the world just as we came into the world born of a woman born under the law born under the law that we couldn't keep so that he could fulfill it so that in his perfect obedience and his substitutionary death he would redeem sinners who were under the law why did he do that Paul tells us in verse 5 he did it so that we might receive adoption as sons and brothers and sisters let us not miss God's amazing love in this statement behind these words to redeem those is the cross of

Jesus Christ because that's the way he redeemed those who were under the law that is where he paid the price for sin and for sinners that is where he absorbed the full furious wrath of God as a sacrifice for sin he did that on Calvary's cross and it's easy for us to miss it when we read those words to redeem those and not think about the implications of those words God sent his only son that he might redeem us that we might be adopted as sons you know as profound as the love of a biological parent is for a child you know that it is more profound when a parent genuinely loves an adopted child you see the love for a biological child is expected it is a given that parents would love the children produced from their own bodies but it is far more profound when an adoptive parent genuinely loves an adopted child and the reason that that is profound is not because of an amazing parent and his or her amazing love love now the reason that that is profound is because it points us to

God's amazing love the reason that a parent who is under no obligation to love a child or to receive a child and adopts that child into his or her family and loves that child genuinely as much as any other parent loves their own child the reason that's amazing brothers and sisters is that's what God

did with us those of us who have come to faith in Jesus Christ it points to the amazing adoption that God has given to sinners I've heard stories of adoptions and orphanages and they say that in orphanages when visitors come the children the older ones who've been there for some time they're on their best behavior they're smiling and they're looking they're all eager trying to do everything possible for those visitors to take a liking to them and to possibly adopt them and sometimes they do but I've also read heartbreaking stories of some children who were returned because for some reason the parent was disappointed in some way shape or form with the child and the child is returned to the orphanage

I read a heartbreaking story a number of years ago about two boys who were returned from the United States to an orphanage in Russia and the reason is that when a parent adopts a child he or she does not have perfect knowledge of that child doesn't know any inclinations of the child and quirkiness of the child and misbehavior of the child because the child is going to be on best behavior and even when the child may be a young child a lot of the issues may not manifest until later but parents couldn't know that but here again brothers and sisters this is the amazing love of God God adopted us with perfect knowledge there's nothing about us that surprises him there's nothing we do we may do things that may surprise ourselves but there's nothing that we ever do that surprises

[34 : 04] God and God adopts us with full awareness of who we are and what we will do he is aware of how wretched we are and how sinful we are and how depraved we are and he still sent his son to redeem us that he might adopt us and while the fear of earthly adoptive parents returning adopted children is real our heavenly father will never ever turn away his adopted children never he never turns us away because there's nothing we can ever do to surprise him he knows up front he knows everything about us he knows us better than we know ourselves he knows every failure we will ever have he knows every sin we will ever commit and he adopts us with a comprehensive informed love and I imagine there's some people who adopt children and it's kind of like in their mind let's try this out to see if it works no

God doesn't do that God doesn't just put his name on us he doesn't just call us children of God no he does more Paul tells us in verse 6 he says God sends his spirit into our hearts he gives us his spirit and it's by his spirit that we are endeared to him that we say Abba we have this new relationship where we can talk to him a relationship we didn't have before he put his holy spirit in us as the mark as the seal that we belong to him and not that we belong to him temporarily but that we will belong to him forever that's the amazing love of God he sent his son so that he may adopt us as sons and he does so with full awareness of all that we are and all that we will ever be and he seals us with his holy spirit puts his spirit within us gives us this relationship that we have that we can say Abba we can say daddy we can be endeared towards him I want you to notice how our triune God is involved in our salvation verse 4 tells us that God sent his son and verse 6 tells us that God sent his spirit God his son his spirit he sent his son to redeem us and he adopts us and proves his adoption by giving us his holy spirit and see this is a basic indication of the transformation that takes place in the life of someone who has truly come to know God when you truly come to know God there is going to be a relationship with God there is going to be a communication with God there is going to be this endearment towards God where we can now say Abba is no longer this distant God in the heavens but it is this near

God who is our father who is our daddy who we can cry out to we can pour our hearts out to in verse seven the apostle Paul says so you are no longer a slave but a son and if a son then an heir through God so he says to the Galatians and really he's saying the same thing to us we who were formerly enslaved under the law are now sons and heirs of God Paul is saying to the Galatians and to us you've been redeemed from your old condition you now have a new position your new position is you are sons of God you are heirs of God and the proof of that is he sent his spirit into your hearts Paul not only addresses the Galatians old condition and their new position Paul also addresses a bad proposition this brings me to my third and final point

Paul addresses his bad proposition in verses 8 and 9 look at what he says formerly when you didn't know God you were enslaved to those who 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 now earlier when Paul was speaking about the elementary principles of the world he was speaking universally about being under the law to all mankind whether you were a Jew who

were under the law directly because the law was given to you or whether you were Gentiles who were indirectly under the law though the law wasn't given to you you were accountable for the law because what Paul says is that cursed!

[39 : 54] Gentiles also though not given the law though they don't know the law they were accountable for the law because the Lord says everyone who doesn't do it you're cursed!

So earlier Paul is talking about it generally but now he's addressing the Galatians specifically they were Gentiles and formerly idol worshippers and this is the point that he is making to them he's saying you Gentiles you Galatians like all the other Gentiles you were enslaved to idols he says you didn't know God you worshipped these idols and you enslaved to them trying to please them trying to appease them doing all sorts of things and these idols and they would worship anything they felt was an idol whether it was the sun or the rain or the earth or fertility they had all these different gods and they would worship them and they would try to do whatever they felt the gods wanted so the gods would not be angry with them and they worshipped all of these things in their fallenness Paul says that's what you were enslaved to them in the same way that the Jews were enslaved to the Lord trying to please God says you were enslaved to all of your idolatry trying to please these idols that you were worshipping but in verse 9 Paul speaks of their conversion he says 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 it's interesting that Paul didn't have word processor or computer he was not in Microsoft Word writing this letter because he probably would have erased the first part but he was writing on parchment and parchment is very expensive and very rare so

Paul says but now that you have come to know God or rather to be known by God and that's an important adjustment that Paul makes and it's an adjustment that we can easily overlook but it's a very important adjustment yes the Galatians have come to know God but it's only because they were first known by God and what we find in these words of the apostle Paul is the language of divine election the language of sovereign grace it speaks to God's initiative and salvation listen to how Bible scholar Thomas Schreiner puts it he writes even though it is true that believers have come to know God there is a deeper reality that explains why they know God's saving love namely God's knowledge of them God's knowledge of his people hearkens back to the Hebrew verb know yada where God's knowledge refers to his choosing of someone the setting of his affection upon someone so when we read the Old Testament we read that God knew Abraham or God knew Israel or God knew Jeremiah and all it means is he sovereignly chose them for his own reasons he chose them and chose to set his love on them and the implication is he doesn't do it for everyone see the notion that oh God loves everybody and he loves everybody all the same no we don't love everybody all the same and God who is the God of love is able to manage his love in a far more precise manner than we ever can and so to know to be known by

[44 : 26] God is when God sets his love on you and chooses you in a saving way God so the Galatians didn't come to know God they were enslaved in idolatry God went to them in the preaching of the gospel through the apostle Paul and he set his love on them opening their hearts and minds to the truth and turning them from idolatry and he chose to reveal himself to them brothers and sisters if you know Jesus Christ this morning your story is no different from the Galatians you may know God but the reason you know God is because God first knew you because God first set his love on you because God first chose you God was the one who took initiative even though we may be more aware that we made a decision to follow!

Christ no the only! reason we made a decision to follow Christ is because God made a decision to set his love on us and to start to work in our lives and to point us to himself oftentimes we will talk about how they found the Lord we don't find the Lord the Lord is not lost he was never lost we're the ones who were lost and God found us more than being lost!

we were dead and God came to us and he raised us from spiritual death to spiritual life so Paul goes on to point out to them that this is a bad proposition he's saying to them in light of what God has done for you how can you turn back how can you go back to slavery you've been set free from that how can you turn back to these weak and worthless things doce what you're doing over and over and over again you're enslaved to it why do you want to go back to that you've been redeemed from it now it's important to notice that even though the Galatians were not turning back to idolatry they were redeemed from idolatry they were redeemed from slavery to worthless idols but Paul still says even though they were returning or not returning but they were going to the law because these

false teachers were saying to them now you come to

Christ you need to keep the law you need to be circumcised you need to observe these days and they were turning to that but Paul says they were turning back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world so here again we have this term elementary principles of the world only difference now Paul adds two adjectives to it and he says they're weak and they're worthless and what he's saying is this he's saying that the true nature of false worship of idols and all they did to please and appease these idols is no different from their new efforts of keeping the law and trying to seek!

acceptance through it in other words he's saying when you were worshipping these idols and you were cutting yourself and you were sacrificing your children you're doing all sorts of things to try to appease these gods to be right with them and to have peace with them and have a good relationship with them he says it's really no different from what you're doing now you're!

[48 : 05] going to! trying to be circumcised trying to keep all the holy days trying to do all these things so that you can please God he says it's all the same thing it's weak and it's worthless it's getting you nowhere you do them over and over again like a treadmill and you go nowhere in terms of salvation I like the way John MacArthur summarizes it in his commentary on Galatians he writes the elemental things of all human religion whether Jewish or Gentile ancient or modern inevitably involve the idea of achieving divine acceptance by one's own efforts and they are elemental in that they are only human never rising beyond the mundane to the divine notice again the bad proposition

God has sovereignly set his love on you you who did not know God you now know God how can you in light of God's amazing grace on your new position want to turn back to a system of works want to go back to slavery observing all of these things under the law trying to please God he says you observe days and weeks and months and seasons and years and the clear indication is they felt obligated to do this you can imagine the paranoia you can imagine when they didn't conform to a particular observation that they were supposed to keep but they forgot something and I've had the opportunity to see this in some people's lives you know there are some people who are so bound to sabbath keeping that they would they would run traffic lights to get home before sunset they would break the law the speed limit there's nothing to them to get home before sunset and then bondage to it and bondage to these observations and these particular obligations some of them who believe that there's something of saving value in what we eat and what we don't eat some would not even eat from you if you have a pot that you have cleaned but you cook pork in it they won't eat it under such bondage and what

Paul says about the Galatians he says I'm afraid for you I'm afraid for you I may have run or I may have labored over you in vain notice that the apostle Paul doesn't say to them you're not Christians he says I'm concerned I'm concerned that you may not be Christians I'm concerned that maybe all my preaching was in vain I'm concerned that all that I did is of no value because you may not be genuinely converted but there's the possibility that they could just be misguided they could have been genuinely converted but they have been seduced by these false teachers and they're being distracted into something that is not good for them something that actually is very harmful for them and see one of the things that happens and it happens not only for the people who are engaged in it but it happens for those who are in relationship with them like the apostle Paul was with the Galatians when you see a person who is trusting in anything else other than

Christ alone and doing other things believing that they are adding something to their salvation it brings doubt it brings doubt for those people it brings doubt of the assurance of their own salvation because they feel if I don't do this and I would die I'll go to hell and for those who understand these things like the apostle Paul you look at them and realize you say you know what I'm not sure this person is a believer that's the kind of doubt that we cast when we go to any kind of works based religion it removes the assurance of salvation both for the person and for those in relationship to them and so brothers and sisters I appeal to us this morning if you're trusting in anything or anyone other than Christ alone for the assurance of your salvation see the danger see the danger that you place yourself in where your very salvation can be questioned if you are not trusting in Christ alone and in his finished work on the cross on your behalf and one of the reasons that many don't trust in Christ alone and his finished work on their behalf is that they really don't believe it is a finished work they believe that they need to add something to it and scripture refutes that there's nothing to be added to it if you're on that spiritual treadmill of performance this morning over and over again trying

to do the same thing to please God I say by the grace of God get off of it get off that treadmill and put your faith in Jesus Christ alone and we here this morning and you don't know Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior hear the good news of the gospel that the apostle Paul lays out again to the Galatians when he writes in verse 8 formally when you did not know God you were enslaved to those that were nature not God's but now that you have come to know

[54 : 49] God his point is that people who are in darkness who are lost who are blind they can come to know God and the reason they come to know God is that there is a God who sets his love on people there's a God who comes to them a God who knows them in a saving way that they may know him in a saving way and so I encourage you this morning if you are outside of Jesus Christ turn from sin turn from disobedience and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and put your faith and your trust in him alone and in no one else nothing else to go back to anything is a return to slavery and a return to bondage let's pray pray pray