

May 29, 2016

Another Gospel

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all." Galatians 1:6-7

"Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? ...All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law. Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."

Galatians 3:1-11

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ...If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise...But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba' Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir."

Galatians 3:26-4:7

As we have noted before, God's design for us is so much more than most of us every embrace. We understand, I hope, that God sent his Son to die on the cross to save us from the eternal condemnation that we deserve as sinners. Jesus satisfied, in his death, the requirement of the law of sin and death under which all of us live. We deserve to die, but because of his death on the cross, we have hope of life.

But God never intended our salvation from the consequences of our sin to be the end of his relationship with us. From the fall of Adam and Eve until now God has worked and is working to share an intimate and personal relationship with each one of us. He wants so much more than to save us from our sins. God wants to make us his children; his sons and daughters and he wants us to inherit what all his children inherit, heaven.

Just as parents share an intimate relationship with their children, so God wants to share an intimate relationship with us. He wants us to share our lives with him every day, he longs of us to listen to him and to follow his direction, and he desires nothing more than for us to lean on him for our very existence. And, because he wants this relationship with us so very much he allowed his Son to die in the horrors of Golgotha for us; so that we might become his children.

The Galatian believers lost sight of what they had and so they returned to what they knew; following the rules. We do the same thing. We find it almost impossible to understand that the God of creation wants to parent us in the most intimate and loving ways and so we turn to what we know, to trying to please him by following the rules.

One thing that we understand about parenting from years of study and observation is that the parent who bases his relationship with his children on their performance will fail, in the end, to be close to his children when they grow up. Performance should never be the basis of our love for our children. We love them because they are our children and not because they get straight A's or hit homeruns.



In very much the same way, God does not love us based on our performance. His love for us is not founded in our perfect keeping of a set of rules. God loves us because we are his children; which means he loves us even when we are totally messing up. Good thing! God is a perfect parent and he wants to perfectly parent us.

Of course, like all parents, he has to wait for his children to choose to be close to him. We cannot make our children love us, or obey us, or listen to us, or clean up after themselves or even go to sleep when we tell them to. Children have minds of their own and in the end, must choose us. In the same way, God longs to take care of us and guide us through this life and be close and personal with us, but we don't always choose to let him do those things. Fortunately, he, like all great parents, loves us anyway.