

Study 10  
Galatians 4:12-20

1. Paul writes in Galatians 4:12 Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. Taking into account the fact that Paul is a former Pharisee and theologian what is the significance of this statement?

In Galatians 4:12, when Paul writes, "Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are," he is emphasizing his willingness to relate to the Gentiles and adapt to their culture and way of life in order to share the gospel effectively. As a former Pharisee and theologian, Paul had the credentials to demand that others follow him in the strict laws of Judaism, but he chose to set aside his former privileges and cultural distinctions. His statement highlights the principle of humility and flexibility in ministry: he is not seeking to impose his past identity as a Jew on the Galatians but instead identifies with them, showing that true unity in Christ transcends cultural and legalistic boundaries.

2. What was the motive of the false Jewish teachers in Galatia? What were they trying to do to Paul and his gospel?

The false Jewish teachers in Galatia, often referred to as the Judaizers, sought to undermine Paul's gospel by insisting that Gentile believers must adhere to the Mosaic law, including circumcision, in addition to faith in Christ to be truly saved. Their motive was to gain the Galatians' loyalty and admiration by enforcing legalistic practices, which would elevate their own status and influence. They attempted to discredit Paul and his gospel by questioning his authority, presenting him as inferior or even a false teacher, and trying to lead the Galatians away from the gospel of grace towards a works-based salvation. Essentially, they sought to control and "enslave" the Galatians by binding them to the law.

3. Can you compare the motives of the false teachers with that of Paul's?

The motives of the false teachers in Galatia and Paul's were fundamentally different:

**1. False Teachers' Motives:**

- **Self-Promotion and Control:** The false teachers sought to gain attention, loyalty, and admiration from the Galatians by promoting a works-based salvation. They insisted that Gentile believers must follow the Mosaic law, such as circumcision, to be truly saved. Their aim was to elevate their own status by enforcing legalistic practices, essentially seeking control and power over the Galatians.
- **Self-Centered:** Their approach was self-centered, wanting to be viewed as authoritative figures and to create a following for themselves, rather than fostering true spiritual growth in the believers.

## 2. Paul's Motive:

- **Christ-Centered and Self-Sacrificial:** Paul's primary motive was to see Christ formed in the Galatians and to help them grow in their faith. He sacrificed his own comfort, reputation, and status (as a former Pharisee) to become all things to all people so that they might be saved and transformed by the gospel. His aim was not personal glory, but the spiritual well-being and freedom of the Galatians, rooted in the grace of Christ.
- **Gospel-Centered:** Unlike the false teachers, Paul was willing to endure suffering, even to the point of emotional anguish, for the sake of his ministry and the salvation of others. His focus was not on his own influence but on leading people to Christ.

In summary, while the false teachers were motivated by self-interest, control, and the pursuit of their own status, Paul's motivation was driven by his desire to see Christ formed in others and to faithfully preach the gospel of grace, regardless of personal cost.

4. What does Paul mean by desiring to see Christ formed in the Galatians? Compare Ephesians 4:11-16. How should this inform us in the manner in which we conduct our Gamma Discipleship program? Are we doing this? What are the obstacles and how can we improve?

When Paul expresses his desire to see "**Christ formed in the Galatians**" (Galatians 4:19), he is referring to the spiritual maturation and transformation of the Galatian believers, where their lives are increasingly shaped to reflect the character, values, and teachings of Jesus. This is not just about external conformity but an internal, heart-level transformation where the life and nature of Christ become evident in their daily lives. Paul is deeply invested in the spiritual growth of the Galatians and is willing to endure great emotional suffering for their sanctification, desiring that they become fully conformed to Christ's image.

### Comparison with Ephesians 4:11-16:

In **Ephesians 4:11-16**, Paul describes the goal of ministry and the function of the church, which is quite similar to his desire for the Galatians. He speaks about the roles of various leaders (apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers) in equipping believers to:

- **Attain maturity in their faith (v. 13),**
- **Grow in the fullness of Christ (v. 13),**
- **Build up the body of Christ (v. 12),**
- **Become united in faith and knowledge of the Son of God (v. 13), and**
- **No longer be tossed by waves of false doctrine (v. 14).**

Both passages emphasize **Christlikeness** and the **spiritual maturity** of believers. In Galatians, Paul longs for the Galatians to grow spiritually and be conformed to the image of Christ, much as Ephesians speaks of the church's maturity through proper

teaching and spiritual growth. In both instances, Paul envisions a community of believers whose lives increasingly reflect the love, humility, and truth of Christ.

### **The Connection:**

- In **Galatians 4:19**, Paul's language of "Christ formed in you" echoes the process of spiritual growth and maturity Paul describes in **Ephesians 4:11-16**. Both passages show that the ultimate goal of ministry is the transformation of believers into the image of Christ, which is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit and faithful teaching.
- Both passages underscore that the church is to grow in unity and maturity, and that ministry leaders (such as Paul in Galatians or those mentioned in Ephesians) play a key role in nurturing this growth by faithfully pointing believers to Christ.

Ultimately, Paul's message in both letters emphasizes that the church is to be a reflection of Christ's fullness, with each individual believer being shaped more and more into His image, not merely through external practices, but through an internal transformation empowered by the gospel.

### **Case Study**

Aaron Lai has been attending the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baptist church for the last 30 years and was in charge of the missions to Vietnam. This ministry started 5 years ago and he had led multiple trips to Vietnam as a result the team grew to a healthy 25 interested individuals. There was much fruit from the ministry. Then the direction of the church changed and the elders wanted to concentrate their efforts on reaching out to Indonesia hence much of the funding went there and a new committee was set up to spearhead this rather than Aaron's own missions committee. He was asked to advise and help with this new work but was very hurt and angry as he was not consulted on this move. He was totally convicted on the Vietnam missions instead and fought tooth and nail to expand the program even at the expense of taking resources from this new ministry. He severely criticized the leaders and people involved in the new ministry and said he would not attend the prayer meetings for these. One of the elders gave a suggestion on saving money for his short-term missionaries to Vietnam by using Air Asia instead of MAS and Aaron got upset and said elders should not micromanage and interfere with his ministry.

One of the elders criticised Aaron's response as an outgrowth of his loss of bearing with respect to justification. He said Christians who are no longer sure that God loves and accepts them in Jesus, apart from their present spiritual achievements, are subconsciously radically insecure persons — much less secure than non-Christians, because of the constant bulletins they receive from their Christian environment about the holiness of God and the righteousness they are supposed to have. Their insecurity shows itself in pride, a fierce, defensive assertion of their own righteousness, ministries, and defensive criticism of others. They come naturally to hate other cultural styles and others different from themselves in order to bolster their own security and discharge their suppressed anger. They cling desperately to

legal, pharisaical righteousness, but envy, jealousy, and other branches on the tree of sin grow out of their fundamental insecurity.

- a. What do you make of the situation? Did all parties display maturity?
  
- b. How should the situation be handled?

#### **Takeaway**

**Paul urges the Galatians to reject the Judaizers' false teachings and embrace the gospel of grace, emphasizing that salvation comes through faith alone, not the law. He passionately reminds them of their past love for him and warns against false teachers who seek personal gain, stressing that true ministry aims to form Christ in believers, not to secure followers for oneself.**