**LIVE FREE – wk 8 Galatians 4:21-31 / Ancient Soap Opera**

**If you believe in Heaven - Can you know that you know you are going? Can you know that you are right with God without a doubt?**

**The Bible says you can have an assurance… unfortunately, some have a false assurance (explain) You don’t want to be on the wrong end of that deal. That is what today is about…**

**Background Check: Paul to Galatia churches he planted, now turning from the truth to a lie following false teachers - A personal, passionate emergency response for the gospel - Paul was frustrated…**

**This letter is about freedom! Freedom from self, sin, shame, & religion**

**Galatians 5:1 - It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (It’s what Jesus did = not what we do / from a salve to a son / from jailer to redeemer)**

**All about God’s Amazing Grace – the amazement of his favor**

**Paul spends 1st half of letter on Justification (our position)**

**and 2nd half on sanctification (our change)**

**Today possibly the hardest passage in Galatians – usually skipped - strange - barely makes sense – may not have ever read, heard it before**

**Up to this point - Paul has been banging on a nail already in – Building an idea (each nail) - driving the point with multiple examples. Now one more nail to drive it in!**

**Today 10 vs w/ 2 stories about 2 families, 2 cities, 2 futures & 1 reality**

**It’s strange, but it’s in the Bible… Galatians 4:21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? (Explain law = Torah)**

**Paul uses OT stories about grace with people who want to take Jesus and add the OT Torah rules. You can’t have both.**

**Gal 4:22 For it is written that Abraham (plays the Abraham card again – hard to beat) had two sons, one by the servant woman and the other by the free woman. (A tale of father, two women, 2 sons)**

**A True Story:**

**God told Abe - you will have a son in your old age, and he will become a great nation. (Have you seen my wife? Pushing 80 I need to help God)**

**Gen 16 - Believing God – but “helped God” by relations with his wife’s servant Hagar (ever believe God and then try to do it yourself?) She gets pregnant. God rebukes him - I told you Sarah. 13 yrs later, Sarah gets pregnant (2 moms, 2 sons) Literal brothers from another mother.**

**Gal 4:23 His son by the servant woman (Hagar) was born according to the flesh, (A young Hagar - his attempt and effort to fulfill the promise of God) but his son by the free woman (Sarah) was born as the result of a divine promise. (A miracle baby, barren woman 80+)**

**God promised the inheritance to Sarah’s Son not Hagar’s**

**Not the first born as custom required - Abe broke custom.**

**A Dysfunctional Soap Opera: 2 moms- 2 sons- 1 Daddy – Hagar = Ishmael (Arab world) Sarah = Isaac (Hebrews) As you can imagine, fights followed… As a father – he brought this upon his own family.**

**Paul draws an allegory from this story**

**There is a huge difference with Hagar and Sarah – Gal 4:24 These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. (BTW – we don’t need to spiritualize the OT to make it relevant or read ourselves into it. We just need to understand its place in leading to grace – it’s literally true and useful.)**

**Gal 4:24 These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai (place the law was given) and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia (Hagar represents bondage to the OT Torah Law – her name lit means “hard pressed” stranger) and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. (The city, Jerusalem, represents man’s efforts to reach God on earth. BTW- the two bros are still fighting over that city today) 26 But the Jerusalem that is above (heaven) is free, (by faith through Christ) and she (Sarah) is our mother. 27 For it is written: “Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.” (From Isaiah 54:1 - pointing to the day when Sarah will rejoice because she has far more children than Hagar – ie. every believer is her child.) Paul is banging that nail**

**2 parents / 2 covenants / that represent 2 attempts to God**

**They represent TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE**

**Picture Abraham is a fork in the road of humanity (a person come up be Abe / Sarah / Hagar (signs for each) A great division of humanity into two groups - those who trust in Christ alone for salvation and those who trust their efforts to help them earn their way to peace.**

* **Hagar = The Torah. Those who attempt to work for God’s favor.** 
  + **Religious rules – thru works (our works) (NAIL)**
  + **Those who try to help God out to earn their salvation**
  + **Even those who have a partial truth… Jesus plus…**
* **Sarah = The gospel. Those miraculously given by faith God’s favor**
  + **Grace (unmerited favor) – thru faith (God’s work) (NAIL)**
  + **Those who understand what Christ has done not us**

**This is what separates Christianity from religion – and every cult**

**Islam - The crescent / Judaism - the Star / Christian - the cross**

**The issue here is - A true and a false salvation – which path?**

**Road Works: Abe and Hagar = Ishmael. Performance. Mt. Sinai = the Law (works) earthly Jerusalem = bondage, death (religion, false faiths)**

**Road Grace: Abe and Sarah = Isaac Promise. Mt. Calvary = the Christ (grace) – new Jerusalem = freedom, life – (true faith)**

**2 stories about 2 families, 2 cities, 2 futures & 1 reality**

**Paul then applies this story to real life real – the point of the story**

**Gal 4:28 Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. (In Jesus we are like Isaac - children of promise with our father) 29 At that time the son born according to the flesh (Ish) persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. (Isaac) It is the same now. (Sarah & Hagar did not get along. Hagar & Ish- were eventually banished for discontent and for mocking Isaac)**

**We can expect to be persecuted for this – people find religion easier than grace - we have a hard time getting this in our head**

**30 But what does Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” (Paul – is reminding us we are not to compromise on this…)**

**Relying on our works and efforts will never bring salvation**

**Christian formulas, penance, repetitive prayers, and efforts…**

**31 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. (In Christ you’re not a slave’s child / but a free child)**

**The world has nothing for me – I don’t envy the things this world can bring – power, position, prosperity (when we focus on the earthly Jerusalem – we become a slave to those things)**

**I have a new eternal Jerusalem my eyes are on!**

**Banging the nail already in – a cross**

**5 Walk Away’s from this Ancient Soap Opera**

**1 – We must learn to trust The Lord more than we trust ourselves**

**The soap opera was a result of Abe (a father) trying to do things on his own merit and ability – rather than trusting God’s word.**

**Dad’s trust God - at home, work, etc. We all need to learn this.**

**2 - People can read the same thing and get different things… but there is only one meaning**

**Galatians 4:21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? (We are both read it – but you don’t see it)**

**Only diff between a cult and a trusted bible teacher – interpretation. Both read & study the text – both treasure the Bible – both are convinced of their understanding – but one is false.**

**Paul wrote to the young pastor Tim - 2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (Handle it correctly)**

**The reason we fail to comprehend and apply God’s Word as we should is - we fail to pay the price of careful study (preachers & people are guilty. It’s why they were susceptible to false teaching.**

**3 – The Gospel is not a hybrid (there is no hybrid religion)**

**Galatians wanted to go back to their old life and way of thinking and take Jesus with them. They want Jesus and the old ways…**

**Like a hybrid car – a little gas, plus electricity**

**Ish was the result of believing in God and efforts – a hybrid = all it produced was a hard-pressed life of slavery**

**A little of this – a little of that – add a little this – leave this - Where everyone is happy / buffet faith… serving up health, wealth, and happiness – but you only leave sick.**

**4 - The biggest threat to the Gospel is in here (legalism and tradition)**

**Gal 4:29 At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.**

**Ish and Isaac were brothers – there was division in the house**

**Paul was clear - Jesus and Jesus alone is the way –but good intentioned religious people are threatened by the gospel.**

**Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.**

**When tradition becomes legalism - Healthy vs unhealthy tradition**

**5 - There is no such thing as salvation by association**

**Religious people of Jesus day were physical descendants of Abe (the Jewish people) thought they were saved by association – by Blood.**

**If you had Abraham in your blood you were set. Paul said - no. Both sons were Abrahams blood, both circumcised, both had a birthright, but only one was chosen to inherit the promise.**

**Bloodlines, backgrounds & religion can’t save - not about family trees**

**I am a Christian because my home, my parents, spouse – my dog**

**I am a Christian - I was baptized, I’m a catholic, my brother’s a pastor, dad, uncle, grandpa, etc. is a missionary (I hear that a lot)**

**Paul says, you need Jesus. Salvation comes by trusting in Jesus**

**I want to end with this thought:**

**What happens at salvation is nothing less than a supernatural miracle**

**Ishmael was born naturally / Isaac was born supernaturally**

**Ishmael: what we try to do / Isaac: what God has done in JC**

**When we bow the knee to Christ – we are reborn miraculously**

**Hagar – name means stranger / sojourner / runner / traveler / homeless**

**Sarah – name means royalty (princess) Which is what we are in Christ**

**\*\* Don’t be a Hag**

**Paul was banging a nail already in**

**The false teachers were asking – who’s your daddy? We have Abraham**

**Paul’s asks the question… Okay, who’s your Mamma? We have Sarah.**

**The entire human race is divided into 2 spiritual groups –**

**The Ishmaels and Isaacs - Are you an Ishmael or an Isaac?**

**Do you trust in yourself to make your own life? (You are an Ish)**

**Do you think that you can earn God’s favor? (You are an Ish)**

**Do you think someone can be good enough or deserve God’s favor?**

**Do you think that it is both God’s part and your part? (You are an Ish)**

**\*\* Do you trust in Jesus Christ alone as your forgiver and king? (Isaac)**

**The Hybrids and Ishmaels never have assurance or peace with God.**

**I need to do a little more / feel a little more / experience a little more / keep that feeling / feel good about myself / hope I am saved… I need to make sure…**

**Rest in this - 1 John 5:11 - And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.**

**Our tendency is to go back and lean on religion – rules – on rituals and systems - only remind us that we fail at them. While the law exposes sin… only Jesus can expels Sin**

**We are Justified (declared righteous thru Christ) (The nail is finally in - a cross) and we are being Sanctified (becoming righteous in Christ)**

**It is with this that Paul says - Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Why would you go back? That would be crazy!)**

**Many of you probably know of Juneteenth. A Texas Holiday also known as Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, Freedom Day, and Emancipation Day. Why is this a special day? Here is why.**

**After 200 yrs of slavery in America, President Lincoln in the midst of civil war declared through executive order the Emancipation Proclamation (Proclamation 95) on Sept 22, 1862 – effective Jan 1, 1863. With that proclamation, more than 3.5 million African American slaves in the confederate states were declared to be free. But it did not end slavery, merely the goal. Freedom was not found for most in the south, as the Civil war raged 2.5 more years. After confederate forces surrendered months earlier, a Union Army general made it to Galveston, TX on June 19, 1865 with a message to the most remote slave state, he announced the federal orders. Drop those chains. YOU ARE FREE!! 2.5 years after the original proclamation - they received the good news and began to live it. That is why that day is so special.**

**What a great picture of what Christ has done. Jesus made a proclamation from the cross, “It Is finished, paid in full!” we are free from the power of sin. I am here as a messenger 2020 years later, "Drop those chains! YOU ARE FREE! Now live in it!"**

**Why would you want to go back to slavery?**

**Next what it looks like to live free!**