

**2018 Message Series: June 24 - July 22, 2018**

Message Series: "The Five Preachers"

June 24: Peter Milloy "Dreaming of Lunch"

July 1: Stever Ruter "Prayer 101"

July 8: David Werner "O Foolish Christians"

July 15: Dan Hair - Learning to Pray

July 22: Andrew Bonsell - Prayer focus

**SUNDAY, JULY 8: Holy Communion**

Message: "O Foolish Christians" or "The Centrality of Christ"

Message Theme: Learning to listen to the voice of Jesus amid all sorts of other voices.

Message Scripture: Galatians 4:1-11

Memory Verse: John 11:25 "Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. ... Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'"

Kids Activity: Children's Lesson with a designated cup: meaning of "consecrated."

Blurb: What voice do you listen to? There are lots of loud voices clamoring for your attention and allegiance. As Jesus-followers we choose to listen to the voice of Jesus. Yet that is not always easy to do! The Galatians in the Bible had trouble focusing on Jesus' voice as they lived their daily struggles. Paul's word to them helps us to stay focused! Come and "train your ear" this Sunday!

**Opening Song:** *He Reigns*

**Welcome:** -Pastor David

**Memory Verse:**

John 11:25 "Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. ... Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'"

**Worship Music Set:** - Sanctify

*The Way*

*Wonderful Words of Life*

*Simple Pursuit*

Worship Prayer - Andrew

**Kid's Lesson:** Consecrated: Set aside for a specific purpose. Give kids special glass for milk.

**Consecrating Associate Pastor**

Explanation: Andrew Bonsell licensed as a local pastor.

Appointed as Associate Pastor of Worship and Family Ministry

Marking Andrew as Pastor: Gina Lindholm, with gift

Appreciation of Andrew's ongoing ministry: Quilt

Anointing "Pastor Andrew" for ministry with prayer

**Message:** O Foolish Christians

**PP#1:** O Foolish Christians!

“I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.” -Galatians 4:11

“O Foolish Christians!” Galatians 4:11, “I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.”

**PP#2:** *Map of ancient Galatia.*

“O foolish, irrational Galatians!” “I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.” This is how Paul talks to the Christians living in Turkey in his letter to the Galatians, chapters 3 and 4. Galatians 3:1, “O foolish Galatians!” 4:11 “I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.”

Paul is really troubled about their situation. He is wondering who they are listening to. What voice are they following? He is worried that they are listening to the old voices of their former lives in new ways, rather than Jesus’ voice calling them into a new future.

**PP#3:** *Image showing the trap of rule-following or legalistic Christianity.*

Paul talks from personal experience. He had been there with them before and had preached that all they needed to be saved was to trust in Jesus. Paul had made it crystal clear that people cannot do anything to win God’s favor. It only comes through what Jesus did for us. And the Galatians had believed this and had embraced it with their whole being, as Paul says in 4:14, “you...welcomed me as an angle of God, as Christ Jesus.”

But after Paul left, he hears about what they have been doing. It sounds like that some people, we’ll call them law-pushers, had come in and were telling them that if they wanted to be the best Christians, they needed to adopt some of the Jewish laws. And the laws they were pushing were the ones that made Jews distinct from Gentiles, like circumcision and food laws. So in essence, they were saying that the Galatians needed to behave like Jews if they were to be good Christians. And it seems that the Galatians were believing these law-pushers! So Paul is worried that they were turning away from their new life in Christ, with freedom from all those old laws and requirements, and instead listening to the old voices of how they should follow God. “O foolish Galatians!” Paul is worried that his work with them may have been wasted.

So Paul again lays out the Jesus-centered Gospel. Turn to Galatians 4. Starting in verse 1, Paul explains that before, the Jewish laws helped God’s people *in the past*, before they knew Jesus. Look at chapter 4. Verse one...

**PP#4:** Galatians 4:1-11 (CEB)

1 I’m saying that as long as the heirs are minors, they are no different from slaves, though they really are the owners of everything. 2 However, they are placed under trustees and guardians until the date set by the parents. 3 In the same way, when we [Jews] were minors, we were also enslaved by *stoichia* [this world’s system].

“I’m saying that as long as the heirs are minors, they are no different from slaves, though they really are the owners of everything. However, they are placed under trustees and guardians until the

date set by the parents. In the same way, when we [Jews] were minors, we were also enslaved by *stoichia* [this world's system].”

Paul uses the example of minors, meaning, younger children. Like slaves, they can't own anything. And also like slaves, they don't have freedom, but must obey the rules of the guardians and the trustees. The Jews, before Jesus, were like this. Yes, they were heirs to God's salvation, but before Jesus, they had to obey the Jewish Law. It was important *then*.

Now, take a look at verse three. See how Paul calls the Jewish law? He uses the Greek word *stoichia*, meaning elemental or worldly system. The Jewish law, although from God, was still based on the worldly system of works and following a calendar based on the moon and stars. It is still a worldly form of obedience and slavery.

**PP#5:** Galatians 4:1-11 (CEB)

4 But when the fulfillment of the time came, God sent His Son, born through a woman, and born under the Law. 5 This was so He could redeem those under the Law [Jews] so that we could be adopted. 6 Because you [Christians] are sons and daughters, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our [Christians'] hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!”

When Jesus came, however, everything changed. Verse four...

“But when the fulfillment of the time came, God sent His Son, born through a woman [as a human], and born under the Law [as a Jew]. This was so He could redeem those under the Law [Jews] so that we could be adopted. Because you [here meaning believers in Jesus] are sons and daughters, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our [believers, including Jews] hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!”

Jesus' purpose, says Paul, was to be born as a Law-follower in order to free them from the Law. Even more, since Jesus was God's son, Jews could claim to be adopted children of God by what Jesus did for them. The Spirit cries out to God identifying Him as their Father.

Here's the point: since Jesus has come, the Jews are no longer minors, but full children of God. The time of the Jewish law is now over. Now is the time to live as God's full children, free from the Law, and living directly with Jesus. Can you hear it? The Jews no longer need the Law!

**PP#6:** Galatians 4:1-11 (CEB)

7 Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son or daughter, and if you are His child, then you are also an heir through God.

8 At the time, when you didn't know God, you were enslaved by *stoichia* [things that aren't gods by nature]. 9 But now, after knowing God (or rather, being known by God), how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless world system? Do you want to be slaves to it again? 10 You observe religious days and months and seasons and years. 11 I'm afraid for you! Perhaps my hard work for you has been for nothing.

Good for the Jews. What does this mean for Gentiles? In Paul's analogy, Jews were minors, and Gentiles were the slaves. But the outcome is the same in Jesus! Verse 7, “Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son or daughter, and if you are His child, then you are also an heir through God.”

Paul now makes his point: whether minor/Jew or slave/Gentile, we were all slaves to *stoichia*. Verse 8, “At the time, when you [Gentile Galatians] didn't know God, you were enslaved by *stoichia*, things that aren't gods by nature [a system of rules and laws that kept you down—the pagan system was also based on the moon and planets...think Roman mythology]. 9 But now, after knowing God (or rather, being known by God), how can you turn back again to the weak and

worthless world system? [Why go from a Gentile slavery of worldly obligations and works, to the Jewish system of slavery to the Jewish Law of obligations and works?] Do you want to be slaves to it again? [It's slavery in another form!] 10 You observe religious days and months and seasons and years [based on the moon and planets]. [Goodness, you now have Jesus, and the freedom from all those works! And I hear you are taking up more rules again!] 11 I'm afraid for you! Perhaps my hard work for you has been for nothing."

**PP#7: Image for swapping one master/slave-owner for another**

Don't pick up another form of *stoichia*. Jesus gives the Gentile orphans also their adoption as children of God. Don't follow the pagan system, or the Jewish system. Follow Jesus!

"O foolish Galatians." "I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted." You see, in their zeal to be the best Christians possible, the Galatians started to follow the Jewish laws of the law-pushers. But Paul has always taught them that Jesus abolished all forms of *stoichia*. It is Christ who gives the minor his or her majority. It is Christ who makes the orphan adopted by God. Christ freed both the Jew and the Gentile. Nothing else is needed. And to start following the Jewish Law is actually saying that Jesus is not enough! Yikes! "O foolish Galatians."

Who are you listening to? What voice are you following? Stop going back to the voice of ritual-obedience. Stop listening to the familiar voice of "do this and that" in order to please God. Listen to the voice of follow Jesus! Trust in Him! "I fear my hard work for you has been a waste."

**PP#8: Image for listening to different voices, straining to hear one voice among many**

Good for the Jews. Good for the Galatians. Now, how about us, today?

Here at our church...what voice do we listen to? What observances and customs do we make requirements? This is why we have paused, as a church. We've stopped our busyness of service and activity in order to more clearly and singularly focus on Jesus. Have we made *the way* we have done church in the past, the requirement for following Jesus now? Is what we have always done, or what makes sense to me and my generation, the way it has to be? Are we clinging to our own *stoichia*, "We must keep doing the good things we did before."

The Jewish Law was good. It worked for a time. But those observances were not the point. Same with our customs and activities as a church. They are not bad. But they are not the point. Our point is to follow Jesus. We must not cling to *the way* we did church, but we must cling to the Jesus of the Church. And that means we may need to let go of past ways we have worshiped and served. That may mean we do things differently, in order to keep singularly focused on Jesus.

Are we much different than the Galatians? Paul's words to them come calling to us down through the centuries, ever challenging us to not replace the centrality of Christ with *the forms* of worship and serve. "Foolish ones" he says to us, "Beware clinging to forms of your faith rather than the Jesus of your faith."

**PP#9: Image for how we make the forms of our faith (religion?) nonnegotiable requirements**

We have the same danger in our private lives. We replace Jesus with a certain way of thinking about Him, or working for Him, or knowing Him. We have forms of *stoichia*, too.

For example, what is the reason why we go to church? Is it to meet and fellowship with God? Or is it just something that should be done, or we do to see our friends, or we go to have a good time,

to do what we enjoy? Are we practicing Christians, or just practicing. Do we want our children baptized just because everybody else does it, or do we really intend to raise our children to be children of God and experience personally the love of Christ? Why do we do our outward actions of Christianity? We should be doing it because we are experiencing Christ as our Lord and Savior, and His Spirit is working within us.

Or again, let's take the issue of the authority of Scripture. The questions flood over us. Is the Bible a normative authority for the whole Church? What does it mean that it is the inspired Word of God? Did the stories recorded in the Bible actually happen? How historical is Scripture? Does it conflict with science? Should one stand when the Gospels are read in Church? And on and on and on. So much focus is placed on the Scripture as it stands alone. But you see, Scripture is only Scripture in that it tells of Jesus—that is where it gets its authority. Jesus is the complete and true Revelation, He is the true Word. We cannot remove the living Jesus from the issue of Scripture. When we do, we turn the Bible into a form of *stoichia*.

Or still another example of our modern *stoichia* might turn up in our own interpretation of the Christian religion. We all have, to some degree, our personal ideas of what is wrong with people, the church, society at large. And we all believe that others need to hear specific issues. But sometimes these issues turn into our personal agendas, which we try to bring up whenever we get the chance. So every once in a while when we are looking at a text, rather than hearing what Christ is saying to us in it through His Spirit, we interject our own interpretations, what we want it to say. So in essence, probably even unknowingly, we have removed Christ and have turned to our own agenda, which has thus become our *stoichia*.

**PP#10:** *Image for listening to God's voice in the midst of many other voices*

Whom are we listening to? To what voice do we give our ear?

In our personal lives, we often rationalize it, but it is often a form of *stoichia*. It's what makes sense to me. It's what the culture says is right. God wouldn't do that. I don't believe God acts that way.

And our Christian life can be some veiled form of preference, or "my way," or what's familiar to me, or what I like.

"O foolish Galatians!" "I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted."

Are we willing to let God speak into us His pure Gospel? Will we strain to listen to His voice? Will we let go of all our usual ways we think it must be done? Will we let go of our works? God is calling us to maturity, to Christian maturity. God is trying to lead us into a new future. As people, and as a church, we must let go of the way we used to do things in order to embrace the new way God has planned. Listening to God's voice means not listening with pre-conceived notions. This was the problem with the Apostles, when they just couldn't get what Jesus was doing. They were listening to Jesus with ears to their culture. But Jesus was bringing in a new future.

We were minors, but we have now come of age. God calls us to grow up, spiritually. We were orphans who are now adopted as children of God. We can claim the inheritance of abundant and eternal life. So we, too, need to be careful of the temptation to go back to the former way of doing things, even if in another form. As we follow Jesus, be careful about doing what seems familiar, comfortable, about what suits us. God is calling us into a bold and unexpected future.

**PP#11:** *Image for following Jesus amid all other temptations, desires and voices*

We follow Jesus, and Jesus alone. He is sufficient. Even if we leave behind all forms of the way we once did things, we still have Jesus, and it is enough.

Don't be foolish Christians. Don't let Paul's work on us be wasted Consider what voice we are listening to. Strain to hear the voice of Jesus, as we step out in faith!!

Amen.

**Holy Communion** - Andrew

Prayers of confession and preparation

The Great Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Receiving of the Elements

**Offering:** *O for a Heart to Praise My God* - Sanctify

**Closing Song:** *Magnify* - Sanctify

**Memory Verse**

John 11:25 "Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. ... Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'"

**Announcements:**

Next week: Rev. Dan Hair, preaching

Hymn Sing

Lifeline at 6:30.

**Benediction:** -Pastor David