

“Until Christ Be Formed in You”

Galatians 4:19-20

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** On Paul’s first missionary journey he took the gospel to Asia Minor including region of Galatia:
 - A. Paul and Barnabas first preached on the Isle of Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12).
 - (1) Sought to preach the gospel to the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus.
 - (2) But a false prophet (Bar-Jesus; Elymas) “withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.”
 - (3) Paul struck Elymas blind and then converted the proconsul (13:12).
 - B. Next Paul and his party landed at “Perga in Pamphylia” (13:13); on to “Antioch in Pisidia” (13:14); where Paul preached to the Jews and the Gentiles (13:16-52):
 - (1) Paul gave the Jews a history lesson ending with the death, burial and resurrection.
 - (2) At first “many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas” (13:43).
 - (3) But when the Gentiles flocked to the preaching of Paul “the Jews...were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul” (13:45).
 - (4) Paul turned “to the Gentiles” as the Jews judged themselves “unworthy of everlasting life” (13:46).
 - C. Next Paul took the gospel to the cities of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 14).
 - (1) In Lystra Paul healed a crippled man (14:8-10) and when people saw the miracle they were amazed and said, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” (14:13).
 - (2) Paul and Barnabas had to restrain the crowd from offering sacrifices to them (14:14-18).
 - D. The Jews from Antioch and Iconium followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra and “persuaded the multitudes” to stone “Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead” (14:19).
 - E. The disciples rescued Paul and, along with Barnabas, flee to Derbe (14:20).
 - F. With extreme bravery, the 14th chapter of Acts closes with Paul and Barnabas retracing their steps through “Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’” (Acts 14:21-28); they then returned to Antioch of Syria where “they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.” (14:27-28).
 - G. In the latter part of Acts 15 and the beginning of Acts 16 Paul and Silas revisit these cities of Galatia where Timothy is added to their party.
2. **3** Paul had a great love for the Galatian brethren.
 - A. Converting them had almost cost Paul his life.
 - B. Paul received much opposition from the Jews and even some from the Gentiles.
 - C. In Galatians 3:1 Paul rebukes the Galatian brethren: “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?”
 - (1) I believe this rebuke has a certain bit of tenderness associated with it.
 - (2) For very quickly after administering this rebuke Paul (who was worried about them) says, “Have you suffered so many things in vain — if indeed it was in vain?” (Gal. 3:4)

- (3) Paul is truly concerned for their eternal salvation!
- (4) This obvious tender bond between the Galatian Christians and Paul is expressed:
- Gal. 4:14-16:** *“And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”*
3. Paul and the Galatians had both suffered much for Christ!
- A. Once they had loved Paul’s preaching, but now they resented it as they were turning back “to the weak and beggarly elements” of Judaism that would put them “again to be in bondage” (4:9).
- B. Once freed from sin and error, they were now falling under its influence again (4:8, 21; 5:1, 7, 9, 15, 16, 19-24).
4. Paul longs and labors for their spiritual growth, stability and maturity; that was his constant goal for himself and for others:
- Gal. 2:20:** *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*
- Gal. 4:19-20:** *“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, 20 I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.”*
5. I want to focus this lesson on what Paul says in chapter 4, verse 19: *“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,”*
- A. Paul’s vehement desire is for these brethren to abandon the false teaching of the Judaizers and return to the pure gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-9).
- B. Paul’s desire in this regard is so intense that he describes himself as going through the pain of childbirth *“until Christ is formed in you.”*
6. **4** All truly mature Christians have that same desire for the less mature in Christ.
- A. An intense desire that the less mature grow in Christ.
- B. A desire so intense it is akin to the agony of childbirth.
- C. A travail that will not end *“until Christ is formed in you.”*
7. How can you tell if *“Christ is formed in you”*? In this lesson I want to suggest **five** ways.

II. DISCUSSION:

“Christ is formed in you” when you exhibit...

- I. **5** Unselfish love and service to others:
- A. Christ was the most unselfish, humble person that ever lived: **Phil. 2:1-8**
- 2 Cor. 8:9:** *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”*
- B. We are to love each other as He loved us:
- Jn. 13:34-35:** *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*
- C. Love is the greatest aspect of our faith: **1 Cor. 13:1-8a**

- (1) But our love must be a love of “action”:

Jas. 2:15-17: “If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

Eph. 4:1-3: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

- (2) Christ is not formed in us until our love shares our material blessings:

1 Jn. 3:16-17: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

- (3) Christ is formed in us when our love focuses on serving others: Jn. 13:12-17: v. 17: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

D. What comes to your mind when something needs to be done?

- (1) “Who is going to do it?” --or--

- (2) “What can I do to help?”

Matt. 20:26-27: “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

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2. **6** Spirit of self-denial and obedience:

- A. If Christ had to learn obedience, then we must certainly do so ourselves:

Heb. 5:8-9: “though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,”

Where would we be if He had not “learned obedience”?

- B. Jesus’ pattern of self-denial and obedience began in His youth:

Lk. 2:49: “And He said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’ 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

- C. Jesus never entertained any other thought than being obedient to the Father:

- (1) Christ is not formed in us until we too never entertain any thought than total obedience to God:

Jn. 5:30: “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”

- (2) Jesus never took a day off from obedience; never, never any excuses!

Jn. 17:4: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

Matt. 26:39: “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

Jn. 19:30: “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”

D. We can’t be saved unless we willingly sacrifice all to obey God! Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:19-24

Matt. 5:29: “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

2 Cor. 7:1: “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

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3. **7** Spirit of submission:

A. Can you imagine the spirit of submission it took to voluntarily sacrifice Himself on the cross:

(1) We’re familiar with the Garden of Gethsemane: **Matt. 26:36-44** **Heb. 5:7:** “who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,”

(2) We’re familiar with the Jesus’ arrest: **Matt. 26:53-54:** “Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

B. These are important lessons we need to be teaching our children: **Eph. 6:1-4:** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: 3 ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’ 4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

C. Submission cannot be forced, but must come from the heart: **Rom. 6:17:** “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”

(1) The level of submission required of the Christian is not what’s found in the world:

1 Pet. 5:5-6: “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’ 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,”

(2) No exaltation without submission and humiliation! **Phil. 2:8-9:** “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,”

(3) Other submissive roles: 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-23; Heb. 13:17

✓ Christ to God,

✓ Wives to husbands,

✓ Man to Christ,

✓ Saints to elders.

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4. **8** Love for the truth and right; hatred of sin and error:

A. Jesus always jealously held to the truth and never compromised with error:

(1) Threw out the moneychangers:

Jn. 2:16-17: “And He said to those who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!’ 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’”

(2) Condemned the Jews for rejecting the truth:

Jn. 8:42-45: “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.”

(3) Jesus even condemned His closest disciples when they failed to stand for the truth:

Matt. 16:23: “But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’”

(4) Our standing for the truth is a more important matter than many realize; many pay lip service to it, but few actually stand fast!

(a) When we compromise the truth we are like the Jews: our father is the devil!

(b) When we compromise the truth; the Lord says to us as He said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

(5) Jesus defended the truth without apology and pointed out error without compromise; and so must we! Matt. 15:1-14

Matt. 15:6-9: “Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

Matt 15:12: “Then His disciples came and said to Him, ‘Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?’”

Jesus: “Oh, my, I’m so sorry!” NO!

Matt. 15:13-14: “But He answered and said, ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.’”

B. We must uphold the truth, expose false teachers for what they are...enemies of the true gospel: **Phil. 1:17:** “I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.”; Isa. 8:20

Phil. 3:1-2: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!”

Phil. 3:17-19: “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame — who set their mind on earthly things.”

(1) The Bible is not a club to beat people over the head: **Eph. 4:15:** “but, speaking the truth in love,”

- (2) But we can make no concession to sin and error (**Eph. 5:11**: “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*”; Gal. 2:5, 11, 14)

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5. **9** Deep desire to spread the message of salvation:

A. Jesus called and trained men to spread the gospel:

Matt. 4:17-20: “*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 18 And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.*”

B. He taught them to be bold, fearless and persistent: **Matt. 10:1-7, 27**: “*Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.*”

C. Jesus gave His Great Commission to His apostles, but it is applicable to all generations.

Matt. 28:18-20: “*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.*”

2 Tim. 2:2: “*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*”

D. The Great Commission is:

- (1) Based on His great glory.
- (2) Requires obedient faith in baptism.
- (3) Requires a lifetime of teaching, learning, and growing as Christ is formed in us.
- (4) Requires and obedient faith in Him to the very end!

III. CONCLUSION: 10

1. We must obey the gospel and grow spiritually so that Christ will be formed in us! Gal. 4:19
2. Are you a Christian? Have you made the first step in the Great Commission? Gal. 3:26-27
 - A. If you are not a Christian, you remain “outside of Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27)
 - B. Outside of Christ you have not one spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3).
 - C. You’re lost! 2 Thess. 1:7-9
3. If you have put on Christ in baptism, is “Christ...formed in you”?
4. In either case, Jesus tenderly invites you! **Matt. 11:28-30**: “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*”