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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

**Personal Study of the Bible-92**  
**Galatians 4:13-16 – Attitude to Whole Truth and its Communicator**

*Galatians 4:13 but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; 14 and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. 15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness, that if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth? (NASB),*

**Translations (in bold) below are literal renderings from the Greek.**

**Galatians 4:13 moreover, you know very well that because of weakness of the flesh that I preached to you the first time** (οἶδατε δὲ ὅτι δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον).

- Paul is reminding these Galatians of the manner in which he first came to them. He did not come to Galatia with personal charm, eloquence, physical strength or attractiveness. His appearance was one of “weakness.” These Galatians believers did not care about human glory. They just wanted God’s truth. This is the attitude of any healthy believer and church. It is but a sign of our evil times that modern churches often put human attractiveness over truth, image over truth (usually because of the need for more people for more money to pay for more building programs—ugh!).
- On Paul’s attitude regarding his physical handicaps, read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. What did Paul do with his weaknesses and the various trials related to people testing (e.g., reproaches, persecutions) and trials in general (distresses)? To make the transition from being weak, due to concern with your attractiveness and with what people think and say about you, to spiritual strength is to make a huge advance in the spiritual life. It requires far more than applying various formulas. It requires a deep understanding yourself, God, and the spiritual life. Apart from grasping key metaphysical concepts about Reality, the believer goes from year to year and decade to decade in the same mess no matter how much doctrine he learns. The only way to truly advance is through dianoetic understanding, all other understanding is superficial, never getting beyond the nominal realm of childish thinking. Until the child grows up in understanding, he does not get it. He can’t.

**Galatians 4:14 and that which was your trial in the sphere of my flesh you did not disdain nor loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus** (καὶ τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, ἀλλὰ ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.)

- Apparently, when Paul first came to Galatia he came with some disease that resulted in him having an appalling, gross appearance. However, due to the believers love for Truth, the Galatians received him with open arms. I wonder how many modern churches would not allow the Apostle Paul to teach in their pulpits because of his unsightly appearance.
- Even though Paul healed many people, he could not heal himself. God left him with this infirmity so he would depend upon God more fully. God deals with us the same way: any problem, physical or otherwise, that remains is designed to get us to depend more on God and less on ourselves or others. The lesson that we all need to learn is to be happy in the Lord regardless of the circumstances; read Philip. 4:11-13.
- Instead of being grossed out by Paul's appearance, they embraced him as a representative of Christ Jesus in spite of his ugly appearance. He came with powerful and profound messages (read 2 Corinthians 10:10). This is what they originally wanted.
- Believers often think they cannot be used of Christ if they are not attractive or have charming personalities. However, Paul is a perfect illustration of the truth that God's power transcends human limitations. It is not about ability; rather, it is about availability.

**Galatians 4:15 Therefore, where is your blessing? For I bear you witness, that if you could, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me** (ποῦ οὖν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν; μαρτυρῶ γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰ δυνατὸν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι).

- This shows the great love the Galatians had for Paul. They would have even torn out their eyes for Paul if that would have helped. Paul's infirmity, apparently, was related to his eyes. I feel the need to point out that true love really is all about caring for the object of love. While "relaxed mental attitude" may be a valid technique in enabling one to stay in fellowship, to equate love with a relaxed attitude is unbiblical and more akin to stoicism (and various psychological dissociative disorders) than the Christian virtue of love. To be sure, one can have a relaxed mental attitude and not really care about the object of love. However, one cannot love someone and be indifferent, at least not with spiritual and authentic love.
- One of the most heartbreaking experiences in any person's life is to love someone who does not respond in love—read 2 Corinthians 12:15.

- Many congregations start out with great love and enthusiasm for the pastor because he brings them God's truth, which they love more than anything else. However, many congregations often, sooner or later, get distracted by the kosmos. This distraction tends to cause frustration and a complaining attitude, which the believer, then, transfers to the shortcomings (real or perceived) of the pastor-teacher.

**Galatians 4:16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I communicate to you Truth?**

(ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν;).

- Anytime the whole truth is taught to those who do not want the whole truth there are going to be problems, beginning with antagonism towards the pastor-teacher.
- In our last Bible class, I mentioned the importance of the virtue of docility. Docility is a virtue of the will that consists of being able to listen and objectively evaluate a message and assent to truth regardless of personal preferences. No one starts out with a docile will required to gain Truth. We all start out with wanting to believe what we want to believe. This is a problem of the will, not the intellect. No amount of doctrine in and of itself can fix this problem. It is all about the will and volition (will-2 and volition-2&1).
- The greatest delight of any communicator (who really is into the whole truth) is to watch believers use their wills to pursue truth no matter what. I am blessed to be pastor of FBC where believers enthusiastically love the whole truth. I so appreciate the enthusiasm. It speaks well of your spiritual life. We have many fascinating things on the horizon at FBC regarding the nature of Esse and esses. Some of it is very difficult. All of it is necessary to move beyond nominalism and gain more capacity for contemplation and love of our God with all or our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. The spiritual life is far more than God just kissing our boo-boos and making *us* feel better with another technique (which really is all about us, once again). *We need more understanding of God and Reality as such to really grow up!* The prevalent anti-intellectualism attitude has even infected the doctrinal movement, resulting in several pagan views of God, man, and creation. This must be addressed and corrected.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don