

Paul's Personal Appeal

Galatians 4:8-16

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TRANSCRIPT:

Galatians Chapter 4:8-16

Galatians 4:8 reads, "But then indeed, when you did not know God, you served those things which by nature are not gods." Verse 9 continues, "But now, after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain."

Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all. You know that because of physical infirmity, I preached the gospel to you at the first, 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. 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. Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

Let us pray.

Lord, as we come to Your word now, speak, O Lord. We come to receive not the words of men nor the philosophies of man, but we come to hear from You. We gather to know what it is that You would have us to believe, to do, how You would have us to live. Pray that You would stir us up, O God. Remind us of the love that You have displayed for us in Christ. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Up until this point, you somewhat may be forgiven if you have thought that Paul, in this epistle, has been writing from a very heavy-handed, deep theological, argumentative, persuasive manner. He has been informing and challenging and alleging things concerning the gospel of God, drawing from the Old Testament texts of scriptures, from the law, from the prophets, and building a case and an argument, and a good one indeed, an irrefutable one, regarding the sufficiency of the work of the cross of Jesus Christ for

our redemption, and how that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith alone in Jesus Christ.

But Paul, at this moment in his epistle, just for really a short section, it seems, really opens up his heart and speaks from the heart to the people. Not that he wasn't speaking from the heart previously, but you see his pastoral manner coming through in these texts of scripture that was just read here in verse 11, 8 to verse 19, and even to the end of the chapter, verse 20.

For example, in verse 11 of the text, he says that "I am afraid for you," showing that there is this fear in his heart for the direction that the Galatians are heading down, a pathway of destruction away from the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 12, he says, "Brethren, I urge you, I plead with you, be like me, as I was like you." As in, "I became like you, as it were, to win you, in order that you might be like me, that is, free from the law, free from its bondage, and not as slaves any longer, but as free sons of God. As those that walk by the faith and live by the faith of the Son of God," as he says in Galatians 2:20.

And then Paul goes even further, opening up his heart, reminiscing, and reminding the Galatians of the former days where he first arrived, as it were, at Galatia, and he proclaimed to them the wonderful love of Jesus Christ, and how they not only embraced the gospel of Christ but they embraced Paul as an angel of God, as it were, as even if he was Jesus Christ Himself. They loved and experienced the grace of God so much that the one that brought them into it by reason of the gospel that he proclaimed meant so much to them. And he reminds them of that.

And he becomes so affectionate, or reveals such of his affection to the people that he's writing to, that he says even in verse 19, "My little children." He compares himself, as it were, to a mother who gave birth to them. And he goes, "So now I will travail again until Christ be formed in you." And here we see Paul, as it were, as the apostle pastor who makes his appeal from a pastoral heart of concern for the people that he loved, that he labored among, that he prayed for, that he served, that he suffered among as he preached the gospel to them.

And he does this by asking them three very soul-searching questions. He wants to awaken them, he wants to remind them, and he wants to challenge them about the dangers of a pathway that they are now treading. This is like a mother who's concerned about their teenage children, or a father concerned about their teenage children, where they go through all the logical reasoning and arguing as to why it is they should not go down that path and make those friends, how it would lead to certain trouble for

them, and all true, and all accurate, and all logical, and all important for the children to understand and believe.

But there comes a point where the heart of the mother and father is so overwhelmed by the danger that is before them that they just plead with them, "Don't do it." And this is kind of what we see now in this part. Paul has been alleging and arguing and making a case, and now we see his heart coming out in a way unlike before, with a plea to them, "Don't go down this path; this is dangerous. What are you doing?"

And he does this by these three questions, which I'd like us to look at this morning. And the first of those is found in verse number 9. In verse number 9 of chapter number 4, Paul says, "But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it," here's the question, "that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?"

He reminds them of what they used to be and who they used to be before they met the Lord. Verse number 8 says that he says, "When you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods." You were in idolatry, you were in slavery, you were in darkness, you did not know God. You did not know the true and living God, and you did not know God in a way that was relational. You may have had some kind of conception of God, for Romans tells us that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

And so we know that there is this fundamental knowledge of God in the hearts of men, yet they did not really know God. They were in darkness, they were alienated from the life of God. They were under bondage and slavery so much so that they were serving things in nature as if they were true gods when they were nothing but false gods. Idols which are futile and vain, which are representative of demonic activity that function behind the idols to deceive the people that worship them. This was the state of the Galatians.

Now obviously, Paul is revealing to us that the Galatians were not all Jews because the fact that they worshipped idols, and that would indicate that these were Gentile people that were among them that the Judaizers were trying to bring under the law. And here Paul says, "This is who you were, but you have transitioned from slavery to freedom. You did not know God, but in verse number nine he says, 'But now, after that you have known God,' and 'or rather are known by God.'"

And Paul reminds them that you came to know God. There was a change

in the darkness of your mind. You have come to the knowledge of the truth. Paul says in chapter three, verse one, that "Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified," when Paul preached to them the gospel that he preached in Galatia. And he says it's through Jesus Christ that you came to know God, that you came to establish a true relationship with the living God, not a superficial knowledge of God that you know that there's some deity out there who created the heavens and the earth, but you came to know Him who is life.

As Jesus says it, "And this is eternal life, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." It says you came to know God by reason of the gospel; you entered out of darkness, and you came into the kingdom of light. You tasted, and you saw that the Lord was good and gracious. He goes even a step further. It's not only that you knew God, but God knows you. This is greater than even knowing God. It is to have the conscious awareness, and it is also to see the evidence of the fact that God Himself has set His love upon you.

When it is said that God knows His people, it's not talking about God's omniscience. Otherwise, God knows everybody in that sense. But rather, that they had been known of God or known by God is an indicator that it is God who set His love upon them. As He knew Israel among the nations, chosen by God, beloved of the Lord, they were known by God. God had not only called them out of darkness, but He now was having fellowship with them, and they with Him, and they were in an intimate relationship to them that God knows His people is what Jesus says, "My sheep know Me, and I know them, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

You remember, on the final day, there'll be many who say to me, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? Have we not cast out devils? Have we not done many wonderful works?" And Jesus will profess unto them, "I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness or of iniquity," indicating that although you may call me Lord, and although you may know me in some superficial sense, I never knew you. Of course, I knew you by omniscience, but we never shared that intimate relationship that comes by reason of the grace of God revealed in the gospel of His Son.

Paul says to them that you have received this knowledge of God, and God knows you. And then he asked the question, "How is it then that you can turn again?" Not a question that he expected them to answer. It was rhetorical. It was so that they would comprehend the magnitude of their unfaithfulness and how offensive it was to the glory of this God who loved them. "How is it that you turn again?" Turn again back to slavery, turn again back to futile thoughts and views of the grace of God after that you had been brought into a relationship with God. After it was that you un-

derstood that God knows you, you are in a relationship that transcends all other relationships, a relationship that has secured your freedom from bondage.

And he goes on to say to them, "How is it then that you, having tasted of this love that was shared between the Father, Son, and the Spirit, now communicated in your hearts, and you are now called sons of the living God, how is it that you can turn back to slavery?" Turning again, he says, "to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage."

Now, bondage, weak and beggarly elements, turning back—were these guys turning back to idolatry? These Gentiles, steeped in paganism, worshipping wood and stone? No. They thought they were completing their salvation by a step forward into Judaism, legalistic Judaism. Look at verse number 10. What is their turning back looking like? "You observe days and months and seasons and years, and I fear that I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." What is Paul trying to say? He's trying to say that simply to turn back to legalistic Judaism is equivalent to reverting back to paganism. Why? Because it is the same old religion with a new veneer, one that is weak and beggarly.

You know what he's simply saying? All religion that is built upon your own works is weak and beggarly. You sacrifice to idols, thinking that your sacrifices to the idols will appease the gods, and the gods will reward you with blessing. And now you think that your circumcision will make you right in the eyes of God. That's the same religion with a different wrapping. Works-based. You can take it from the Old Testament. You can take it from the pits of hell. You can take it from wherever you like it. But if it is a gospel that is not of grace, it is no gospel at all. And it is a damnable gospel which was drawing the Galatians away from the grace of Christ.

Just because it was wrapped with the language of the Bible, it meant nothing. It just rather meant that it was more deceiving. So it is in many of the religions today, is it not? They can have Jesus on their lips. They can even mention Jesus from the pulpit. They can even read the same Bible that we read today. But if that gospel is not the gospel of the grace of God by faith alone in Jesus Christ, it is no different to paganism. In that, it is a religion that is built upon your own efforts. Of course, it is different in that there is a right knowledge of God in many of these religions. Or there might be a right knowledge of certain aspects of the Christian faith. But as Paul brings out here, it is all the same in the sense that it is both weak and beggarly and will not bring you to God and the knowledge of God. So in the final analysis, it is just as dangerous, if not more dangerous, because of its alignment with some of the truth.

And Paul says to them here that you are turning back to the weak and beggarly elements. Now, I said last week that I would explain what elements mean a little bit more to you because this word appears in verse number three of chapter number four, and it is one of the most controversial words that Paul mentions in the New Testament. And it says, "Even so we, when we were children, we were in bondage under the elements of the world." What does Paul mean by the elements of the world?

Well, it is used seven times in the New Testament, and its basic fundamental meaning is this: the rudimentary principles or the fundamental principles. It is used of language, the fundamental elements that make up language. It is used in other texts of literature around the time of, you know, just before the coming of Christ and after Christ, as elements of the universe, as the philosophers thought, of earth, fire, water, and wind, which were the fundamental elements that made up the universe. Some believe it's a reference to the stars. Others believe that it's a reference to demonic spirits that propagate false doctrine in the church.

But it's used in scripture in Galatians chapter four; it's used twice, as we've looked at in this text and in verse number three, and Colossians chapter two, verse eight and verse 20, it is also used twice. And in both cases, in all these four cases of the seven, it shows the close relationship between legalism and bondage to the law. Hebrews also has an occasion in chapter five, verse 12, where it refers to the basic principles of God's revelation. And in second Peter chapter three, it appears also twice, talking about the earth will melt with a fervent heat; the elements will burn up, which is obviously talking about the fundamental elements of the earth.

But what seems to be more consistent with Paul's theology and with the context in which this is given, and in Colossians, is that he's referring to the fundamental principles that govern the world and the Jews under legalism's relationship to God. What I mean by that is simply this: that the world approaches God by the efforts of their own hands. He says that you don't be deceived by the rudimentary elements or principles. And he goes on to say, "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle." Once again, this legalism that was creeping into the church.

And Paul uses this word to show that fundamentally, as I've just demonstrated by paganism and legalistic Judaism, at the heart of man's religion, it is all the same in this sense that the fundamental principles that govern the darkened heart of man is to approach God by the works of his own hands, like Cain's offering offered there at the beginning. And of course, this is none other than propagated by demonic spirits. This is the lie of the evil one, to think that a man may be justified in the sight of God by his own

religious works.

And Paul says that these elements are weak and beggarly, and all they do is that lead us to bondage. And what Paul is saying here is that for you to go under the law is nothing more than bondage. Look what he says there in verse number nine of this text, "How is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?" Their pursuit of law works was a pursuit of bondage, which Paul summarizes as that which is weak and beggarly.

What does he mean by weak and beggarly? Well, he's simply saying that for you to think that the observance of days and months and years will make you any more acceptable in the sight of God is to espouse a belief that is powerless to change you. It is weak. It is powerless to free you from the bondage. It is powerless to cleanse your conscience from sin. If you pursue a life of legalistic obedience to the law in order to satisfy the justice of God, you are following that which is weak and pursuing that which has no power to change you.

And not only is it weak, he says it's beggarly. And simply what he's saying by it's beggarly is that this leaves you bankrupt. It's like a cloud without water. It promises so much, but when you pursue it and when you follow it, you find out that it's nothing. It's empty. It's vain religion. Or it may be dressed with fine garb and smoke and lights and vestry. It may be dressed with fine creeds and confessions and some great historical facts that are passed, or by some fanatic vision by some prophet in time past, but my friends, all works religion is weak, and it is beggarly.

And as you pursue it because it glistens and glimmers as though it's going to provide you riches, it leaves you at the end of the rainbow with no pot of gold. It leaves you dry. It leaves you empty. And Paul is contrasting that with the knowledge of God that comes through the gospel. So if it is weak and beggarly, he's trying to show us that the power of God unto salvation is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It cannot change you, but the gospel can. It may not free you, this weak and beggarly elements of the world, but the gospel can. Christ Jesus can.

He's trying to show them that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not only the power of God unto salvation, but it is the unsearchable riches of Christ. You might think that the pursuit of legalism and your own works and man-made religiosity is going to make you rich in the sight of God, but it leaves you empty and bankrupt and without anything. But if you come to the gospel, the free gospel of grace, and because it is free, you might think it is quite cheap, but it is free only because it cost the blood of the Son of God. It is priceless.

You come to that gospel, you will have a wealth of the wisdom, grace, righteousness, peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is showing these people that there is nothing greater than gospel freedom. It is the greatest experience known among men. It is satisfaction. It is sins forgiven. It is being brought into the family of God. It is to be given the Spirit of the living God to make your bodies the temple of God. It is that which satisfies and settles a restless heart. It is that that meets the troubled with peace, the downcast with joy, the fearful with security, the weak with strength, and even those that are suffering and still under the afflictions of the flesh and of the mind, it imparts to them the grace to carry on in light of the glories that are revealed in it.

And what Paul is simply saying to the Galatians is, "How can you turn from that? You want to pursue that which is weak and beggarly? You want to turn back to that which provides nothing, that is empty? You want to, rather, be in bondage than to continue on in the freedom of the grace of God, all because you are trying to perfect yourself by something that God has never told you to do? How is it that you can turn back?"

As Richard Longenecker says, "Knowing God the Father in the intimacy established by Christ and the Spirit, how is it possible for them to want to turn to any other relationship?" And how often we do.

Verse number 15 of this text is where the second and third question comes in, verse 16, and we'll tie these in together, but it's very similar. In verse number 15, he asks the second question, basically saying, "What then was the blessing you enjoyed?" Alternative translations to this, as the ESV points out, is "What then has become of your blessedness?" Or as the NSB translates it, "Where then is that sense of blessing you had?" And what is Paul doing here? He's reminding them of where they were, and but now what has happened in that they have come to know God, and that God knows them, and he's reminding them that you're moving away from God is absolutely crazy and folly because you have now entered into the best thing that exists this side of eternity. What is it more that you want?

And then he goes on to remind them and ask them, "What about the blessing you once enjoyed?" Compare your previous state and condition, having known the Lord, having walked in His way, having been relishing the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the effects that it had on your mind and on your heart and your conscience and on your life, and compare it with your present condition now that you are hearing the false teaching of the Judaizers that are taking you away from the blessedness of the gospel, and compare and ask yourself, "Where's the blessing that I once enjoyed?" The state of blessedness you had when you received me, Paul says, when you

received my gospel, can it compare to your present state of bondage?

Contemplate days gone by where you sat at the feet of Jesus like Mary and lapped up the Word of God. Contemplate days gone by when your heart and your mind, burdened with sin like the pilgrim's progress, like Christian in Pilgrim's Progress, with that great burden on his back that rolled down the hill as he saw the cross of Jesus Christ. Compare now as you pick up that burden again to carry it in your own strength. You compare your time now with that time past. Ask yourself if it is better for you to work in your own strength to earn favor with God or to receive His free kindness by grace into your hearts and have that communicated to you by the power of the Holy Spirit.

You tell me what's better, slavery or sonship? As William Cowper says in his hymn, "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I sought the Lord?" And Paul is saying such proof of the blessedness that you experienced by reason of the gospel that I proclaimed to you was seen in the way you treated me. You were willing to take out your eyes and give them to me. You received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus Himself.

And now he's saying to them in the third question, "Now I have become your enemy because I tell you the truth." So once upon a time, you were willing to take out your eyes and give them to me. You received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Himself, as if He was among you preaching the Word to you. That's how well you received the truth that I proclaimed to you. And all because you experienced this blessedness that came to you by reason of the gospel and the grace of God. But now you've been infected by false teaching. Now you believe the lie. Now you're pursuing a course that is contrary to the course that I proclaimed to you, the way of grace through Christ alone. And now I become your enemy because all I'm trying to do is tell you the truth and bring you back to that path that liberated you from your bondage.

Where's the blessedness? Where's the sense of that freedom that calls you to love the Word and those from whom the Word proceeded from? But now you've become, as it were, no different to the nation of Israel, where you take up stones to stone the prophets because they tell you the truth of God, but it rubs you the wrong way. When in time past, you would receive the Word of God as it is in truth, the Word of God.

Doesn't it remind you of the words of the Lord Jesus, "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me"? And how often it is that how often this is true as people allow sin to creep in their hearts, and they're confronted by the faithful proclamation of the Word of God. How often is it true as people espouse to false teaching, and the

Word of the Lord cuts forth into their heart and is sharp and cuts at the very recesses of their hearts, and the dear idols that they hold and lift up in their hearts are knocked down by the authority of Scripture, and therefore, those who once proclaimed the Word to them that they loved and received the truth now become their enemy because they tell them the truth.

Parents, you might know what it's like if you've been trying to faithfully proclaim God's truth to your children who do not want to hear it. Friends, you might know what it's like as you've continued to proclaim the truth to your family and to people in your neighborhood, and at one time, perhaps they were open to this, but as soon as the Word cut hard and as soon as they were making up their mind to take another course of action, you now become their enemy, although you haven't changed in any way. But you've just been faithful to that which God wants you to do. This is how Paul felt. What was his crime? Speaking the truth, the truth of the gospel, trying to help them, trying to keep these people near the cross, protecting them from damnable heresy that would destroy their soul.

And you know you're in a bad place when the friends, people who are your friends, who brought you to the truth, then become your enemies for speaking the same truth, and they have not changed at all. And the lessons that we learn from this text of Scripture are important. The big lesson that we learn is this: that false teaching, in all its form, is utterly deadly. It's deceptive. Not only is it deceptive, if it finds a foothold in your life and you give it a little space to breed, you will soon find that it will infect your mind, your heart, your relationships. You might come to the place in your life where, just like the Galatians, you think that bondage is better than freedom.

"How is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements which you desire to be in bondage?" You might come to the place where you think that eternal life is about more than having Christ and knowing God. Or you might come to the place where you think that it is less than knowing God and being known by God. So you must be careful of two dangers at this point. We must not settle for more than what God has required in the gospel. That is a Christ-plus religion. For many, being deceived, think that Christ plus healing is true spiritual maturity. Or Christ plus wealth equates to true spiritual blessing. Or Christ plus sacraments is what we need to be truly satisfied and accepted in the eyes of God. Or Christ plus experience of some visions and revelations. Or Christ plus tongues makes us truly those that are blessed by God and endued with the power of the Spirit. Or Christ plus idols so that we can better engage God. Or Christ plus good works.

But anything you add to the free gospel of grace in Christ makes that gospel no gospel at all and will rob you and bring you back into bondage. It is false.

We must not settle for more than what God has said in the gospel. Listen very carefully, people of God. We also must not settle for less than what God has set forth in the gospel of His Son. We must not think of Christ minus forgiveness. That I will have Christ, but Christ can't forgive me. Christ minus sonship. Oh yes, I believe in Jesus, but surely Christ cannot make me a child of God. Christ minus the Spirit. All I have is Jesus, but there is no work of the Holy Spirit that takes place in my life to sanctify me, to change me, to lead me, to guide me, to empower me. Christ minus repentance is very dangerous because it is Christ that calls sinners to repentance. And if you have a Christ without repentance, you have a false Christ who is no Christ at all. Christ minus satisfaction, as if to say that Christ, yes, is the water of life, but He does not satisfy. Christ minus spiritual blessings. Christ minus deliverance and salvation.

My friends, that is less than the biblical Christ. In fact, let us not be deceived. If we settle for a Christ plus, we take up a new form of an old religion called legalism, and we pursue that which is weak and beggarly. But if we settle for a Christ minus, we soon begin to believe that Christianity itself is weak and beggarly. And we think, "Is that all that Christ can offer? Goodness without power and grace? Miracles without hope? Love without transformation?" If we settle for a Christ minus, Christianity will become to us weak and beggarly. And we will not find within ourselves the desire to cry out as Elisha did when he was taking the mantle from Elijah and basically cried out, saying, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" He could do that because he knew the Lord God of Elijah. He knew the inheritance that belonged to him in Yahweh. He knew what God did for Elijah and what God could do for Elisha, and he did not want to settle for anything less.

"Lord God of Elijah, where are You?" He could pray as Isaiah prayed in Isaiah 63:15, "Look down from heaven, O God, where is Your zeal and might?" Because it was a God who was zealous, and he knew he served the God who was mighty, and therefore, he was moved to cry out, "God, where is Your zeal? Where is Your might?" Because he believed in the God of the Bible and did not want to settle for anything less in his life. This is what the Psalmist does; he's open with God, he's crying with God, he's pleading with God and saying, "God, who You are, I know this is true of You, but I don't have that in my life. God, come down. God, help." He didn't say all these things don't exist, and neither does God have a desire to do them for us.

No, he was like that man who prayed with importunity, knocking, seeking, and asking, saying, "I need bread from You, O God, to feed my neighbor that's come to me at midnight." We must beware of the bondage of wrong views about God. The Galatians espoused wrong views about God's grace, and they were being led astray on a pathway that was robbing them of their

blessedness, and Paul says, "Beware of the bondage of wrong views about God." Some of us may have wrong views about God's holiness that leads you to hell and not to the cross. Some of us may have wrong views of God's forgiveness as though God will forgive those who do not repent. Some of us may have wrong views this morning about the doctrine of election, thinking that it keeps us from human responsibility and keeps us from the faithful promises of God.

How often is it that we, having views of the atonement, shrink away from the free offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ that is there to lead us out of bondage? We must beware of exalting our reason above the revelation of the scripture that God has given us in His Word, lest we espouse beliefs that lead us to slavery and not into the liberty of the children of God. You say, "How may I know if I have perhaps fallen in any of these points?" I'll ask you the question that Paul asked the Galatians: "Where is then your blessedness?" Tough question because if we're honest with ourselves, we lack perhaps joy and security and the love and the peace that we have once known at times of great intimacy in our knowledge with God. But this question we must still ask ourselves this morning: "Where then is the blessedness? What has become of the blessing you once sensed and had known?"

Have you lost the joy of your salvation? Have you lost the wonder of your redemption? When you were drinking from the water of life, were you not satisfied? When you were looking upon the light of life, Jesus, were your eyes not illuminated? When you were believing on Him who is the resurrection and the life, did you not understand and feel yourself to know that "I am walking in newness of life"? When you were eating from the bread of heaven, were you not filled? Why then such dissatisfaction? Why then such darkness? Why then such deadness of spirit? Why then such hunger? What of the peace and the joy and the contentment in God promised to us in the Word? Is love to your soul? Has it become a distant memory?

Let me read to you the whole hymn in closing from William Cowper: "O for a closer walk with God, a calm and heavenly frame, a light to shine upon the road that leads me to the Lamb. Where is the blessedness I knew when first I sought the Lord? Where is the soul-refreshing view of Jesus and His Word? What peaceful hours I once enjoyed! How sweet their memory still! But they have left an aching void the world can never fill. Return, O holy Dove, return, sweet messenger of rest! I hate the sins that made Thee mourn and drove Thee from my breast. The dearest idol I have known, whatever that idol be, help me to tear it from Thy throne and worship only Thee. So shall my walk be close with God, calm and serene my frame; so pure a light shall mark the road that leads me to the Lamb."

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Have we turned to the weak and beggarly? Perhaps this morning we need to check ourselves, lest we have been forsaking Him who is the fountain of living waters and have been satisfied hewing out cisterns for ourselves, which can hold no water. Whatever that may be for you at this point in your life, let me encourage you to return to the Lord. And ask yourself, "Where is the blessedness when first I sought the Lord?" Let us pray.