

Title: No One's Looking – Galatians 4 13-27

Read:

¹⁸⁻²⁰It is a good thing to be ardent in doing good, but not just when I am in your presence. Can't you continue the same concern for both my person and my message when I am away from you that you had when I was with you? Do you know how I feel right now, and will feel until Christ's life becomes visible in your lives? Like a mother in the pain of childbirth. Oh, I keep wishing that I was with you. Then I wouldn't be reduced to this blunt, letter-writing language out of sheer frustration. ²¹⁻³¹Tell me now, you who have become so enamoured with the law: Have you paid close attention to that law? Abraham, remember, had two sons: one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. The son of the slave woman was born by human connivance; the son of the free woman was born by God's promise. This illustrates the very thing we are dealing with now. The two births represent two ways of being in relationship with God. One is from Mount Sinai in Arabia. It corresponds with what is now going on in Jerusalem—a slave life, producing slaves as offspring. This is the way of Hagar. In contrast to that, there is an invisible Jerusalem, a free Jerusalem, and she is our mother—this is the way of Sarah. Remember what Isaiah wrote: Rejoice, barren woman who bears no children, shout and cry out, woman who has no birth pangs, Because the children of the barren woman now surpass the children of the chosen woman. Isn't it clear, friends, that you, like Isaac, are children of promise? In the days of Hagar and Sarah, the child who came from faithless connivance (Ishmael) harassed the child who came—empowered by the Spirit—from the faithful promise (Isaac). Isn't it clear that the harassment you are now experiencing from the Jerusalem heretics follows that old pattern? There is a Scripture that tells us what to do: "Expel the slave mother with her son, for the slave son will not inherit with the free son." Isn't that conclusive? We are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Think:

There is a book by a famous preacher guy called Bill Hybels and the book is called "Who You Are When No One's Looking". The book is pretty amazing but the title alone is probably challenging enough. It asks the same question Paul asks at the beginning of today's passage. When you are at college and there is no one from Church around who are you? How do you treat others? When you are at school and your parents are not around, how do you talk about others? And trust me, you're not alone in struggling with this. Your parents, those guys at Church, your youth leader and yes even the pastor, struggle being the same person they are in Church, when they are at work. Why? Because it's hard to do the right thing by God all the time. Doing the right thing, does not mean being boring, it doesn't mean you can't have fun, and it certainly doesn't mean that you're soft and can get pushed around. Being Jesus like when no one is looking, is about trying you hardest to do what Jesus would do. It's about not giving up when you mess up. It's about going back and saying sorry when you did mess up. It's about, making sure next time is different. WWJD badges and bracelets might seem a bit corny or even un-cool, but the whole WWJD concept is a great help, when no one is looking. Next time no one is looking ask yourself that simple question, really "What Would Jesus Do?"

Pray:

Lord when no-one is looking you are with me. Please Father use you Spirit to prompt me to ask that question of What Would Jesus Do, when I need your help. Amen.

Action:

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