

Galatians 4:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

Analysis

Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. Paul's tender appeal despite rebuke. "Brethren" (adelphoi, ἀδελφοί)—he still considers them family. "I beseech you" (deomai hymōn)—I beg you, I earnestly request. The tone shifts from doctrinal argument to personal plea. "Be as I am" (ginesthe hōs egō)—imitate my example. Paul, born a Jew, had renounced law-keeping as grounds for righteousness (Philippians 3:4-9). He lived as though he were a Gentile regarding ceremonial law (eating with Gentiles, not insisting on circumcision).

"For I am as ye are" (hoti kagō hōs hymēis)—I became like you (Gentiles). Paul identifies with them. "Ye have not injured me at all" (ouden me ēdikēsate)—his concern isn't personal offense but their spiritual welfare. They hadn't wronged him personally, but they were harming themselves spiritually by abandoning the gospel. This combination of firm doctrinal rebuke with personal affection and identification is model pastoral ministry.

Historical Context

Paul's flexibility regarding ceremonial law (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) demonstrated his freedom in Christ. To Jews he could observe Jewish customs (Acts 21:23-26); to Gentiles he lived free from such obligations. This wasn't compromise but principled application: ceremonial law is indifferent for Christians, neither required nor forbidden. Paul's personal example validated his theology: he

practiced the freedom he preached. The Galatians' drift suggested they doubted both his teaching and his lifestyle. He reassures them he lives what he teaches.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you respond to spiritual leaders who combine firm correction with tender affection and personal identification?
2. In what areas of Christian liberty do you impose unnecessary restrictions on yourself or others?
3. Does your life validate your theology, or is there disconnect between what you profess and how you live?

Interlinear Text

Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ ὅτι κάγὼ ὡς ὑμεῖς ἀδελφοί

be am as I am for I am as ye Brethren
G1096 G5613 G1473 G3754 G2504 G5613 G5210 G80

δέομαι ὑμῶν οὐδέν με ἡδικήσατε·

I beseech you at all me are ye have not injured
G1189 G5216 G3762 G3165 G91

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 2:5 (Parallel theme): But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

1 Kings 22:4 (Parallel theme): And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.

Genesis 34:15 (Parallel theme): But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised;

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