

Galatians 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Analysis

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? Paul's painful rhetorical question. "Am I therefore become your enemy" (hōste echthros hymōn gegona, ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα)—have I turned into your enemy? The perfect tense gegona suggests a state that has come about: I have become and remain. Echthros (ἐχθρός) means personal enemy, one hated and opposed. The Judaizers apparently portrayed Paul as hostile to the Galatians' best interests.

"Because I tell you the truth" (alētheuōn hymin, ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν)—literally "truth-telling to you." The participle emphasizes Paul's honesty. His rebuke and correction, though painful, were motivated by love and commitment to truth. This verse captures pastoral ministry's heartache: speaking necessary truth can be misinterpreted as hostility. The Judaizers offered flattery and false promises; Paul offered hard truth. Galatians had to choose between comfortable lies and uncomfortable truth. This remains every believer's choice.

Historical Context

False teachers often gain following by tickling ears (2 Timothy 4:3-4), avoiding confrontation, promising easy paths. Paul's prophetic ministry involved rebuke, warning, correction—uncomfortable but necessary (2 Timothy 4:2). The Galatians initially loved Paul (verse 15); now they potentially viewed him as enemy for opposing the Judaizers' teaching. This pattern repeats: faithful preachers who

confront error often lose popularity to seductive false teachers who promise much while demanding little.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Do you welcome correction and rebuke from those who love you enough to tell you hard truths?
2. When have you mistaken someone's loving confrontation for hostile attack, and how did you eventually recognize the difference?
3. Are you willing to risk being seen as an enemy by speaking necessary truth to those you love?

Interlinear Text

ὥστε	ἐχθρὸς	ὑμῶν	γέγονα	ἀληθεύων	ὑμῖν
therefore	enemy	your	Am I	because I tell	you
G5620	G2190	G5216	G1096	G226	G5213

Additional Cross-References

Amos 5:10 (Parallel theme): They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

Proverbs 9:8 (Parallel theme): Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

John 8:45 (Truth): And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Galatians 5:7 (Truth): Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

Psalms 141:5 (Parallel theme): Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

1 Kings 22:8 (Parallel theme): And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

Galatians 2:5 (Truth): To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

John 7:7 (Parallel theme): The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

1 Kings 21:20 (Parallel theme): And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

Galatians 2:14 (Truth): But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?