

Galatians
“Living Free”
Main Teaching: 1:10-6:10
B. 3:1-4:31 Reasoned Grace
3. 4:1-31 Liberty verses legalism

4:1-7
“From slave to son”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-3 The way we were

III. Vs. 4-7 The way we are

I. Intro.

In Galatians 1-3 we have been listening to Paul the apostle, Paul the theologian, Paul the defender of the faith; but now we are hearing Paul the man, Paul the pastor, Paul the passionate lover of souls. Paul’s focus in the forth chapter in man’s personal history instead of world history:

- a. Vs. 1-3 Man’s condition under the law
- b. Vs. 4-7 Man’s condition under grace
- c. Vs. 8-11 Passionate not to go back to the law
- d. Vs. 12-18 Not forgetting the past

John Newton, who wrote Amazing Grace, was an only seven years old when his mother died. He became a sailor, and went out to sea at eleven years old. He became the captain of a slave ship, and had an active hand in the horrible inhumanity of the slave trade. But when he was twenty-three, on March 10, 1748, when his ship was in imminent danger of sinking off the coast of Newfoundland, he cried to God for mercy, and he found it. He never forgot how amazing it was that God had received him, as bad as he was. To keep God’s grace ever on his mind, he placed a plaque over the fireplace mantel with the

words of Deuteronomy 15:15 *“You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you.”* We must keep fresh in our mind what we once were, and what we are now in Jesus Christ, if we do we will do well.

II. Vs. 1-3 The way we were

One of the tragedies of legalism is that it gives the appearance of spiritual maturity when in reality it leads the believer back into a second childhood. The motives may be right but the methods are wrong! The Judaizers had sold them a bill of goods in thinking that their following the law and circumcision would make them superior Christians.

Wiersbe commented saying that legalism practiced in Christianity is like, *“Hearing your pilot announce that the navigator has lost their position and has been flying in circles for the last hour and half but the good news is that they are making very good time!”* To counter this Paul takes three appeals the first we will look at this week the other two when I get back:

1. Vs.1-7 **He explains their adoption:** First we have entered into our adoption by being born again but once we did we entered into the family of God as full adults able to enjoy our complete inheritance.
2. Vs. 8-11 **His concern over their regression:** They had cashed freedom in for bondage and this having escaped the bondage of false gods.
3. Vs. 12-18 **His heart that they would come back to the simplicity of a relationship:** Paul reminds them of how their heart towards him had changed because they had embraced legalism instead of obedience for love’s sake.

Vs.1-3 In 3:26 Paul said we are sons of God through faith in Jesus, now he compares a child and a slave. In the Jewish tradition, on the 1st Sabbath after a boy had turned 12, his

father took him to the Synagogue, where he became “*A Son of the Law*”. The father spoke these words over the son “*Blessed be thou, O God, who has taken from me the responsibility for this boy.*” The son then prayed, “*O my God and the God of my Fathers! On this solemn and sacred day, which marks my passage from boyhood to manhood, I humbly raise my eyes unto thee, and declare with sincerity and truth, that henceforth I will keep thy commandments, and undertake and bear the responsibility of mine actions towards thee.*” In the Greek culture the boy under the fathers care from 7-18 then he became a cadet for two years and was under the direction of the state. Before he became a cadet they had a ceremony where the boyhood long hair was cut off and offered to the gods.

In the Roman culture the age was not specific as it was up to the father to determine when the boy was ready and apparently based upon verse 2 Paul has in mind the Roman custom and not the Jewish or Greek custom. What we do know is that the Roman’s held a sacred family festival every year on the 17th of March and if the father believed the son was ready he would be formally adopted and recognized as a son and heir and given the toga virilis. In turn the boy or girl would give the father a toy showing that they had put away childish things!

While the child is still recognized as a child they have less day-to-day freedoms and authority than slaves of the household even though one day they will inherit it all. Paul uses that truth to compare it to the spiritual condition of a person born under the guardian of the law set to watch us as children bringing its truth to bear upon our conscience until we could be presented as adult children and heirs of the King. Paul says, “*So too, we, when we were ‘young children,’ were kept in slavery to the ABC of the*

universe.” One of those chief elements is the idea of “*you get what you deserve*” some call it karma. This is one of those things that held us in bondage and that grace completely destroys. Legalism is not a step towards maturity it is a step back into childhood. Maturity is doing the right thing for the right reason. Immaturity is having to be told to do the right thing and without being told it won’t get done and if it gets done it will be for the wrong reason.

III. Vs. 4-7 The way we are

Vs. 4-5 Paul says, “*When the time was right*” Jesus came into our lives as the law had worked perfectly in the world to prepare us for God’s redemptive work. Paul’s aim is not to destroy the work of the law in our lives only to limit its influence. Some that remain under the law in the world are still being prepared but once you have received Jesus by the grace He offers you no longer need to law working in the world. Paul tells us four things:

- a. “**WHO**” came, ***Jesus:***
- b. “**WHEN**” He came, ***the fullness of time:***
- c. “**HOW**” He came “***born of a woman, born under the law:***” Jesus came not only as God’s Son, but also as one born of a woman, born under law. The eternal Son of God in heaven added humanity to His deity and became a man, born of a woman, born under law.
- d. “**WHY**” He came, “***to redeem those born under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons:***” Because Jesus is God, He has the power and the resources to redeem us. Because Jesus is man, He has the right and the ability to redeem us.

He came to purchase us out of the slave market, from our bondage to sin and the elements of the world.

We were not just purchased out of a slave market to be owned by another! We were purchased from a slave market to be made heirs, placed into the family as adult sons and daughters. God is not just their creator, their “*man upstairs*” He is their Dad as they have been adopted into His family. In the Roman culture adopted children were given equal privileges in the family as biological children.

When we consider our status as Christians we need to go much further than thinking of God as one who has merely saved us from certain destruction to realizing that He has saved us not only out of harm’s way he has saved us all the way home into His lavish mansion. Solomon wrote in Song 2:4 “*He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.*” We gain something in Jesus that is greater than what Adam ever possessed. He was never adopted as a son of God. Redemption is far more than restoring what Adam lost as we are granted more in Jesus than Adam ever had.

Vs. 6-7 We have access to the same intimacy with God the Father that God the Son, Jesus Christ had. Jesus addressed God the Father as “Daddy” when He prayed, Abba, Father, as recorded in Mark 14:36. Listen to Paul’s words carefully as he doesn’t say we “*whisper*” Abba, Father as if we are lacking confidence to speak affectionately. No we are bold and confident to shout out our love for we have experienced His love for us. ***Our cry’s, as weak as they may seem in a world that belittles our faith, mocks our life and attempts to drown out our voices will never be able to keep our Dad from hearing us!*** God’s purpose was not only to secure our sonship by His Son, but to assure us of it by His Spirit. There are five differences Paul makes here with regards to Sons’ verses slaves:

- A son has the nature of the father, a slave has a master: The law can make us a slave but it can never make us a son! It could reveal our need for the nature of the father but it could never produce it.
- A son's father is the master; a slave's master is the father: No slave could ever call the master, father and no son would ever call his father, master! As son's we have the holy spirit that has entered our hearts that naturally cries out to our Dad.
- A son obeys out of love; a slave obeys out of fear: The fruit of the Holy Spirit indwelling us is love! The law demanded and fear would obey but never out of love.
- A son is wealthy; a slave is poor: We are both sons and heirs and since we have been adopted as adults into the family of God we get to enjoy our inheritance the moment we have been adopted into God's family.
- A son has a future and a hope; a slave doesn't: The worst day of a son's life always held the promise of something better the next day. The best day of a slave's life always held the certainty of something worse.

To be an heir you must inherit something but we don't inherit something we inherit Someone, God the Father! And as such we have received according to Ephes. 1:3 we have also received *“every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”*.