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SUMMER SERIES 2024 – WEEK 4

Galatians 4: Adopted and Adapted by God

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

– Galatians 4:4-7 ESV

- **Paul picks up where he ended Chapter 3**

- He restates his argument: Faith alone in Christ Alone
 - Justification, now sanctification
- Through faith, we are heirs of the promise
 - We are adopted into the family of God

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. – Galatians 4:1-3 ESV

- Paul clarifies what it means to be an heir
- Before faith in Christ, we were like children who needed a guardian
 - Before coming to Christ by faith, we were in bondage
 - Jews → The Law
 - Gentiles → Paganism
- These are the “elementary principles of the world”
- We are now sons

- **Results of Adoption**

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. – Galatians 4:6-7 ESV

- The result of our adoption is our sonship
- We are more than mere followers
 - God is our Father
 - The indwelling Spirit is evidence of this
 - This signifies a close, personal relationship with God
 - “Abba! Father!”
- We are no longer slaves to the law or sin
- We are heirs to the promises and blessings of God
 - This includes a restored relationship with God and the hope of eternal life
 - We are called to live our lives based on the promises of God

- **Returning to the Law**

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? - Galatians 4:8-9 ESV

- Before knowing God, they followed powerless idols
- Their turning back was illogical and detrimental
 - It is self-imposed slavery to sin
 - It negates the freedom found in Christ
- Where do we do this? What do we return to?
 - Works based?
 - Legalism
 - Enslaves us to our sin/works
 - It robs God of His glory
 - It robs us of joy and peace
 - It is inconsistent with the new identity and freedom we’ve been given in Christ

Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. – Galatians 4:12-14 ESV

If anyone understands life under the law, it’s Paul

- He appeals to them to understand living in the freedom of Christ
- He has been exactly where they are
 - However, he knows the freedom found in Christ
- Evidently, the Galatians had previously responded to the Gospel
 - Even in some kind of ailment, the Galatians treated Paul with kindness
 - This was because of the Good News he preached
 - They could not get enough!
 - **WHY GO BACK TO THE WAY YOU WERE BEFORE**

What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? – Galatians 4:15-16 ESV

- You can feel the sorrow in Paul's words
- He saw the Galatians experience the freedom of Christ
- Yet, now they are returning to a life based on legalism
 - They have reverted to their old way of life
 - They have added to faith

But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. – Revelation 2:4 ESV

- Where have we abandoned our first love
 - Spiritual apathy
 - Moral compromise
 - Ignoring accountability
 - Materialism
 - Wealth
- This is the danger of abandoning faith or adding to it

- **False Teachers' Motives**

They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. – Galatians 4:17-20 ESV

- The impact of false teaching has eternal consequences
- False teachers never have your best interest at heart
- They may sound good, but they are manipulative in their ways

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." – Matthew 7:15 ESV

*"and you're thinking they're not the dangerous type because some of their statements are right
That only proves that Satan comes as an angel of light
This teaching can't be believed without a cost
The lie is you can achieve a crown without a Cross" – Shai Linne, *False Teacher\$**

- Paul knows what will happen if the Galatians continue down this path
- He compares his anguish for them to childbirth
- His ultimate goal is for Christ to be formed in them

- He never gives up on them though he is perplexed

- **Two Covenants**

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. – Galatians 4:21-23 ESV

- Paul writes knowing the Judaizers will hear his words
- He points to a well-known story that illustrates the two covenants: Law & Grace

Law

- Characterized by legalistic practices
- Under the Law, there is a lack of true spiritual freedom
- Hagar represents slavery under the Law
 - Ishmael, her son, represents human attempts to fulfill God's promise through natural means
 - Ishmael's birth was brought on by human effort
 - This parallels how adherence to the law relies on human effort
 - Human effort is insufficient to achieve God's promises

Grace

- Characterized by faith
- Under grace, there is true spiritual freedom
- Sarah represents freedom by resting in the grace of God's promises
 - Isaac, her son, represents God's fulfillment of His promise through supernatural means
 - Isaac's birth was a result of God fulfilling His promise
 - Our life is now characterized by the freedom we have in Christ
- Like Isaac, believers are children of the promise
- If we are children of the promise, we are heirs to the promises given by God

Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. – Galatians 4:28-31 ESV

- Like Isaac, believers are children of the promise
- Our identity is rooted in Christ, not the flesh
 - This new identity provides security and assurance because it's based on God's promises, not human effort
 - Embracing this new identity involves rejecting the old identity of the flesh

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. – 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. – Ephesians 4:22-24 ESV

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. – Galatians 2:20 ESV

- The story of Isaac and Ishmael points to the need for separation from legalism
 - Those seeking after law will not inherit the promises
 - Those adding to faith will not inherit the promises
 - Believers are called to reject legalism and embrace their identity as heirs

So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. – Galatians 4:31 ESV

- This final affirmation leaves no doubt about our identity
- We are no longer bound by the law
 - We are heirs of the promise through faith
 - We are free

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?”

Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. – John 8:30-36 ESV

- We are free from the demands of the law
- We no longer have to live in fear of measuring up
- To live as a child of the promise, we should:
 - Remind ourselves of our identity in Christ
 - Focus on God’s grace and the sufficiency of Christ’s work on the cross
 - Embrace the freedom we have in Christ

- **Discussion questions**

What are some practical steps we can take to ensure we are living by the Spirit and not by the flesh?

What are some modern-day examples of legalism that can subtly work their way into a church like Christ Chapel? How can we lovingly address and reject these?

What do you think it would look like to actually live in the freedom that Christ has provided for us? What kinds of things still hold us captive?



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SUMMER SERIES 2024 – WEEK 5 HOMEWORK

WEEK 5 – Galatians 5: Free to Live by Faith

While many of us would acknowledge and confirm the concept of freedom in Christ, we still struggle with understanding what it looks like in everyday life. In this chapter, Paul points out the human tendency to view justification as our responsibility. Most Christians have no problem accepting the fact that salvation is the work of God, but they struggle to accept the concept of justification as another transformative work that is purely the byproduct of His grace. In this chapter, Paul differentiates between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, removing any and all doubt that works-righteousness is a dead-end street.

- Read Galatians 5. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.
- Now read pages 47-56 of Ken’s Devotionary™ on Galatians.
- Take a close look at verse 1, then read the following passages and write down what you learn about our freedom in Christ.

Romans 6:5-11

Romans 7:17-19

Romans 7:22-23

Romans 8:1-8

- Read Galatians 5:2-6 again. Why would Paul tell the Galatians that if they get circumcised, Jesus will be of “no advantage” to them? What could that possibly mean?

What does it mean to be “severed” from Christ? Is Paul suggesting the Galatians might lose their salvation?

Notice his reference to “the hope of righteousness” for which they are to wait. How could their getting circumcised show that they are not willing to wait on Christ to produce righteousness in them?

- In verses 7-12, Paul uses strong language to attack the Judaizers. What do you think he means when he says, “I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves?”

What does this tell you about Paul’s view on circumcision and salvation?

- Read verses 13-15. How might the Galatians be using their freedom in Christ for an opportunity for the flesh?

According to Paul, the Law is summed up in the following statement: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Why does this command succinctly state the rest of the Law?

Read Matthew 22:34-40. What does Jesus have to say about this topic?

- Compare Galatians 5:16-26 with Romans 8:1-11. Write down any similarities do you find.