

Ga 4:1–11 (ESV) 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, ⁽²⁾ but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. ⁽³⁾ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. ⁽⁴⁾ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁽⁵⁾ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁽⁶⁾ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁽⁷⁾ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. ⁽⁸⁾ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. ⁽⁹⁾ 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? ⁽¹⁰⁾ You observe days and months and seasons and years! ⁽¹¹⁾ I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

1. Continue in the book of Galatians and it’s defense of the gospel

- A. Paul is arguing powerfully that man is saved through faith alone in Christ alone – apart from works
 - 1). IOW we are not saved and kept by our working for God
We are saved when we trust in His work for us

2. Outline

- A. Man’s condition under the law
- B. God’s action through Christ – to free us from that condition
- C. Paul’s appeal – to walk in the freedom we have been given

I. MAN’S CONDITION UNDER THE LAW

1. Under the law – a reminder

- A. Any system that approaches God on the basis of our own works
 - 1). Trying to earn salvation – maintain salvation – or merit His blessings
- B. For the Galatians it was the OT law
 - 1). But Paul says to earn anything with God through the law have to keep it all perfectly
 - 2). Therefore rather than earning blessings we bring ourselves under condemnation
- C. But it can be any set of rules we set up – any traditions that become the standard
 - 1). Keep those perfectly and you feel God owes you blessing – fail and feel condemned

Transition: Let’s look at man’s condition under the law – *this would be the unbeliever before salvation*

Ga 4:1–2 (ESV) 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, ⁽²⁾ but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

1. Taken out of the Greek (Roman) culture – of a boy becoming a man

- A. Under the law – the father would determine what date his son would legally be recognized as an adult
 - 1). The family would gather at a sacred festival known as the “Liberalia”
 - 2). The boy would take off his childhood toga and put on the toga of a man “Toga virilis”
 - 3). At that time the boy was acknowledged for the first time as an adult
And the heir of his father’s estate
- B. But until that date he was still considered to be a minor – with a status no different than a slave
 - 1). What I mean – though he was lord of all the estate in title
He didn’t enjoy any of the privileges that title would eventually give to him
 - a). He had no freedom – he was under the constant supervision of guardians
 - 1a). Who controlled his life and disciplined him severely when he disobeyed
- C. But as soon as this date set by his father arrived – everything changed
 - 1). He was considered to be an adult – and all the privileges of adulthood flowed into his life
 - 2). Finally he enjoyed freedom – and could enjoy the estate that was his

Transition: Paul takes this picture and applies it to the believer before they were saved

Ga 4:3 (ESV) In the same way we also, when we were children (*before grace set us free*), were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world

1. Before salvation we were like children enslaved to elementary principles

A. In light of v. 9-10 (context) – probably refers to the basic elements of human religion

Ga 4:9–10 (ESV) 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? ⁽¹⁰⁾ **(What are the elementary principles of the world? He tells us)** You observe days and months and seasons and years!

B. He is speaking of both the Jewish law and Gentile religions

1). That substitute ritual for an intimate relationship with God

Thought: It is the difference in trying find satisfaction in types and shadows instead of the real thing

Col 2:16-17 (NIV) Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. *(Kind of things the Galatians were turning too)* (17) ***These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.***

A. All those shadows and types in the OT were meant to point us to Christ

1). They weren't meant to be a shallow substitute for the real thing – experiencing God Himself

B. Imagine this – I'm outside during the day with my wife

1). I want to express my love to her – so I run over and hug her shadow instead of her

2). There is no satisfaction in that – but that is what the Galatians were doing

a). Instead of going to God directly they now put the law in-between

b). Trying to get satisfaction out of the shadow rather than God Himself

Thought: What happens when you bring yourself under a system of works

Ga 4:3 (ESV) In the same way we also, when we were children, were **enslaved** to the elementary principles of the world.

A. Result of legalism – you become like a slave with a harsh master

Rather than a son with a loving Father

1). Instead of serving God with delight your service is motivated by fear

2). I don't want to serve – obey – but afraid not too because of what God might do

B. The Son serves from love – as an act of worship – because His Father is so good - kind

Transition: Paul goes on to show what God has done to set captives like this free

A. What He has done to move us from the bondage of the law to enjoy the love of one of His children

II. GOD'S ACTION TO FREE MAN UNDER THE LAW

Intro: Here we will see *two things* God did to liberate man from their bondage

FIRST: God sent His Son into the world

Ga 4:4 (ESV) But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

1. Fullness of time? It was the perfect time

A. Roman road system and policing – made it easy and safe to get around – take Gospel to others

B. Plus because of Rome's dominance - Greek language had become the common language

1). Therefore it was easy to communicate the gospel throughout the empire

C. The mythological Greek gods were losing their grip on the common people

- 1). They were open to something new – something real that could satisfy

Thought: It is amazing to look at history and see when God decides to move
How He arranges things – moves things to enhance what He is doing

- A. When Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to that Wittenberg door that began the Reformation

- 1). That was right after the printing press was invented
So that document was easily dispersed throughout Europe
 - a). Something that would have been impossible if they had to be handwritten

Transition: So the Son came at the perfect time – but why did He come?

- A. Paul gives us two reasons why the Son came

Ga 4:4–5 (ESV) But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁽⁵⁾ to *redeem* those who were under the law, so that we might receive *adoption* as sons.

1. To *redeem* those under the law = beautiful word

- A. Picture of a man going into the slave market and purchasing a slave to set them free
- B. Here it is the picture of Jesus setting us free from the law – bondage to mere religion
 - 1). Setting us free from trying to earn God’s favor through our own effort
 - 2). Setting us free to rest in God’s work for us – free to enjoy God

Question: Why did He do that? Second reason in this verse

2. So that we might receive *adoption* as sons

- A. So that we might be adopted into God’s family and enjoy all the privileges of being His child
- B. All those privileges gained for us by the work of Christ

Point: Not just to free us from our sin and its guilt – from the law that constantly condemned us

- A. But to take us into His family – to give us a hope and a future
- B. Adoption is amazing – He took on the full responsibility of our care – of providing
 - 1). Why do we worry so when we are adopted!
 - 2). I love it when money gets tight – and a new bill pops up – “Father you have enough!”
 - a). I’m His child – He is responsible – He has taken that responsibility gladly!

Transition: So Jesus came to purchase us out of the slave market of sin and bondage to the law

- A. The purchase price – His life
- B. He did that so that we could be adopted into the family to enjoy His love

Notice: Paul also emphasizes the qualifications of Christ to be our redeemer

- A. For Jesus to be the Messiah – Savior three things had to be true of Him
He had to be God’s son – born of a woman (virgin birth) – born under the law

3. The qualifications of Christ

- A. The *origin* of His coming – “*God sent forth His Son*”
 - 1). Sent forth His Son from where – from being with Him in glory
Jn 3:16 (ESV) “For God so loved the world, *that he gave his only Son*, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - 2). So God the Father sent God the Son to earth
Question: How did He arrive? Must have been something!
 - 1). Big splash – arriving like a boss – you know like we would if we were God!
- B. The *manner* of his coming – “*He was born of a woman*”
 - 1). The word “*sent*” implies His eternal deity – He was sent from glory to earth
 - 2). The word “*born*” refers to His humanity – Incarnation – Almighty God took on human flesh

- a). Almighty God taking up residence in the womb of a woman – arriving as a baby
- 3). The big difference – no human father – God was his Father
 - a). “Born of a woman” = the virgin birth
 - b). Amazing – I was thinking of that song we sing at Christmas
 - Mary did you know that your baby boy
 - Has walked where angels trod?
 - When you kiss your little baby
 - You have kissed the face of God
- C. The **condition** of His coming – “**Born under the law**”
 - 1). Why must He come born under the law = to keep the law for us
 - 2). He had to come and **die** for us to be saved = to pay the debt of our guilt
 - He also had to come and **live** for us to go to heaven = to earn for us a righteous standing
 - a). Takes righteousness to get into heaven = perfect compliance to the law
 - 1 Co 6:9 (ESV)** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?
 - Point: I have to be righteous to go to heaven – I can’t be – I can’t keep the law perfectly
 - 1). God’s solution – He would come Himself and keep the law in my place
 - 2). He would earn that righteous standing we need to get into heaven
 - a). He would give that standing to any who believe as a free gift!
 - Point:** He needed to live a perfect life and die a sufficient death to get us into heaven
 - A. His death removed the sin that would keep us out of heaven
 - B. His life provided the righteousness we needed to get into heaven
 - Summary:** The first thing God did when the time was fully come
 - A. He invaded this planet by sending His Son in order to redeem mankind
 - 1). To set them free from that sentence of eternal death hanging over them
 - 2). To bring them into His own family through adoption **so they could enjoy HIM!**

First: God sent His Son

SECOND: God sent His Spirit

Ga 4:6 (ESV) And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

1. For those who say “Can’t see the Trinity in the Bible” – Really?

- A. V. 5-6 **God** (the Father) sent His **Son** (Jesus) into the world and His **Spirit** into our hearts

2. This is great – all of God’s children receive the Spirit at the point of new birth

- A. That is an **objective fact** – but it leads to a wonderful **subjective experience**

Question: What does the Spirit do in us v. 6?

- A. He enters into our hearts and links us to God as our Father in a very real way
 - 1). He places in an intimate cry that wasn’t there before – **that childlike cry to God as Father**
 - 2). Abba – Hebrew – that instinctive cry of the little child to their daddy
- B. You didn’t have that before you were saved – you wanted distance from God not intimacy
 - 1). Suddenly that changed! There was this cry that wasn’t there before
 - You were simply acting like what God had made you – His child!

Thought: This is one of those proofs that a new birth had taken place

- A. You may have talked about God before being saved – maybe even called Him father
 - 1). But your speech was one of the slave – cold – lacking intimacy
 - 2). It’s so different now isn’t it? Why? Grace! God has done something!

- a). He has stooped in love and rescued you from your sin – maybe your mere religion
He has drawn you to Himself – and enabled you to believe
He has adopted you to be His child – gave you His Spirit and put this intimate cry in you
1a). *Why? So that relationship would be real – intimate - enjoyable*

Thought: God loves being my Father – this is enjoyable to Him too!

He wouldn't have put that cry into my heart if He didn't!

- A. Whole of the NT points us to this – we have a heavenly Father – we are loved
 - 1). Be careful! Don't replace that intimacy with mere religion – God doesn't want that
- B. Remember the veil in the temple – when the law was still in effect = meant to keep you away from God
 - 1). It was a constant reminder of your failure – don't get into God's presence with sin on you
 - 2). But through the work of Christ – by grace – that veil was torn down wasn't it
Mt 27:50–51 (ESV) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. ⁽⁵¹⁾
And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.
 - a). Why does God put that in the Scriptures – to tell us something extremely important
 - 1a). Christ has removed our guilt – He has wiped our record clean
 - 2a). Access to God is available now – He is not judge – He is Father – run to Him
- C. Don't you just love the intimacy we can have with God – so informal – Child - Father
 - 1). Mere religion is so cold and formal isn't it? When you're in a loving relationship it isn't!
 - a). England – got a letter addressed to the “Right reverend William Foote”
I spoke at a lot of conferences – what should we call you? – uh...Bill works?
 - 1a). There was this formality – because they didn't know me I guess
 - b). But Taylor didn't bother with any of that “Dad! As he jumped onto my lap”
Kid was brutal! I was constantly under attack from all angles! I love it!
 - 1a). If he would have called me “Right reverend.” Knock it off! Stop being weird
 - 2). I love all this – I can run to God – rest in God – enjoy God - the veil has been torn
 - a). He loves me – enjoys being with me – why He put that cry in my heart!

Transition: Oh how thankful we should be – He has done it – done what we couldn't do for ourselves

God has done it

Ga 4:7 (ESV) So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Gal 4:7 (NIV) So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, *God has made you* also an heir.

FINDLAY: "This carries to a climax the emphatic repetition of "God" observed in verses 4 and 6. "God sent His Son" into the world; "God sent His Spirit into your hearts:.. God then, and no other, has bestowed your inheritance. It is yours by His decree. Who dares challenge it?"

1. Child of God you are a recipient of His Work – a recipient of grace

- A. Redeemed – adopted – given an inheritance (co-heir with Christ!) – You are rich!

Question: What is Paul saying here – He's speaking to Christians who are acting like slaves not sons!

He says “Once you were slaves – bound up by all those external rules and regulations that kept you defeated and joyless. (Mere religion). But NOW you are sons brought into this incredible relationship with God as your Father. Do you really want to turn away from THAT and go back to a cold harsh slavery? Approaching God through rules and regulations rather than a loving relationship? Do you really want to start trying to earn His love when He wants to freely bestow it upon you by grace? Don't you know legalism will steal all the joy of what it means to be a son or daughter of God!”

- A. I am rich spiritually – right now! Stop acting like a pauper – stop acting like who? Eyore

Eph 1:3-8 (NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.* (4) For he *chose us* in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love (5) he *predestined us to be adopted as his sons* through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- (6) to the *praise of his glorious grace*, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (7) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the *riches of God's grace* (8) that he *lavished on us* with all wisdom and understanding.

Transition: In the next section he appeals to them to stop this insanity

Man's condition under the law

God's action through Christ

III. THE APOSTLE'S APPEAL

Again he looks back on what they once were – contrasting it to what they are now

Ga 4:8 (ESV) Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.

1. When you did not know God you were slaves to idols

- A. We are created to worship – but you worshipped false gods – statues
- B. The unbeliever does the same – money – pleasure – career – reputation – man's idea of success

Point: But now it's different – you didn't know God then but now you do!

- A. You were slaves to false gods and basic principles of religion – *now you're not!*

Ga 4:9 (ESV) 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?

1. Now that you know God how can you return to slavery

- A. Now that you've enjoyed Him – experienced being His child – that beautiful cry of “Abba Father”
 - 1). When you've enjoyed running to Him so freely
Why would you want to embrace something that will stop that!
 - 2). When you've enjoyed His love so intimately
Do you really want to go back under a system where you will always feel condemned!
 - 3). When you enjoyed the amazing truth that God views you through the perfect work of His son
Are you now going try to earn His acceptance through your own work

Transition: Next verse gives us an indicator of what they were doing

Ga 4:10 (ESV) You observe days and months and seasons and years!

1. Relationship had degenerated into external rituals and ceremonies

- A. A heartless – cold – response to rules, regulations and days on a calendar
 - 1). This had replaced relationship with God with a set of rules = mere religion
- B. They had been lied too – the false teachers said – this is what is important to God
 - 1). Paul says – No! Christianity is about relationship – why He put that cry of Abba in your heart
 - a). He sent His Son to earth so that could happen

Thought: Paul is heartsick over this – to see these believers make such foolish choices

Ga 4:11 (ESV) I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

1. Was all that effort we put into Galatia just wasted time?

- A. Did our labor to give you truth – to bring you the Gospel of grace bear no fruit at all!

Since you are so easily turning from grace to legalism!

Point: This is Pastor Paul crying out with a broken heart to the Galatians he loved

- A. Think! Make wise choices! Stop believing the lies of these false teachers
I long to see you enjoying God! To be thrilled by Him!
 - B. I get that to some degree! I get emails saying the teaching on grace has set them free to enjoy God
 - 1). My eyes fill with tears – it's what I want for all of you!
 - 2). I want your thoughts to be filled with how wonderful He is
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CONCLUSION

1. We see what the Christian life is

- A. It is the life of a son or daughter – not a slave
 - 1). We are called into a life that enjoys Him
 - 2). We can enjoy Him because of grace – we are accepted because of what Christ has done
- B. He loves us – He enjoys us – He wants to be with us (Like a father with his child)
 - 1). So learn to rest – linger in His presence – there your heart will find peace and joy

2. Here is a key to living out our Christian life

- A. I must remember – I am a son – relate to God as a son – NOT as a slave
 - 1). The slave related to their master out of fear
 - 2). The son relates to his father out of love
 - a). I want to spend time with Him
 - b). I want to obey to bring Him pleasure
 - 1a). *Because He is who He is – the affections of my heart have been captured*

PRAYER – NORM will be standing by the flag?