**We Cry Out Aba Father**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Galatians 4:1-7**

**Wednesday Evening**

**August 10, 2022**

**Galatians 4:1-7**

1 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, 2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

**1 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,**

Saints, to further illustrate the spiritual immaturity of those who insist on remaining under the law, Paul used an example from Roman law and custom. In ancient times, the “coming of age” of a son carried tremendous significance.

This did not occur at a specific age (such as twelve or thirteen), as it did among Jews and Greeks; rather, the “coming of age” was determined by the father. In Rome this event was usually marked on March 17 by a family celebration known as the Liberalia.

During this event, the father formally acknowledged his son and heir. The son received a new “grown-up” toga and entered into adult responsibilities.

Paul pointed out, however, that while the young children and heirs are still minors (not yet of age), they are not much better off than slaves until they grow up.

Although they are the future owners of an estate and a fortune, while they are young, they have no claim to it nor any right to make decisions regarding it.

In the eyes of the Roman law, the young heirs were no different than slaves. Paul’s application of the illustration reveals that when we were under the law, we were no better off than slaves.

**2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.**

Saints, In this analogy Paul focused on the legal rights and status of the children. These guardians are different from the ones described in 3:24—these are more like trustees.

But Paul’s meaning was the same. The law performed its function of “keeping us out of trouble” and disciplining us during our “immaturity” until God offered us “maturity” through our acceptance of salvation by grace.

Paul’s words imply that the time of this “coming of age” differed for every child. In Rome, the father set the time for his son’s coming of age and adulthood. So too, God set the time for terminating our guardianship under the law and making us his children and heirs by faith.

The date was the time of Christ’s coming into the world. Faith, then, initiates the believer into maturity and full rights. Paul was dumbfounded that the Galatians would choose to revert to slavery when Christ had given them freedom. They were behaving like children who had inherited an estate but still insisted on remaining in a dependent, servile role.

**3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.**

Saints, Paul alluded to slavery in order to show that before Christ came and died for sins, people were slaves to the spiritual powers of this world, in bondage to whatever law or religion they chose to follow.

Thinking they could be saved by their deeds, they became enslaved to trying—and failing—to follow even the basics. The phrase, “spiritual powers of this world,” has been translated several ways. Most likely, Paul was referring to these “powers” as the elementary stages of religious practice, whether under the law of the Jewish religion, or the rites and rituals in any heathen religion.

**Colossians 2:20**

“Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations”

Saints, in other words, the statement referred to any religious experience prior to accepting Christ as Savior. Paul was pointing out that trying to reach God through any religion or any worldly plan brings failure.

The “powers” of the world (whether religious or moral) suggest that a solution is needed, but do not offer that solution. Paul compared religious rituals to slavery because they force a standard that people can never achieve.

But, with the proclamation of the gospel, grace in Christ replaced those worldly religious practices.

**4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,**

Saints, everyone was enslaved under the “spiritual powers of this world,” but . . . That little word offered hope to humanity. God’s intervention into human history changed the world.

When the right time came, God sent his Son to earth. Why did Jesus come when he did? The “why” may be unanswerable, except that God knew it was the right time. Several factors present in the Roman Empire certainly aided the quick spread of the message of the gospel.

The Greek civilization provided a language that had spread across much of the known world as the main language for all people. The Romans had brought peace throughout their empire and built a system of roads that made land travel quicker and safer than ever before.

The Jews were expectant, eagerly awaiting their Messiah. Messianic fervor was at its height. Into this world came Jesus. Just as a Roman father would set the date for his son to reach maturity and attain freedom from his guardians, so God had set the date when he would send his Son to free people from the law, to become his children.

**Psalm 102:13**

You will arise and have mercy on Zion; For the time to favor her, Yes, the set time, has come.

**Mark 1:14-15**

14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

**Ephesians 1:10**

“that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him”

Saints, Jesus was born of a woman—he was God yet also human.

**Genesis 3:15**

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

**Luke 1:30-32**

30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

**John 1:1**

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God”

**John 1:14**

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”

Saints, Paul balanced his amazing claims about Jesus’ divine nature with his reminder of Jesus’ human character. Jesus was a human and subject to the law; thus he was voluntarily subject to the structured universe that he had created (John 1:3-5) and that had been marred by human rebellion.

**John 1:3-5**

3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Saints, more significantly, Jesus lived as a Jew, subject to God’s revealed law. In keeping with this, Jesus was both circumcised and presented at the Temple.

**Luke 2:21**

And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

Yet while no other human being has been able to perfectly fulfill God’s law, Jesus kept it completely.

**Matthew 5:17**

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill”

Saints, thus, Jesus could be the perfect sacrifice because, although fully human, he never sinned. His death bought freedom for us who were enslaved to sin, offering us redemption and adoption into God’s family.

**5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

**Romans 8:15-16**

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God…

Saints, Jesus was himself born “subject to the law” so that by his living and dying he could accomplish two purposes:

**1. To buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law**

**2. To allow those “freed” people to be adopted as his very own children**

Saints, through his life, Jesus demonstrated his unique eligibility to buy our freedom. Through his death, Jesus paid the price to release us from slavery to sin. When Christ redeemed those who were slaves to the law, he did not redeem the Jews alone.

His death set people free from bondage to any law or religious system offering, instead, salvation by faith alone. But because the law was God’s clearest revelation of his justice, being born under the law and keeping it perfectly proved that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice.

He took upon himself the curse the law required in order to set believers free of that curse. In these verses, Paul continued to respond to the foolishness of the Galatians. If Christ had fulfilled the law, taking upon himself the curse of the law, and had freed people from the law, why would the Galatians try to keep requirements already fulfilled by Christ?

Meanwhile, Paul was building a case that would make the question entirely rhetorical. Redemption had an ongoing purpose—so that he could adopt these believers as his children.

Until Christ bought us (that is, paid the ultimate price by taking the penalty for our sins), we could never have been acceptable to God. Even our good works or religious rituals could bring us no closer to a relationship with him.

But Christ gave freedom from the slavery people faced before and brought them into a new relationship with God the Father. Believers’ new position in Christ goes beyond mere acceptance by God. So close is that relationship that Paul called it “adoption.”

In Roman culture, a wealthy, childless man could take a slave youth and make that slave his child and heir. The adopted person was no longer a slave. He became a full heir to his new family, guaranteed all legal rights to his father’s property.

He was not a second-class son; he was equal to all other sons, biological or adopted, in his father’s family. That person’s origin or past was no longer a factor in his legal standing. Likewise, when a person becomes a Christian, he or she leaves the slavery of trying to please God through works and gains all the privileges and responsibilities of a child in God’s family.

 **6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"**

Saints, this verse and the next are central in the apostle’s entire argument. Focusing again on the Galatians, Paul added, you Gentiles have become his children, part of God’s family.

Despite their doubts and confusion at that time, God still regarded the Galatian believers as his children. How did Paul know this? How could the Galatian believers claim this?

Because God has sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts. The Spirit cannot be earned or obtained, as if he were the result or reward of some system of works or discipline.

Instead, God sends the Holy Spirit as a gift. Having the Spirit of Christ meant that they belonged to Christ.

A person cannot have a personal relationship with laws or rituals. But believers have an intimate relationship with God: they can call God their dear Father. As God’s adopted children, we can approach him with love and trust.

As God’s adopted children, we share with Jesus all rights to God’s resources. As God’s heirs, we can claim what he has provided for us—our full identity as his children.

**7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

**Romans 8:17**

“and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together”

Saints, to conclude his argument from this analogy, Paul explained briefly that each Galatian believer was no longer a slave to any law or religious ritual or even to Satan.

Instead, each person had entered into God’s family, being adopted as God’s own child. Belonging to God as his child also means that everything he has belongs to the child, for God has promised the inheritance of eternal life and his riches and blessings to all his children.

We need no further preparation. No system can fill in or stand in for Christ. Being a child and being an heir are inseparable realities in God’s family.

Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**