

From Slavery to Sonship

Galatians 4:1-20

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. 8 But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. 9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain. 12 Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all. 13 You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. 14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? 17 They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. 18 But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. 19 My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, 20 I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

I. We Have Been Redeemed from Slavery to Become Sons (Galatians 4:1-7)

A. Christ Came at the Perfect Time to Redeem Us (vv. 4-5)

- Romans 5:6 – “Christ died for the ungodly.”
- Ephesians 1:10 – God's plan unfolds in the fullness of times.
- Mark 1:15 – “The time is fulfilled.”

B. Christ Redeemed Us So We Could Be Adopted (vv. 5-7)

- John 1:12 – We become children of God through faith.
- Romans 8:15-17 – We receive the Spirit of adoption.
- 1 John 3:1 – “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us.”

II. Beware of Returning to Spiritual Bondage (Galatians 4:8-11)

A. Legalism Is a Return to Weak and Beggarly Elements (vv. 8-9)

- Colossians 2:20-23 – Human regulations cannot produce spiritual life.
- Romans 10:3-4 – Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.
- Titus 3:5 – Salvation is not by works of righteousness.

B. Religious Rituals Cannot Replace a Relationship with Christ (v. 10)

- Matthew 15:8-9 – Worship can become empty tradition.
- Isaiah 29:13 – Hearts can be far from God despite outward observance.
- Philippians 3:7-9 – Paul rejected confidence in religious achievements.

III. Embrace the Gospel That Transforms Relationships (Galatians 4:12-20)

A. The Gospel Creates Genuine Love and Fellowship (vv. 12-16)

- Proverbs 27:6 – “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”
- Ephesians 4:15 – Speaking the truth in love.
- 2 Timothy 4:2 – Preach the Word with patience and instruction.

B. Spiritual Leaders Labor for Christ to Be Formed in Believers (vv. 17-20)

- Romans 8:29 – Believers are predestined to be conformed to Christ.
- Colossians 1:28 – Presenting every believer mature in Christ.
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 – Being transformed into Christ's image.

Reflective Questions

1. Am I living in the freedom of God's grace, or am I still trying to earn His acceptance through my own efforts?
2. Are there any legalistic attitudes or religious traditions that have become more important to me than my relationship with Christ?
3. Can others see Christ being formed in my life through my words, attitudes, and actions?