

What We Are Now

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[0:00] you can be turning to the book of Galatians chapter 3. Galatians chapter 3. Partway through the message, I'm going to have you hold your finger.

We haven't done this in a long time. Hold your finger in Galatians, and we're going to go to another passage. So I'm just encouraging you. There's nothing necessarily wrong with a Bible on your phone.

That's good, but it's good you can have both in your hand or have the Bible in your hand, be able to look at it. Let me just give you some advantages. You look at your Bible, you're going to start learning where things are in the page, and you'll be able to picture them in your mind later.

Verses will come to mind, and you think, that's on the right-hand side of this page, on the left-hand column, and it's halfway down, and it's good. It'll help you remember that.

And so I encourage you, carry your Bible, and we'll look together at it. Not saying we may never use anything behind us, but it's good, good, good.

[1:09] It helps the brain to have what's here. So we're in Galatians chapter 3. We're going to be centering on verses 26 to 29 today.

We'll be ending the chapter. But just giving you this little bit of review, we've been looking so far at a situation where the Judaizers have been arguing that Gentiles had to keep the law in order to be saved.

Last time, we looked at the purpose of the law. And so Paul, he set up this argument where he has taught people that that's not the case.

It's not the case that you need to keep the law in order to be saved. And so he takes some time to talk about the law and what it is and what it does.

And we looked last time about how the purpose of the law, it was not to save us, but to show us that we're sinners. Show us the standard God had.

[2:07] And it's there to show us that we needed a Savior. And so we looked last time at how the law was our guardian. It was our guardian to bring us to Christ.

And we looked at how that was true in the nation of Israel and how it's true in our own lives.

Remember, we talked about the two, I can't remember the word I used, the two strains of this.

That wasn't the word, but that's the idea. But in the end, we came down, we finished with this phrase that we don't need a guardian. And so the question is, why?

And that's what Paul's going to answer next. He says we don't need a guardian in verse 25. And then in the first part of 26. But why don't we need a guardian?

So Galatians chapter 3, starting in, let's go back to verse 21 and read through. It's good to get the sense of what's going on. Galatians 3, 21.

[3:08] Yes, 21. Is the law contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not. For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.

But the scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. For in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God through faith.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free.

[4 : 17] There is no male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Let's pray together. Father, Father, I thank you for what's here. I thank you for the position that you've put us in.

A blessed position, a safe position, a glorious position. And I pray that you would open to us your word today. Lord, in the everyday walk of life, in the need for having our minds rightly centered, for the work of dealing with sin.

Lord, all these things, we need to understand what we're going to talk about today. We need to understand about being in Christ. And I pray that you would open your word to us today, that you would open our eyes and our hearts and our minds, that your spirit would attend, that we would understand what's here.

Father, that you would help us to put off those things that might be distracting, that your spirit would aid us, both in preaching and in hearing and understanding.

[5 : 40] And I pray that your name would be glorified. In Jesus' name. Amen. We don't need a guardian. Why?

We don't need the law. Why? He says, we don't need a guardian because you are all sons by faith in Christ.

We're all sons of God by faith in Christ. Now, first of all, I don't always do this, but I am going to break down some phrases as we go through. You are all sons of God.

Now, as I've talked with different people, they've brought up questions and I thought, no, no, we won't go there. We're not going to think that way. And some might think, if you say that we're all sons of God, you're saying, oh, you're preaching a universal salvation.

That Paul here is saying that everyone is a son of God. And that's not what he's saying. He's referring to all the Galatians who were in Christ through faith. Remember, he's writing this epistle to the church at Galatia.

[6 : 47] Galatia. This is not something that's written to all unsaved people everywhere. This is written to a group of believers. He is not preaching universal salvation.

He's speaking to the church. He's addressing Christians. And he says, you, speaking to those Christians in Galatia, you are all sons of God.

And we have to take, this is a situation where Paul, he's drawn upon some common knowledge of the day that is not something that is common knowledge to us. So I'm going to spend some time talking about what's going on here.

He uses this phrase, you are all sons of God in this passage. The word son here is a particular word for son. It doesn't just mean male offspring.

It means a certain type of son. It means a certain age of son, a certain maturity of son. The word son here is referring to a mature, or I'm going to coin a phrase here, a coming of age son.

[7 : 55] And we know this because of the Greek word that's here. We also know this because of the progression he's made to the passage. Remember, he's been just talking about a guardian. What was a guardian for?

It was for an immature son. It was for a son who wasn't old enough to take on the responsibilities of leading a house and dealing with managing all the things that go into the house and the family and the business.

He was an immature son. He's carried this, this practical illustration through this whole thing. He says, you were an immature son and you weren't in a position yet to know Christ and the guardian was bringing you there and the law was bringing you there.

But he says, now you are all sons of God. You're these mature sons. You're these coming of age sons. You're a son who's reached the legal age. He's talking to these Christians and because of being in Christ, and I'm giving a little bit away, but because of being in Christ, you are a son who is old enough to receive his inheritance.

He's speaking about they've come to a position. They've come to a position that they couldn't have come to on their own. They needed a lot to bring them to this point and it is something that they've come to by God's grace.

[9 : 15] So Paul is saying that they are all mature sons, but then he says they're mature sons by faith. Now, whenever you use an illustration, not everything fits perfectly.

And this would be one of those situations because in the situation or the illustration that Paul is using, he's talking about a situation where normally in a family situation, a boy would be born and he would naturally grow up and he would naturally mature and with the help of a guardian, he would be taught the things he should and shouldn't do.

He would be disciplined in ways that would shape him towards the future and the natural process of what would happen would be that they would mature and they would be ready for being this come-of-age son who would be able to deal with things.

So this part of the illustration breaks down just a little bit. It's not that it makes anything that negates it, but the thing that's different from the situation of the guardian to the situation that's here, the guardian, the law, pointed us to our need of Christ.

But it wasn't that we grew up in the sense that we, oh, we exercised and we did what was right and, you know, we put away a couple of nice facts and now we're grown-up men and we know what we know and we know what we need to know and we act like men.

[10:40] It's not that at all. The law still had the purpose of pointing us to Christ, but we're mature sons not because we grew up, we're mature sons by faith.

When God worked in us and we trusted Christ as Savior, it wasn't that we earned it, we didn't earn it. Faith was just an instrument God used to bring us to himself.

It was something he even gave to us. It was an instrument to bring us to himself, but our becoming mature son was a gift of the work of Christ for us.

And he gets into this and explains this as we go through. So he, as Paul is talking to these Galatian Christians, he's saying, you are all sons of God, not because you've grown up, but by faith.

God has brought you to trust in the one who provided salvation for you. So we didn't do any work to be classified as a mature son. We were simply made mature sons by faith.

[11:53] Now, before we go any further, why not sons and daughters? Why were not made sons and daughters of God?

Or why didn't, as some versions, wrongfully, absolutely, and I'm not, I'm not going to throw rocks at them, but absolutely wrongly put the word children here. Some even put, some versions put, sons and daughters.

And that's not correct for this situation. So, why didn't he say sons and daughters of God? Or children of God?

Well, first of all, I'm going to point out, and this is what happens, the world out there, not knowing Christ, hears about this verse and says, Paul is a sexist. He's just about men.

He's, he's just, he's just exalting men and putting down women and children and slaves and all the other people. And that is not at all what Paul is doing.

[12:53] I've told you, Paul's been using an illustration. He's been using an illustration that everyone in the Roman world at that time perfectly understood.

It was the pattern of the day. And so, Paul picked the word son on purpose and he used this particular word son to show that he's speaking about a mature, come of age son who was able to inherit everything.

So, in using this situation, this illustration, the situation was that in those days, only firstborn mature sons, sometimes the firstborn did something like Reuben.

Reuben went into his father's couch, slept with his father's concubine, son. And Jacob said, nope, I'm not considering you my firstborn anymore.

He goes to another son. That was because that could happen. But the firstborn, it was that the son who would inherit would be always called the firstborn. That's what Jacob and Esau were fighting over.

[14:10] They wanted that privilege. And so, the firstborn son was the one who inherited everything. Now, what happened if a man in the course of time had ten daughters and no sons?

Well, in this day and age, well, the oldest girl got it. No, that wasn't the case in that day and everyone in that day knew this. In that day, if someone did not have a son that made it to maturity, that made it to the point that he could inherit everything, they would then adopt a son.

And that's another theme we're going to begin at this point. I'm not going to talk about it a lot today, but we're going to begin at this point and begin to talk about a lot in Galatians because we are adopted.

We're people who are not of this family, but lo and behold, we're in this family. We'll talk about that more later. So, if a man had no sons, he would take and find a mature man.

Could be a slave even. But he would take that mature man, ask him to be his son, and then he would adopt him. And he would be legally his son.

[15:21] And he would be this special kind of son, that of age son that the word that Paul picks is speaking about. Now, other people, women, children, slaves, in Paul's day and age, had no standing.

They could not testify in court. They could not own land. And they could not receive an inheritance. So, in Paul's day and age, everybody knew this.

Everybody knew that if you were going to inherit anything, you had to be this of age, mature son of the father. And so, in Paul's day and age, the oldest son would get basically everything.

We know from Abraham that he gave gifts to his other children, sons of Keturah, the handmaid he took long after Sarah died. He gave them gifts, but Isaac got everything.

All the wealth, all the possessions, all the land. He became the head of the family and sometimes, if it was something that was hereditary, he would gain a title.

[16:52] You know, if you think of the English lords, some of their, I'm maybe speaking totally out of hand here. I'm not sure if their titles are passed on or if they're conferred upon people.

I'm totally out of my wheelhouse at this point in life. So, Paul said, you are all sons. So, he's not against girls.

He's saying, he's using this illustration to say, you're this particular kind of person that can inherit everything.

everything. And he's looking at the church, and we'll see this more in just a minute. He's looking at the church, and he's looking, and he's not just saying, guys, you are sons of God.

He's looking at the church, and he's looking at the dear brothers, and he's looking at the dear sisters, and he's looking at the dear children who have trusted Christ by faith, and he's looking at them and saying, you are people who can inherit everything.

[18:00] Well, the big question then is, how did they get to be sons? These kinds of sons. We weren't born sons of God. We weren't even born into the right family.

John 8, 44, you are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth. We were born into that family because of our sin.

We're not in this family that has all the riches and all the inheritance. We're not in the family that Christ is spoken of when God speaks to Abraham.

We're not in that family. How did we get to be sons of God? We can only be made a son of God when God makes us a son of God.

Again, we could get into this. What happens here? We won't get into it, but just to mention a little bit, we were from the wrong family, and we were enemies of God, God.

[19:10] But God adopted us, and he made us perfectly qualified to receive his inheritance.

You say, I don't feel very qualified. Neither do I, and no one is, except what Paul goes on to explain. We're only a son of God when he makes us a son of God, and that's through faith.

faith. He makes us a son of God by joining us with his son. I have struggled all week to think of a good example of this.

I've failed. I'll read you a couple things in a few minutes. this is a mystery, and many of the commentaries I read this week said it is plainly a mystery, and we can see that Paul takes like four or five different stabs at it.

We're all of a body, and Christ is the head. We're all building, and Christ is the foundation. We're all this vine, we're branches, and Christ is the vine.

[20:21] everything points to how we're connected to Christ, and everything comes from Christ. We're made a son of God because we have been connected with Christ.

And here Paul uses, well, he sort of uses two examples, but he talks about the one example leading to the other example. We'll get to that in just a second.

But the fact of the matter, and by the way, do you know Paul's favorite way of identifying what we call Christians in his epistles?

Do you know what words he uses? Jesus, almost always, he refers to us as those who are in Christ.

It's a huge thing with Paul. We are made sons of God by being joined to Christ. And I wish I could explain exactly how that is.

[21 : 29] But all we can do is keep turning to the things that Paul uses to help us to try to understand it. I'm convinced he didn't totally understand it. He understood what God had revealed and he tried to convey that.

But the thing he really wanted us to know, though we don't understand it, is we are who we are because we're in Christ. He points here to this idea of baptism.

Verse 27. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Now at this point he's speaking about our spiritual baptism at the point of salvation.

Our spiritual baptism at the point of salvation he goes on to say, clothes us in Christ. And we'll talk more about that in just a minute. I want to make a distinction.

Many of you were raised in a Catholic church church. And when you were so many days old, you were brought to the church and the priest took some water and he sprinkled the water on the baby's head.

[22 : 43] Sometimes they pour it a little bit. They do it different ways. I've never been to one. But in that moment, they say that you're baptized and your sin was washed away by that act of baptism.

That is not at all what Paul is talking about here. Not at all. Now when we talk about baptism, when we talk about baptism, we're pointing to what is really going on spiritually.

Okay. So last week we had two baptisms. Do you remember? Abigail was up here in the English service and Jose Luis was in the Spanish service and both people upon their profession of faith were taken and dipped into the water and pulled back out.

It physically didn't do anything. They were obeying the Lord's command but it didn't physically do anything to them. It was a testimony. It was a marker.

It was something that pointed to the reality that had gone on. It was something that they and we were would be able to look at the rest of our lives and say at that point what happened there pointed to what really happened to me spiritually.

[24 : 01] I was placed in Christ. So here's the spot. You keep your finger in Galatians. You turn to Romans 6. Now I wanted to get to this last week but I knew I couldn't.

I wouldn't have time and we're going to be rushed today. Galatians chapter 6. I'm going to read several verses. I'm not going to make a lot of comment. I'm going against my Baptist feeling here to preach a whole message on Romans chapter 6.

But I'm going to start in verse 3. We could start in verse 1 but time's sake we'll start in verse 3.

Romans chapter 6 verse 3. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his we know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

[25 : 31] That's a picture. It's a picture of how when we trust Christ through faith God takes us and puts us into Christ and we share in the death that he died.

We share the burial that he was buried. We share in the resurrection that he experienced and we are forever in him. One person said it's like taking one finger and saying that's Christ and that's me and the other finger hand and saying that's Christ and we covered up that's all you see because I am in Christ forever in Christ.

Everything that happens to me comes through Christ. Everything that I get is because of Christ.

Everything that I am is because of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5 21 a favorite verse. For our sake he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

That hand that covers is the beautiful Savior. No one sees me anymore. They see the beautiful Savior.

[27 : 05] And that's the way we are. When we come to faith in Christ we are placed in Christ. Like I said his death becomes our death. His life becomes our life.

His righteousness becomes our righteousness. We have eternal life and are sons of God because we are in him. And as we keep reading from various times through the epistles that Paul writes be

very careful to watch for that phrase in him or forms of it because he's pointing to what Christ has done for you.

Being baptized into Christ brings us into a position of having put on Christ. Now I say that you say but pastor you've already said that but he goes on talks about baptism and then putting on Christ. The term have put on is a verb that is commonly used in the sense of putting on garments. This just takes the illustration just a little bit further and helps us to see.

Now like I said have put on is a verb that's commonly used in putting on garments. You might think maybe you've watched an old movie and there are people who put on a cloak and they throw over the hood you can't tell who's in it.

[28 : 33] You only see the cloak. It's kind of the picture not for evil. I shouldn't have said movies because we tend to think someone with a cloak is evil but if you have a royal cloak if you have a royal robe with a hood put over you well then you look like royalty.

It could be referred to such a thing a lot of people said it referred to a soldier's uniform. You can take any old butcher or any old baker or any old candlestick maker and put a soldier's uniform on them and they're forever known or not forever but while they're wearing that uniform they're a soldier.

No one thinks oh that's Joe the butcher. It's Joe the soldier. The uniform determines who he is. And so it is with Christ. When a person is brought to faith in Christ he is clothed with Christ. Again it's that picture of being completely surrounded.

Everything that is seen is Christ. Isn't that a blessing to you? Everything that is seen. Now granted yes you say but I see sin in my neighbor.

[29 : 54] I see sin in my kids. I see sin in my wife. I see sin in myself. Yep that's true. God sees only Christ. If you see if you sin against God yes we confess and we repent.

God sees only Christ. And so our sonship makes us one in Christ.

These Judaizers were trying to convince people that in order to be good enough to inherit God's promises one had to keep the law especially circumcision.

in order for one to be like that of age son that was able to inherit these promises and this is exactly how the Jews would think.

Only us Jews would be able to inherit the promises that were made to Abraham. And Paul is saying that is not the case. He's built this argument through the book of Galatians.

[31 : 05] He did the same thing in Romans saying the promise was made before the law. The law didn't change that. The law was given to bring us to Christ.

It didn't have anything to do necessarily with our own particular salvation. It had to do with Christ. But the law pointed us to Christ.

And he's saying you Judaizers you're wrong. It's not keeping the law. Paul is saying that being in Christ makes us all equally worthy to inherit God's promises.

Makes us all equally worthy to inherit God's promises. By being made a mature son Paul is not erasing or devaluing earthly distinctives.

And we come to verse 28 that the world likes to use in this day and age. Oh there's neither I better read it I'm going to get it wrong. Hey it helps if I go back to Galatians.

[32 : 10] I took my finger out. He says in verse 28 there's neither Jew nor Greek there's neither slave nor free there is no male and female for you are all one in Christ.

And the world likes to say see God knew that the whole LBGT plus agenda was true all along. No that's not what Paul's getting at at all.

You have to follow the progression of his example. You have to follow the progression of his argument. And he is not against women. He is not saying that all of us are indistinct.

We are distinct. There are biological distinctives. God has certainly called different people to different positions and different callings.

This is not negating that. this is simply pointing to the fact that when God works in his people he doesn't have second class citizens like the Judaizers tried to say.

[33 : 15] When God works in his people and he provides for them salvation and the way it will be for all eternity and I wish I knew more details but for all eternity there won't be a distinction between this person or that person like the world tried to put out.

Oh you're a man you get to sit here. Oh you're a woman you get to sit here. No not in God's economy. God does not look at women as second class citizens. In the least we are joint heirs with

Christ.

So he's not arguing for no distinction he's arguing that we all in Christ have the same privilege of being in Christ before the Father.

Paul is simply using the custom of the day to show how we are made acceptable to be made heirs according to the promise. Gentile slaves and women are all still Gentile slaves and women in their earthly distinctions but before God all those trusting Christ are clothed with Christ and are equally worthy to inherit all that is promised and provided by Christ.

David Campbell says it this way none is spiritually superior over another that is a believing Jew is not more privileged before God than a believing Gentile a believing slave does not rank higher I think he meant lower I didn't make sense but anyway I'll read it the way he has it a believing woman some Jewish men prayed I thank God that thou has not made me a Gentile a slave or a woman Paul cut across these distinctions and stated that they do not exist in the body of Christ so far as spiritual privilege and position are concerned elsewhere while affirming the co-equality of man and women with Christ Paul does nonetheless make it clear that there is a headship of the man over the woman and that there are distinctions in the area of spiritual service doesn't do away the distinction but before

[35 : 34] Christ there is no distinction our sonship makes us Abraham's offspring and heirs according to the promise this is verse 29 and that's been the point of Paul's argument all along when we belong to Christ we are part of Abraham's family and don't need to be circumcised to become part of God's family God made promises to Abraham and those are fulfilled in believers not in the physical descent of Abraham but in Christ and when we've been put in Christ we are co-equal we are joint heirs with Christ just a couple things quickly I'd like I'd like to put a word on this or a phrase it's a phrase you're familiar with Pastor Chad made much of this I want to carry this forth because it is just screaming through the

New Testament and that phrase is union with Christ union with Christ we see in this passage the doctrine of our union with Christ we cannot do anything to make ourselves acceptable to God the son of God took on flesh and as the God man Jesus Christ came lived a perfect life died for our sin and rose again to provide salvation we can do nothing to earn this what God has done is to place all of us in Jesus we are clothed with him all of our salvation is provided because we are in him we can come boldly to the throne of grace because we are in him all our needs are met because we are in him we have strength to live for Christ because we are in him we are blessed with all spiritual blessings because we are in him we will rise again and live forever in new bodies on a new earth because we are in him all we need have and will have is because we are in

Christ that's such a blessed position so let me make this statement are you struggling with sin what ones of us aren't yes you and I need to confess it and we turn from it but that doesn't affect your position before God the true saint is in Christ the true saint though struggling with sin is seen through he God sees Christ when he looks at that person he sees that Christ has paid for your sin he sees that you are Christ's righteousness brothers and sisters I'm not trying to lessen your struggle with sin I'm not saying don't worry about it I'm not saying that at all I'm trying to help you fight the battle from the standpoint of knowing how you stand before God you don't stand before God as someone who has to try to regain some standing brothers and sisters you who have trusted Christ as Savior may struggle with sin but you stand before God as righteous as Christ you stand in his standing and again that's not to say oh let's sin that grace may abound that's to say we love him we want to put off the sin he's done so much for us we're going to live for him in his strength we're going to endeavor to put away these things that dishonor him but you've got to remember that it is not you earning your standing before God it is God Christ stand in that and lastly friend if you're not trusting Christ how are you going to make provision for your sin how are you going to do that on your own all you can do is try to keep the law but you failed at that already and you know it you're helpless your only hope is a righteousness that's outside of yourself you need someone else to pay for your sin and the good news is that's why we call it the gospel someone has

Christ Jesus the son of God came and took on flesh and lived a perfect life took our sin upon himself and suffered in our place he died for our sin was buried rose again and ascended and offers to you if you will trust him he will place you in himself his payment for sin will be your payment his righteousness will be your righteousness the father will look at you with utter delight but it only is like that if you are trusting Christ as savior so I encourage you turn to the righteousness of another turn to Christ be choose I say this from our standpoint choose to be in him and let him stand for you

before Christ let's pray together father we thank you for this wonderful position that we have and [41 : 22] Lord you know we're just scratching the surface we we are so far from understanding Paul didn't know how to explain it completely but Lord help us to live there we're people that you have provided everything for and by faith you've placed us in your son and you are perfectly satisfied with us because of him I pray that those who are here who are struggling with their sin who know that the condemnation of sin is upon them I pray that today be the day they trust Christ as Savior and we as Christians who would be struggling with sin may we struggle from the standpoint of already knowing that we're accepted in Christ may we stand in that and pray that you would be with us in Jesus name Amen to