

Heirs of God Through Adoption

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[0 : 00] You can be turning to Galatians chapter 4. Galatians chapter 4.

While you're turning there, in last week's message, Paul had begun to explain to us the law's rule in the life of an unbeliever. And so as we were looking at it, we saw that the law was there to show us we're sinners, and that there was no way to escape from our sinfulness.

He went on to teach us that the law also shows us our need of Christ. At that point, Paul went on a beautiful rabbit trail. I always loved it when preachers went on rabbit trails.

I had a Greek teacher who would love to go on rabbit trails, because they were always very interesting. And Paul here goes on a rabbit trail. Now, it's not that he's uncontrolled.

He has a purpose in going on this rabbit trail. So he went on this beautiful rabbit trail. And as he thought of the law showing us our need of Christ, he wanted us to learn one aspect of what Christ does for the believer.

[1 : 13] He talked about how we're enslaved. And now, because of Christ's work, we're no longer enslaved. We're a son. The work of Christ makes us all equal inheritors of God's promises.

And so our rank and our station in life doesn't keep us in any way from receiving the full inheritance promised by God, because we are in Christ.

We talked about we're clothed in Christ. Remember, I talked about that robe, that cloak that would go over us, pointing to Christ being that which God sees. And so he takes a moment to give us this beautiful picture of how we're in Christ.

But it looked, he's a good preacher. It looked like he's driving along towards this point, and he gets steered off to the side, and it looks like he's distracted.

But actually, he's setting us up for a contrast that we're going to see later in this chapter and even later in the book. He's setting us up for a contrast that will be important.

[2 : 24] So we're going to see today in chapter 4, we're going to return to the topic of the child and the guardian to see another aspect of the work of Christ for us.

And he's continuing to set up this contrast that he's going to show us later in the verse. But we're going to look at Galatians chapter 4 and deal with verses 1 through 7.

But I'm going to read starting in Galatians 3 and verse 21. Galatians 3 and verse 21 down through the first seven verses of 4.

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.

[3 : 25] 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. There is no male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

And you are Christ's, if you are Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is 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.

[4 : 39] But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a 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 your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son.

And if a son, then an heir through God. Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for your word. And Lord, it could be easy for us to sit here and think law, guardian, slave, and think, oh, this is hard to understand and this is going to be boring.

And yet, Lord, some of the most tender and beautiful things that can be seen of the work of Christ are in these verses. And I pray that you would be with us. Open our eyes to see how merciful you've been, how gracious you've been, how wonderful the work of Christ is and how it was perfectly suited for us.

I pray that you would be with us. Be with me as I speak and bless that your word would be honored and glorified and your people would be drawn to yourself and Lord, that you would be glorified in all of it.

[6 : 01] In Jesus' name. Amen. So, this section really starts at the beginning of chapter 3 and I'm not going to go back and rehearse all of it.

Paul at one point says, why then the law? And he answers that question in several phases and we've looked at several of those things and we've been blessed by the wonder of what Christ has done as our Savior.

And as I mentioned last week, he was talking about the air and how he's under guardian. And then he went to talk about what Christ has done in making us sons of God.

And as we begin chapter 4, he starts out by saying, I mean that the air and that phrase, I mean that the air, he's bringing us back to thinking about what he was talking about.

He says, I want to go back to this idea about an air because there's more to learn. He's given us one aspect but he wants us to learn more. And in order for us to see more about Christ, he wants to see what it is, more about what it is to be under the law.

[7 : 10] How the law kept us in a particular situation. The consequences of that law. And so he comes back to the idea of being an heir. The idea of an underage heir.

Okay? So this again is the system where in Greco-Roman times, a person had a household and if he began to establish some sort of large household, it happened with small households also, but it's easier for us to think of it in relation to a large household.

Say this man had developed a large household and he had lots of animals, he had property, he had buildings, he had servants, and he had treasure of some sort, gold or whatever.

And he knew that as he come to be older, he would have to leave that to someone. He would set up a system whereby he'd be able to leave it and it would only go to the oldest son and we addressed all that in past sermons and how Paul uses that to point to how God makes us all like his son, but we won't go back through that, but this man would set it all up so his oldest son would inherit everything and in that situation if the son was a minor, he would put a guardian over that son and that guardian would make sure he was kind of like a disciplinarian, he would make sure that son got to school, he would make sure that son got home, that he didn't run with the wrong crowds and didn't make bad choices, he carried a rod as it were and was always there saying, guy, you're going in the wrong direction, your dad wants you in this direction and he would make sure that the son obeyed that and that's what the heir was and the last time we talked, we really emphasized that idea of how he guarded the son to point him to what the father wanted him to be.

This time, we're looking at it in a little bit of a different situation, we're looking at the son's condition as an heir and no matter what the father may be, maybe the father was at the time of Paul the Bill Gates of the world or maybe he was the Tesla guy, Elon Musk, thank you, maybe he was the Elon Musk of the day, you know, he had just bazillions but the situation of that heir was such that no matter how much money dad had, he had control of none of it.

[9 : 46] You know, I'm sure the father took care of him but he had control of none of it and he couldn't go out to the servants of his dad and say, you know, I'm junior, go do this, I'm junior, get me that.

No, no, this guy as an heir was a person that ended up being like a slave. He had no say in his father's work, he had no say in his father's finances, he had no say even in where he could go and what he could do.

He could not enjoy his inheritance. It was all managed by, he was managed by the guardian and his inheritance was managed by a steward as we read in here.

And so in the end he's no different than a slave. He has to do what he's told to do. And he suffers the judgment of the law or the judgment of the guardian if he doesn't do what he's told to do.

And so his situation is pretty desperate. It would be so frustrating to have what you could see would be yours and couldn't inherit any of it.

[11 : 08] And so Paul's bringing us back and saying the law is a guardian and a steward. And that guardian and that steward were to have influence on that son but neither to point him to make him the kind of man he was supposed to be to be able to inherit this.

But neither that guardian or that steward could say you're ready. Here it is. The guardian could not say at one day when let's say the son turned 19.

By the way from what I've read the average son had to be 25 before he could inherit what his father had. But let's say he turned 19 and the guardian looks at him and says you know I think you're good enough.

That stood for nothing. It couldn't change a thing in this young heir's life. It didn't matter. The guardian had no say in how that young person could do anything or could say when the time was done.

Same with the steward. The person in charge of the money that would be eventually his son's. And by the way I should back up and say one of the things you should keep in mind is that this part of the example kind of gives the hint of since it involves the idea of a steward.

[12 : 45] A guardian would be in place whether the father was alive or not. But the steward was kind of that was something that took place when the son was a minor but the dad had died.

Okay. The father would set up that there was always a guardian to help his son to learn but he would set up a steward and say if I die he can't control his finances you have to control everything. And so none of these the son had control of nothing and these were over it. but they were unable to deliver the heir from the enslavement that they were under.

Like I said it was nothing different than being a slave Paul said and so they had no responsibility in ending it.

Now Paul has all along likened the law to this idea of a guardian and a steward. Paul has said that the law was there not to make you the heir but make you to be ready to be the heir.

[13 : 50] And the law is there and the Bible teaches us plainly this law is here to show us we need a savior. It imprisons us in sin as it talked back a few verses back earlier.

The law shows that we are sinners God laid out his character and gave prohibitions and things that we were to do prohibitions being what we are not to do and things that we were to do he laid these all out and we're sinners and so the big responsibility one of the first use of the law is to show mankind that they are sinners and so this law has been doing this before we came to Christ the law teaches us you're not what God expects in fact you are in violation of what God expects and you are in trouble because you are under judgment and the law would bring judgment upon us and so Paul is getting at this because there have been this and we haven't talked about them in a while but there's been this group called the Judaizers who came in and said you know if you're going to be a real

Christian if you're going to be a good Christian you're going to have to be a person who observes the law you're going to have to be circumcised and Paul saying no no that's not the gospel and so he's building this case saying the law can do nothing for us but what he has done a couple of times well once and he's breaking in a second time he's breaking in to give us a contrast saying the law imprisons the sin but God has done a work he sent his son and here he's saying the law can't do anything to make you able to have the inheritance that God has promised but God sent his son and so this is pointing to us that we are like these heirs that are aren't old enough to inherit we were the children before we were saved we were enslaved to the elemental principles that's spoken of in this passage the elemental principles for the

Jew that would be they were enslaved to the law as it was written out and given to them to the Gentile we know from Romans and Paul's alluding to it and we'll make reference to it later in this chapter he's alluding to how all of us have a basic understanding of the ten commandments engraved on our hearts and yet we refuse to obey God but that basic understanding sort of guides where we should go and what we should do and we're enslaved to those we want to keep them but yet we rebel against them and we throw that off and so even though the basic understanding of the

law is written in our hearts we choose to rebel against them and so nothing in our past as Gentiles nothing in the past of the Jews could make them ready to inherit what God has provided but then in the middle of these verses in verse four we see a beautiful verse and here's a situation where again God breaks in and shares or Paul breaks in and speaks to us of one of the things that God has done in verse four Paul says but when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of a woman born under the law and he speaks of the fullness of time and what's he getting at well we could go into a long explanation but I'm just going to lay it out kind of simply and point to the fact that when Paul refers here to the fullness of time he's referring to I think three different things we'll deal with one that's kind of most obvious and in the at the end of it and that's the idea of the time that the father had appointed but the fullness of time what is what is Paul getting at what is God getting at at the fullness of time God sent forth his son and that's the idea of the time that all the prophecies had pointed to in

[18:30] Matthew 1:22 it says all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet speaking about the things that were set up for Jesus birth all that took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet in Matthew 12:17 again the verse says this was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah speaking about the life of Christ in Acts 3:18 but what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets that his Christ would suffer he thus fulfilled so in one sense as Paul is saying at the time when the fullness of time had come he's talking about how God had from eternity past planned for the son to come and he had prophesied that and he had spoken of how

God would do this and so the prophecies went out and they all came together at one moment when the fullness of time had come also speaks of the time when the situation of the world was ready for God's plan to be executed Christ was to come to earth but that the knowledge of that had to be spread through the world Christ was to come to the earth not only would the ability to be able to travel and spread that knowledge but there had to be a language ready for that good news to be shared and if you think through history even you go back and some of the first kingdoms Babylon began to have a unified language but that only covered a certain part of the kingdom and then another kingdom took over the Persian Medo Persian kingdom took over and another area began to have a unified language and then

Greek came along Philip Alexander the Great rather came along and Greek thinking was elevated and Alexander conquered so much of the world and the Greek language was spread all over and the Greek language became a universal language at that point and then the Roman kingdom came and the Roman rule covered the known earth at that time and even though Latin was available and the official language Greek was the language of the whole known world at that time and not only did the Romans bring the Greek language to the whole known world at that time the Romans built roads to reach every outpost they had so travel travel had been by sea and some by land but when God had worked and brought about the Roman rule on earth now it was possible for Paul the apostle to travel on foot throughout Asia Minor he planned to go to Spain he could have sailed to Rome and walked to Spain because of what God had done in putting things together so that the gospel could be spread God worked in the fullness of time that there would be roads that this gospel could travel on then of course it is at the fullness of time and it was the time that the father had appointed and that's equating with this example that when a father had an heir he would set a time as I mentioned often it was 25 years old when that person would be old enough to take over and nothing would change the father's designation of when it was appropriate the father before the foundation of the world set the time he knew exactly when his son would be sent and so when that fullness of time had come he sent his son the son's coming was not accidental or happenstance it was

God's planning so at God's appointed time he sent forth his son there's interesting things here as you think about what's all involved in this it says he sent forth his son God the father sent forth God the son very God of very God this was important because as his son was going to come and redeem he needed someone who could endure the judgment of God against sinners now right now the judgment of God against sinners for those who don't know Christ will take an eternity to endure those who don't know Christ will spend an eternity in hell it will take eternity for man to be able to endure the judgment of God against sin but he sent his son very God of very

[24:15] God God to take on flesh as we'll talk about in a second but God to take on flesh to be able to endure the judgment of God against sinners so at the in the fullness of time God sent for his son the one who would be able to endure this judgment and then he sent forth his son very God of

very God a being of infinite value as he took on flesh being the God man and we'll talk more about the man aspect in a minute but as he took on flesh and became the God man he was a man of infinite value a perfect man now a perfect human Adam at one point was a perfect human but he wasn't a human of infinite value a perfect man if he was willing to suffer for someone else a perfect man could suffer for one perfect or one imperfect person one person for another person but in the fullness of time

God sent forth his son very God of very God not only able to withstand the judgment of God against sinners but he was of infinite value it wasn't just that Jesus came to give his life for one person he was of infinite value he could give his life for all of his people he was able to take the place of all of his people so in fullness of time God sent forth his son and then it says that this son was born of a woman so that he might receive adoption as sons I'm pulling from two parts of the verse there born of a woman that he might receive adoption as sons God sent forth his son his son took on flesh he was born with a full human nature which he got from his mother and that was amazing because in order for someone to die for someone else they had to be the same kind of being and so God the father sent his son very God of very God to take on flesh so that he could be one of us he could represent us and not only that he could be one of us someone needed to die for the sins that the judgment against sin is death for the wages of sin is death someone had to die no man even a perfect man in just being just human would be able to withstand this judgment no one would be of full enough value and so the God man came but he had to take on flesh because God cannot die and so in the fullness of time God sent forth his son very God of very God born of a woman with a full human nature able to represent us and able to die for us and he was born in fulfillment of promises

Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman between your offspring and her offspring he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel in the fullness of time that seed of a woman came Isaiah 7:14 therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name God with us Emmanuel in the fullness of time God sent forth his son born of a woman and born under the law to redeem those under the law the picture begins it continues and gets sweeter God sent his son to be under the covenant of works Moses law and all that

God had set forth through Moses for Israel to do God sent forth his son under the covenant of Moses Christ was under subjection to the covenant of Moses and he was to keep every commandment that God required of man under the law he was taken to the temple at eight days old to be circumcised why to keep the law all the things that the law required of a man to do Jesus did all the thou shall have no other gods before me thou shall not covet the commands the ten commandments and all the other rules and laws that God set up in the Old Testament Jesus came at the appropriate time born under those commandments the law said do this and live and Jesus did it Jesus as the

[30 : 05] God man came and fulfilled the law Christ came as a sinless human he came as a sinless human and obeyed every single command that God requires of man and in doing that he earned a perfect righteousness he was shown to be the perfect human he earned a perfect righteousness that he would be able to give to others because he was infinite as the son of God now he came under the law and he obeyed every single part of it God sent his son to be under the law also though to bear its judgment why he didn't sin he had no sin Christ was sent to be under the law so when the law said the soul that sinneth it shall die Christ would then take all of the sin of his people upon himself the one who had done the law perfectly who had never disobeyed this one took all the sin of people upon his himself and he became their redeemer we were slaves of sin and we couldn't deliver ourselves someone would have to buy us out of that condition

Jesus was sent forth the son of God became flesh lived under the law lived a perfect life so he earned the redemption price and then all of our sin was placed on him and his death bought us out of that sinful marketplace Christ was born of the law to bear the law's righteous judgment a judgment he took but that should have been ours we had no hope in ourselves we were sinners before we even started the guardian was supposed to make the son fit to be in the air but we were wicked and the law just made us more sinful there was no way we are going to escape the law's imprisonment so God sent his son under the law to redeem hopeless helpless sinners like us and it's interesting we've made comment about this before but this verse goes further and it's cheesy

I don't want you to think of this being cheesy like this but you've watched those infomercials and they'll say you know these two knives for \$9.99 but wait there's more and again I don't want this to be cheesy but as we think about that that's hard to comprehend God would send his son the infinite being of the universe would come and take on flesh he would live under the law he represent me he'd live a perfect life he'd take my sins upon himself I'd be redeemed out of the marketplace of sin and we could picture well that'd be great thank you God just put me in the corner of heaven and I'll be glad for eternity but it goes on it says the father sent his son that we might be adopted as sons adopted his son

God sent his son into the slave market to shed his blood that lost helpless and wicked people could have their ransom paid I mentioned that when he paid that ransom we were made righteous in God's eyes by what Jesus had done we might be made to inherit so that we could inherit eternal promises we were made to be able to inherit the promises that were made to the son of God we were made ready in the work that Christ did we were made sons we talked a little bit about this last time we were adopted into God's family we were made sons and we inherit what Christ inherits we are oh the word escapes me we inherit along with Christ God made us ready and able to receive the inheritance he promised his son so I'm not just redeemed

I'm redeemed and get to enjoy all that Christ earned and again not to be cheesy but wait there's more we've been placed in an intimate relationship with the father think about that we've been placed in an intimate relationship with the father as if Christ sharing his righteousness as an inheritance with us was not more than anyone could dream the work of Christ puts us into the situation as sons to share Christ's intimacy with the father what Christ did he made us sons but he put us into a relationship with the God that we had offended that God in a relationship with the God that we were we used to be vile in his eyes it says in this passage that we by the spirit call

[36 : 02] God Abba father and I just wanted to point out to you that that's the way Jesus addressed his father in one of the most intimate moments of his life as he knelt in the garden pondering what was coming at the cross he said in Mark 14 36 Abba father all things are possible for you remove this cup from me yet not what I will but you will Jesus addressed God the father as Abba father now is it like saying daddy I'll say yes but I think it's not so much yes it refers to a young child but I'm not so hung up you know I'm saying it this way because some guys some kids boys especially say

I'm not saying daddy I'm a man you know they could be 12 I'm not saying daddy I'm a man and so I don't want you to think baby babyishness I want you to think intimacy I want you to think now again maybe you don't have a good dad and so it doesn't work this way but think of a situation with a good dad and and how you can say dad in such a way that you're close and I think it's good to think about that idea of daddy again I don't I don't want guys to go oh I don't want this I just want you to see the intimacy I want you to see that intimacy that a child has a three year old a four year old a five year old boy or girl sitting on their dad's lap saying daddy daddy they just are close the next second they snuggle their head in their dad's neck their dad wraps their arms around him or her there's this intimacy now it looks different as kids grow older but the intimacy is what we're seeing we've been brought to the point that we can call

God our father at the same way that a child can call their dad daddy and so he's saying what a beautiful situation it's unbelievable we're redeemed we're made sons we're heirs with Christ we share in his inheritance and we have an intimacy with the father because at the appropriate time God sent his son into the world but when the fullness of time had come God sent his son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who are under the law that we might receive adoption as sons and he goes on to say and because you are sons

God has sent the spirit of his son into your hearts crying Abba father so you're no longer a son and if a son then an heir of God or heir through God now this has been the point of the whole illustration that he's been going on here under the law you were a slave now you're not a slave you're a son and since you're a son you're an heir of God and just as you are in Christ you're an heir to the promises God gave to Abraham seed now I forgive me for this we're dropping a thought here just cold because Paul has said a profound statement that we can't get into that relates to where he's going and the danger he's trying to warn the Galatians against so we'll get to that next week but he set up already these two contrasts we were stuck under the law but

God did this amazing thing and he redeemed us we were stuck as heirs and yet God sent his son to bring us to himself and to put us into this relationship and where it's going to go is he's going to say and you're going to go back and try to please God by keeping the law when you've been put in a

situation like this that's where we're going and you can keep that in your mind for next week but I want you to think about the wonder of what God has done God orchestrated all the prophecies and all the events necessary for Christ's coming he orchestrated all the conditions of Christ's coming God very God the God man born of a woman born under the law he orchestrated all those things God knew how to meet all the demands of his holiness and of all his attributes he knew everything that needed to be satisfied in order to bring you to salvation and he did it and so

[41 : 58] I want you to see the wonder of the greatness of God we don't think on it enough we don't consider it enough all that went into God providing salvation for us it was of enormous cost it was in one sense easy to him but it was an enormous work and yet he did it to provide salvation for us brothers and sisters your standing before God today is in what he sent his son to do but when the fullness of time had come God sent for this son born of a woman born into the law to redeem them who are under the law that we might receive adoption as sons and the verse goes on I want you to remind yourself of the things that we've looked at here in the past two weeks when you struggle with sin God provided a way for you to be delivered when you struggle with sin God's son came to make you a son of

God an heir of God who put you in a relationship of intimacy with his father remind yourself of that when you fail to resist temptation and to fall into sin remind yourself of what God did to provide your salvation I'm not trying to get us to be thinking in terms of shame I'm trying to get us to think in terms of the wonder of what God did we want to turn from our sin so that not to try to earn salvation we have salvation we want to remind ourselves in the midst of the things we struggle with because God has loved us and he's made us right before him when you don't feel close to God remember what he's done for you remind yourself of what God has done when you feel like you don't measure up to your expectation or to others expectations I don't measure up it doesn't it's that's not the case that's not the issue

God did it God provided it Christ came took all these things upon himself did all these things so that you might be redeemed God sent his son to redeem you and bring you into a relationship with himself a relationship that's like the relationship he has with his son brothers and sisters we need to remind ourselves of this as we said when we struggle and when we're in temptation but we also need to be people who remind one another of this and I am just so struck with the fact of how often and I don't elevate myself to this I'm speaking of the frequency I get to preach these things to you I'm in the word of God a lot during the week that's such an amazing privilege but one of the things that's been amazing to me is how often I have had to have you folks individuals of you say to me something about the gospel to remind me of where

I am I'm amazed at how in our lives we can become blind to the truth and be overwhelmed with our own shortcomings and our own guilt and all these things and we need to be people who are reminding one another of what the gospel says because we forget and friend John 3:16 says for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life the most commonly known verse in the bible is pointing to what we have described here today in the book of Galatians God so loved that he gave his son to redeem them to pay for their sin to bring them to himself this work that God has done was offered to you whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life let's pray together father thank you for your word thank you for the things that are here

I pray that you would help us to be people who are reminding ourselves and that's exactly what Paul was doing here he was reminding us of what Christ has done when these people sought to try to turn back to the law to make themselves feel better or be approved in God's sight Paul says remember what Christ did remember the extent of what he did remember the blessings of what he did help us to be people who are doing that very thing and Lord may we glory in the work of the cross glory in God's grace and mercy to us we pray that you would help us with that in Jesus name amen our closing hymn is 460