

GALATIANS 6

Sons & Daughters

"John Newton, the man who wrote the most popular and famous hymn in America, "Amazing Grace,"... was an only child whose mother died when he was seven years old. He became a sailor, and went out to sea at eleven years old. As he grew up, he became the captain of a slave ship, and had an active hand in the horrible degradation and inhumanity of the slave trade. But when he was twenty-three, on March 10, 1748, when his ship was in imminent danger of sinking off the coast

of Newfoundland, he cried to God for mercy, and he found it. He never forgot how amazing it was that God had received him, as bad as he was. To keep it fresh in his memory, he fastened across the wall over the fireplace mantel of his study the words of Deuteronomy 15:15: "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you."¹

God's grace truly is amazing. When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, God saves us and removes our transgressions! We are no longer blind and lost. We are found and free. "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us." What a journey it has been thus far through Galatians learning of the wonderful grace of God provided through the cross of Jesus Christ. We have seen Paul's labor in unpacking the truth of the gospel to the mislead churches of Galatia. In the first three chapters he does the following: validates his apostolic authority and proves salvation is complete and available by faith in Christ alone. He lays out the purpose of the different covenants God made with Abraham and Moses. We saw how these covenants were connected, neither an end in itself, and ultimately aimed to lead us to Christ who fulfilled them. We followed the road of salvation history from Abraham to Moses to Christ; promise, law, faith. We learned, "the law is a harsh taskmaster: a prison warden, a public executioner, a pitiless pedagogue. But the condemnatory character of the law was a part of God's design from the beginning, and the coming of Christ has forever altered its former claim and status..." Chapter four will serve as the perfect segway and conclusion to the relationship between promise, law, and faith set forth at the beginning of chapter three.

It begins with another analogy of man's condition under law as an heir-in-waiting, "the one who has all the privileges, but has not yet entered into those privileges while still a minor...Lord of the whole estate as he ultimately is, in fact he is presently, 'subject to guardians and trustees.'"⁴ It was a long 1300+ years of man's "minority" in bondage to law. The promise/inheritance was in place through Abraham, but was not fulfilled until the coming of Christ. In Christ, Jews and Gentiles alike would finally be freed from their trustees, guardians, and custodians (the law) (3:24), no longer as minors, to finally receive their inheritance (in Christ by faith). And thank God our Father; Christ came at just the right time!

Verses 4-11 unpack one of the most powerful truths of what our inheritance in Christ entails. Our beloved Savior,

Pre-Article Questions:

1. How did God encourage and speak to your hearts during prayer partners this week?
2. What would you say is the difference between being "religious" and in a "relationship" with Christ?
3. If you were convincing someone that they needed to be a Christian, what would be your top reasons why?

1. Guzik, David. A Study Guide for Galatians 4. www.blueletterbible.org

2. Psalm 103:12, ESV

3. George, 270.

4. Fee, 146.

Jesus Christ, saves us from eternal damnation, but it doesn't end there! Our God adopts us as sons and daughters making us co-heirs with Christ. And how are we assured of this adoption? Our seal is the Holy Spirit. God sends the spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit, into our hearts. Therefore, because we are sons, God sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts as a witness, giving us the power to live as sons and daughters of God, no longer sinners bound to whatever was before us. F.F Bruce writes: "The purpose of the Son's mission was to give the rights of sonship; the purpose of the Spirit's mission, to give the power of using them. God bestows on us not only the status of sons (through the sending of his Son) but also the character and knowledge of sons (through the sending of the Spirit)."⁵

If Christ's death only saved us from hell, that would have been enough, but to think, that is just the beginning! Our faith in Him also gives us the right to be adopted by God, becoming His sons and daughters, making us co-heirs with Christ! But there's still more. God sends the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, into our hearts to empower us to live like a son or daughter of God can and should! There is truly no god like our God!

Great men and women of faith who have impacted the world no doubt walked in this revelation. It is said of John Wesley, the foremost leader of the Methodist movement and a passionate revivalist: "He and his friends visited the inmates of the prisons and work-houses of Oxford. They took pity on the slum children of the city, providing them with food, clothing and education. They observed Saturday as the Sabbath as well as Sunday. They went to church and to Holy communion. They gave alms, searched the scriptures, fasted and prayed. But they were bound in the fetters of their own religion, for they were trusting in themselves that they were righteous, instead of putting their trust in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. A few years later John Wesley (in his own words) came to 'trust in Christ, in Christ only for salvation' and was given an inward assurance that his sins had been taken away. After this, looking back to his pre-conversion experience he wrote: 'I had even then the faith of a servant, though not that of a son.'⁶

Who are you? Who are you? Are you a servant or son? Is your faith resting on your "goodness" or works for salvation? Do you have faith in Christ to save you but not to change you? May you always remember, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"⁷

Article Question:

1. Which story in the article can you relate with more and why? John Newton's or John Wesley's?
2. Would anyone like to respond to those questions at the end of the article?

Galatians 4:1-20, NIV

What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. 4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. 6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the

5. F.F Bruce, 198.

6. Stott, John, 109

7. Romans 8:15, ESV

Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. 8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? 10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! 11 I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. 12 I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. 13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, 14 and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. 15 Where, then, is your blessing of me now? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17 Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them. 18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you. 19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Study Questions:

1. How does life under the law compare to an “heir-in waiting”? (Thought: it’s a tease of sorts, you might have an inheritance but you can’t actually receive it and walk in it till older. Reality, it is bondage, seems so far off. You’re treated no differently than anyone else.)
2. Re-read verses 4-7 of Galatians, contrast the “heir-in-waiting” metaphor with our “inheritance” in Christ.
3. What “identity in Christ” words do we get from verses 4-7? How does knowing who we are in Christ and what our inheritance is make all the difference when it comes to sin, temptation, and living a full life in God?
4. Re-read Galatians 4:6, the Greek word Abba, is an Aramaic diminutive for ‘Father.’ It is the same word Jesus used in prayer to God, like saying, ‘Father, dear Father.’ How are we identified as Sons and Daughters of God according to this verse?
5. Read Romans 8:14-17, how does understanding that God doesn’t simply adopt us and call us sons and daughters, but provides the Holy Spirit as the source of this life and knowledge of sonship, encourage or challenge you tonight?
6. Read John 14:16,26, John 16:13, Mark 13:11, Acts 1:8, The Holy Spirit is a person of the trinity, has many roles in our lives: guide, teacher, comforter, gift-giver, spirit of truth, which of these roles has the Holy Spirit been active in your life this past week with and how did it bless your day?
7. Re-read verses 12- 16. Paul says he became their enemy by telling them the truth. Has this ever happened to you? How does Paul’s persistence, use of endearing terms in the following verses, and his heart for the Galatians encourage you tonight to keep pressing in for those God has called you to pray for, speak the truth to in love, and reach?
8. How does Paul’s pleading and longing for the churches of Galatians to walk and receive the truth, resemble the way God and the Holy Spirit plead and long for us to walk and receive truth?:
9. Has anyone yet to receive Christ and is ready to become a son or daughter tonight? If not, what is holding them back? Praying with your Life Group to understand your identity as sons and daughters of God, spend time praying for anyone who is struggling to receive and walk in this new identity as son or daughter.

Prayer Partner Assignment:

Meet with your prayer partner this week to read and discuss:

1. Read Luke 15:11-32
2. Describe both the younger son and older son?
3. Describe the Father? What surprises you the most about the father and why? How does this picture of the Father impact your heart?
4. Which son do you relate with more and why? The second son did not understand his "son ship." How so?
5. "'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.'" What will you take away with you today from a fresh reading of this verse practically and spiritually

Scripture Memory:

Galatians 4:4-7, "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. 6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."

Romans 8:15, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"