

Galatians 4:1-20

Study Guide

Big Idea: When I rely on my ability, love is lost.

Today, we will follow the progression from being “enslaved”, “redeemed”, “adopted”, and then how some people can regress and fall back into a works-based way of relating to God. When we do this, we no longer are living from a place of love.

1. Read Galatians 4:1-3.

Discuss what Paul means with “enslaved to the elementary...”. Give an example. Why are the “heir” and the “slave” no different here?

2. Read Galatians 4:4-5a.

Why was the arrival of Jesus so timely? What did He come to do? What does “redeem” mean? Discuss the implications of that.

3. Read Galatians 4:5b-7.

Roman adoption involved an elite family choosing an adult son, going through the approval of the Senate, and a ceremony, to then give the son all the rights and privileges of sonship. This involved large amounts of money and entire estates. (Multiple Caesar's adopted adult sons and they were made into rightful successors). What is the implication of the fact that you have been adopted as an adult child into a Father/Son-Daughter relationship with God? How does that change the way you view yourself and the way you live? Discuss.

4. Read Galatians 4:8-20

Here Paul goes from the theological argument to a personal lament. Having been in a loving relationship with the Galatians, they had regressed. Give an example of deep connection with someone based on mutual brokenness. Now discuss the dynamics of verse 17. How does spiritual posing tend to harm love and connection? Discuss.

Application

Spend a few minutes praying together, thanking God for “redeeming” you, and for “adopting” you into His family. Imagine Him as your good Father, with you in the room, and talk freely with Him, as you pray.

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Message Outline

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they be secure who love you." (Psalm 122:6).

1. Be prayerful.
2. Be wise.
3. Be missional.

Galatians- Salvation by faith in Christ alone.

"Bewitched"- Greek: baskain- to fascinate; to charm in a misleading way.

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I. Enslaved (v. 1-3)

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

II. Purchased (v. 4-5a)

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, ...

III. Adopted (v. 5b-7)

...so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Jeremiah 3:19a-

"...I looked forward to your calling me Father..."

III. Adopted (v. 5b-7)

⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

1. The Nature of the Father ("...partakers of the divine nature..." 2 Peter 1:4)
2. The Love of the Father ("...love ... shed abroad in our hearts..." Romans 5:5)
3. The Riches of the Father
Riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7)
Riches of His glory (Phil 4:19)

Riches of His goodness (Romans 2:4)

Riches of His wisdom (11:33)

All the riches of God, found in Christ (Col. 1:19; 2:3).

IV. Regression (v. 8-20)

8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

IV. Regression (v. 8-20 cont.)

10 You observe days and months and seasons and years! 11 I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. 12 Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong.

IV. Regression (v. 8-20 cont.)

13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, 14 and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. 15 What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?

IV. Regression (v. 8-20 cont.)

17 They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. 18 It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, 19 my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! 20 I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

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