

Living as Sons Instead of Slaves (Galatians 4:1-20)

I. Remember Your Redemption From Slavery (1-7)

A. You Were Formerly in Bondage (1-3)

1. Even Heirs are placed under authority until they mature (1-2)
 - a. Paul uses a human example
 - b. Even a child heir is placed under authority although he is the owner of all – in this sense he is no more than a slave
 - c. The child will be under the authority of guardians and managers until the time when the Father deems it appropriate.
2. Like Child Heirs, All men were once held in bondage of elementary principles (3)
 - a. Based on the context of Galatians, the “elementary” things is the law of Moses
 - b. Paul is using this example to show that once Christ has come, the child heir (us) is no longer under the manager (the law) – (this is verified in v. 5 when Paul explicitly states it is the law)
 - c. The meaning of elements or elemental things (στοιχεία) is debated. Paul is using the term to define the law but in other places it means principles of the world, elemental spirits, or basic things.
 - i. It must have been shocking to the Judaizers to hear Paul compare the law to pagan principles or spirits
 - ii. The Galatians had once been Gentiles, serving other gods, now Paul in essence says they are going back to idolatry by turning toward the law for justification.

B. Now You Have Been Adopted As Sons (4-7)

1. God Redeemed You From Bondage (4-6)

- a. God Sent His Son Into the World of Bondage (4)
 - i. The Father Sent the Son in the Fulness of Time
 - Just as the child becomes an full heir at the time the Father determines (v. 2)
 - The time of bondage was fulfilled at Christ’s coming
 - He was born of a woman - He took on flesh like those he came to save
 - He was born under the law - He submitted himself as a servant to the law
 - ii. God’s Son Redeemed Man from the Law (5a)

- We were "under the law" - we were held in bondage by the condemnation of the law because we are unable to keep it
 - Today Christians are not under the law in that sense - Today we have the law written on our hearts by the Spirit and we have a new heart desiring to keep the law.
 - b. God's Son Brought About Our Adoption (5b)
 - By giving himself for us, he bore our condemnation
 - By taking our condemnation, he purchased our right of adoption
 - c. God Has Given His Spirit of Adoption (6)
 - We are God's Sons because the fulfillment of the Spirit has been given.
 - The Spirit of His Son dwells in us which makes us heirs with Christ
 - The Spirit is the fulfillment of the promise
 - 2. Believers Are No Longer Slaves But Sons (7)
 - a. Paul emphatically states that we are no longer slaves to the law
 - b. Paul states that we are now sons and because we are sons - we are also heirs to the promise
- II. Walk in Your Redemption As Sons and Heirs (8-20)
- A. Paul Exhorts Us Not to Return to Slavery (8-12a)
 - 1. The Galatians Desire to Be Slaves Again (8-10)
 - a. The Galatians Used to be slaves to Others (8)
 - i. When we were in bondage, we were estranged from God
 - ii. When we were in bondage, we were slaves to false gods - Again Paul compares slavery to the law to idolatry
 - b. The Galatians Desire to Return to Slavery (9)
 - i. Now those in Christ have come to know God - relationship
 - ii. More importantly - Now in Christ God knows us
 - iii. Paul cannot believe they now desire to return to those same worthless elementary things
 - iv. Paul cannot believe they desire to be enslaved again
 - c. The Galatians are Returning to Ceremonial Rituals (10)
 - i. They desire to return to the Old Testament festivals and feasts
 - ii. They have fallen back into thinking they are right with God because of their religious observances

- iii. The OT Jews kept weekly, monthly, and yearly ritual observances
 - 2. Paul Earnestly Calls The Galatians to Freedom (11-12a)
 - a. Paul Questions the Validity of the Galatian Church (11)
 - i. Paul is legitimately afraid for them - if they knowingly return to law-keeping, they are forsaking the cross
 - ii. If they forsake the gospel, then Paul has labored with them in vain - they are indeed lost
 - b. Paul Begs Them to Come Out From Bondage (12a)
 - i. He asks them to become like Him (forsaking the law as a means of salvation)
 - ii. He has become like them (He is a Jew who lives as a Gentile because he no longer holds the law as a means of being right with God.)
- B. Paul Reminds them of Their Relationship with Him (12b-16)
 - 1. Paul Was Received as an Apostle of God (12a-15)
 - a. The Galatians Received Paul when he first evangelized them (12b-13) -
 - i. They had done him no wrong - the Jews were persecuting him left and right but the Galatians received him (12b)
 - ii. They received Him as a messenger of God even though he was physically infirmed. (there is endless discussion about his ailment - no one knows for certain what it was) (13-14)
 - b. The Galatians Sacrificially Rejoiced in Paul's Gospel (15)
 - i. Paul reminds them of the blessing they received when the Spirit came to them - He asks, "where is that blessing now?" Don't you still have the Spirit? How can you leave the Gospel?
 - ii. Paul reminds them that they showed him great love in response to the Spirit
 - 2. Paul Asks if He is Now Their Enemy (16)
 - a. His only crime is telling them the truth
 - b. Paul is reminding them of their response to the gospel
- C. Paul Warns Them Not To Follow False Teachers (17-20)
 - 1. The Judaizers Seek to Bring them Back into Bondage (17)
 - a. The Judaizers are eager to shut them out of the kingdom
 - b. The Judaizers want them to seek after their teaching - they want to have authority over them
 - 2. Paul Seeks to Have Christ Formed in Them (18)
 - a. Paul says it is good to be sought for a good purpose
 - b. Paul's purpose is to labor so they will be like Christ
 - 3. Paul is Extremely Serious About His Warning (20)

- a. Paul wants to be present with them so they can hear the change in his voice
- b. Paul is serious about his stance against their false gospel
- c. Paul is perplexed that the Galatians are being led astray so easily