

## **THE BLESSINGS OF FAITH**

### **Galatians 4:1-7**

#### **Sola Fide – Week 9**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Have you ever been to the beach? It's hot. You get sand all over you. The water is salty. It's hard to walk on the sand. You get sunburned. So why do so many people go to the beach? Because the benefits far outweigh the cost. The beauty, the serenity, the long walks, the waves, the swimming, the sandcastles. The benefits of the beach far outweigh the costs.
2. The same thing could be said about being a Christian. Being a Christian is not an easy life. If you are looking for the easy life, the easy road, then don't follow Jesus. Following Jesus means you have to do what He says, and not what's easy; not what's comfortable; not what feels good; not what's popular; not what's cool; not what's financially smart; not what's safe. Following Jesus means people might laugh at you, they might reject you, they might persecute you. So why follow Jesus? Because of the blessings. The benefits of following Jesus far outweigh the costs. You gain far more than you lose. This morning we are going to look at some of the blessings of following Jesus.
3. Context: Paul started churches in Galatia and moved on to start churches elsewhere. False teachers followed him in Galatia and taught salvation by works. In response Paul wrote this letter.
4. So far in Galatians Paul has been arguing for the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
  - i. Justification refers to the final judgment. It means when you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, He will declare you righteous and let you into heaven.
  - ii. Justification is man's greatest need and greatest problem. How can we get right with God so He will let us into heaven.
5. Paul has been contrasting two paths to eternal life:
  - i. Law-works: Reliance upon law-keeping to get you to heaven.
  - ii. Faith: Reliance upon Christ's sacrifice to get you to heaven.
6. Main problems with the law path:
  - i. It supplants Christ.
    1. **Galatians 2:21** "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing."
    2. **Galatians 3:13** "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us..."
  - ii. It is futile.
    1. Galatians 3:10
7. Paul makes it very clear that we are justified by faith.

- i. Galatians 2:16
- 8. In this next passage, Paul spells out the blessings that we receive through faith rather than law.

## II. **FOUR BLESSINGS OF FAITH**

### 1. **Redemption.**

- i. **Galatians 4:1-3** “Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a slave, though he is the owner of everything. 2 Instead, he is under guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elements of the world.”
- ii. Paul is using an illustration to contrast faith vs. law-works.
  - 1. Those who rely upon the law are like children.
  - 2. Those who put their faith in Christ are like mature sons.
  - 3. Children in that time period, even if they are set to inherit a fortune, were no different than slaves until they reached maturity. They had no access or authority over their inheritance.
  - 4. In the same way, those who rely on the law are like children – enslaved to the curse of the law. They must keep the law perfectly, but they can’t, and so are doomed to hell.
  - 5. In contrast, Paul is going to say that those who put their faith in Christ rather than in law-works are adopted as mature sons who get to enjoy their full inheritance right away.
- iii. **Galatians 4:4-7** “4 When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God 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 God has made you an heir.”
- iv. Paul goes on to detail five blessings of faith.
- v. The first blessing of faith is redemption.
- vi. **Galatians 4:4-7** “4 When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law”
- vii. God sent Christ to redeem those under the law.
- viii. To redeem something is to set it free.
- ix. In those days slavery was very prominent.
  - x. If your friend was a slave, you could redeem them, or set them free, by paying a ransom.
  - xi. Apart from Christ, we are under the law. We are enslaved to the curse of the law. We need to be perfect to get to heaven, but we are very sinful.
  - xii. But Christ redeems us from the curse of the law.
  - xiii. How?
  - xiv. By becoming a curse for us.

- xv. **Galatians 3:13** “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”
  - 1. Under Jewish law, a criminal was executed and then hung on a tree or a wooden post.
  - 2. That’s what we deserve for breaking God’s law – the curse of death, or eternal separation from God.
  - 3. But Christ became a curse for us. He died for our sins on the wooden cross, paying our penalty.
  - 4. Now, we are no longer under the curse of the law.
- xvi. Redemption from the curse of the law means:
  - 1. We don’t have to try to earn heaven by being good enough – an impossible task. Christ earned it for us.
  - 2. We don’t have to fear God’s wrath for our sins and worry about going to hell. All of God’s wrath was poured out on Christ.
- xvii. I still remember leaving school on my last day of high school. Freedom! I didn’t have to follow the rules; I didn’t have to worry about my grades; I didn’t have to think about the dress code. Freedom! That’s what happens when we believe in Jesus. Redemption! Freedom from the law. We don’t have to work hard to make the grade. We don’t have to worry about failing and going to hell. Christ has saved us!

## 2. Adoption.

- i. **Galatians 4:4-5** “4 When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”
- ii. The second blessing of faith is adoption.
- iii. Paul mentioned this near the end of chapter 3.
- iv. **Galatians 3:26** “for through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus.”
- v. JI Packer is one of the most prestigious Christian theologians of the twentieth century, and in his book *Knowing God* he wrote about the importance of our adoption.
  - 1. He calls it the highest privilege that the gospel offers; even higher than justification. “To be right with God [justification] is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the father is a greater.”
  - 2. The doctrine of adoption “is the nucleus and focal point of the whole NT teaching on the Christian life.”
  - 3. “What is a Christian? The question can be answered in many ways, but the richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God for his Father.”
  - 4. “You sum up the whole of NT religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one’s holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the

thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the NT new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. 'Father' is the Christian name for God."

- vi. When you put your faith in Christ, God doesn't merely declare you righteous and give you the guarantee of heaven. He adopts you as His child, and becomes your Heavenly Father.
- vii. Not everyone is a child of God. God loves everyone. He made everyone. But apart from Christ, you are not a child of God. You are not in His family. He is not your father. Only when you put your faith in Jesus Christ does God adopt you into His family and you become a child of God.
- viii. What does our adoption mean? JI Packer says there are four implications of our adoption in God's family.
  - 1. It implies authority. If God is our Father, then that means He is in charge. He tells us how to live, and as His children our duty is to obey.
  - 2. It implies affection. Just as a father loves his child, so God loves us. And just as a child loves his father, God invites us to love Him.
  - 3. It implies fellowship. God invites us into a more than a master-slave relationship; more than a king-subject relationship; but into a father-child relationship. This implies intimacy. Walking together. Talking together. Knowing each other deeply. Doing life together. As a child of God you have immediate and constant access to your heavenly Father. You can talk to Him about anything at any time.
  - 4. It implies honor. Just as a father desires to give gifts and rewards to his children, our heavenly Father desires the same for us, and will one day give us eternal life, glorified bodies, and many rewards in heaven.
- ix. Do you remember the movie Annie, about the orphan? She lived in a miserable, poor, orphanage. All she wanted was parents. She believed her parents left her there by mistake. But her parents never came for her. But one day she gets adopted by a billionaire, Daddy Warbucks, and her life is never the same. We watch that movie and think, "That would be amazing!" But something greater happens to us when we believe in Jesus. We get adopted by the richest person in all of history; the king of kings and Lord of lords; the creator of the universe; the one who can do anything, knows everything, loves perfectly, and never does anything wrong. He adopts us!

- x. What does a good father do? He provides, protects, teaches, counsels, guides, encourages, loves. Through faith in Christ, we have a heavenly Father who does all of that a more, and perfectly.
- xi. If you never had an earthly father, you have a perfectly heavenly Father who loves you.
- xii. If your father has passed away, you have a perfect heavenly Father who is alive and available to you.
- xiii. If you have a father, but you don't have a good relationship with him, you have a perfect heavenly Father who you can talk to about anything.
- xiv. If you had a terrible father, you have a perfect heavenly Father who will never hurt you or let you down.
- xv. If you are a father but you're not sure how to be a good dad, you have a heavenly Father who will show you how to love your kids.

### 3. Indwelling.

- i. **Galatians 4:6** "And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"
- ii. The third blessing of faith is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- iii. What is the indwelling?
  - 1. When you become a Christian, God sends the Holy Spirit to live inside you.
  - 2. The Christian's heart is the Holy Spirit's home (Pentz, Zingers, 149).
  - 3. This is also known as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:33).
- iv. Five Questions About the Indwelling
  - 1. Who receives the indwelling?
    - a. All Christians.
    - b. How do I know?
    - c. Gal 3:26 says you become a child of God when you put your faith in Christ.
    - d. Gal 4:6 says that if you are a child of God, God sent the Holy Spirit into your heart.
  - 2. When did the indwelling begin?
    - a. On the day of Pentecost.
    - b. In the OT, the Holy Spirit didn't live inside all believers. He would only indwell or empower some people for special tasks, such as kings or prophets.
    - c. After Jesus died and rose again, before He ascended into heaven, He told them to tell the world about Him; to make disciples of all nations.
    - d. But first they were to stay in Jerusalem and wait until He sent them the Holy Spirit to empower them.

- e. On the day of Pentecost, a Jewish holiday, while all the Christians together in one place, the Holy Spirit filled them (Acts 2). From then on, the Holy Spirit has been indwelling Christians.
  - f. "Christ departed so that the Holy Spirit could be imparted." Pentz, Zingers, 149
3. When does the indwelling happen?
- a. Does it happen after you become a Christian, or the moment you become a Christian?
  - b. The moment you believe in Christ and become a Christian, the Holy Spirit indwells you.
  - c. How do we know?
  - d. **Ephesians 1:13** "In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed."
4. Does the Holy Spirit leave?
- a. Can you lose the Holy Spirit?
  - b. No. He never leaves you.
  - c. **1 Corinthians 6:19** "Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,"
  - d. Many Christians in the church of Corinth were very sinful. They were very worldly. Paul doesn't warn them about losing the Holy Spirit. He reminds them that they have the Holy Spirit, and must live accordingly.
5. What does the Holy Spirit do?
- a. He does many things, but we don't have time to go into all of them: He speaks to us and guides us; He helps us understand the Bible and teaches us; He grows us; He comforts us; He empowers us for ministry, and for holy living; He convicts us of sin, etc.
  - b. But this very passage mentions one of the best works of the Holy Spirit: He gives us assurance that we are children of God, and that God is our Father.
  - c. **Galatians 4:6** "And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"
  - d. Abba is the Aramaic term for "father."
  - e. What does this mean that the Holy Spirit cries, "Abba, Father!" Paul clear it up in Romans.
  - f. Romans 8:15-16 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of

adoption, by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father!” 16 The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children”

- g. The Holy Spirit tells us that we are God’s children and moves us to cry out to Him as such.
- h. He gives us assurance that we are children of God; saved; adopted; and that God is our heavenly Father, listening to us, loving us, caring for us, watching us, near to us.
- v. One time a Buddhist monk was asked what he thought was the greatest difference between Christianity and Buddhism. He said, “The greatest difference is that you Christians know what is right and have the power to do it, but we Buddhists know what is right but have no such power.” Where do we get that power? From the indwelling Holy Spirit.

#### 4. Eternal life.

- i. **Galatians 4:7** “So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir.”
- ii. The fourth blessing of faith in Christ is eternal life, or entrance into heaven.
- iii. Paul mentions two things in this verse:
  - 1. You are no longer a slave but a son.
    - a. You are free from the curse of the law.
      - i. You don’t have to keep the law to go to heaven.
      - ii. You don’t have to fear God’s wrath.
  - 2. God has made you an heir.
    - a. You get to receive the blessing promised to Abraham. You become an heir of Abraham.
    - b. What was that promise?
    - c. Justification – or eternal life. Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness (Gal 3:6).
    - d. When you have faith in Christ, God gives you the gift of justification. When you stand at the gates of heaven to be judged, God will declare you righteous.
    - e. Jesus put it this way:
      - i. **John 3:16** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”
- iv. Remember: One day everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and only the righteous will be allowed into heaven. And nobody is righteous. But Christ died for our sins so that if we simply believe in Him, God will justify us, or declare us righteous, and let us into heaven.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. My first pastor was the pastor of First Baptist Church of Lafayette, named Perry Sanders. One evening he went to North Louisiana to preach, and on the way home they stopped at a gas station. After filling the car up with gas, he went inside the store and said to the lone employee, “Are you ready to die tonight?” The employee hit the floor, thinking he was about to be robbed. When he realized he was not being robbed, he listened as Perry Sanders told him how to be sure he was going to heaven – by believing in Jesus Christ.
2. Most of you here today have already put your faith in Jesus. You are saved. You are Christians.
3. But some people here today have been hesitating. You’re not sure if you want to become a Christian.
4. Why not? When you ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior,
  - i. He redeems you from the law. You don’t have to worry about being good enough to go to heaven. You don’t have to worry about going to hell.
  - ii. He adopts you in God’s family. You now have a loving heavenly Father that will take care of you, and that you can talk to any time you want.
  - iii. He places the Holy Spirit to live inside of you. God lives in you!
  - iv. He gives you eternal life, so that you can know for sure that when you die, you will go to heaven.
5. So how do you become a Christian and get saved?
  - i. A – admit you are sinner; you cannot save yourself and need a Savior.
  - ii. B – believe in Jesus; that He died for you and rose again.
  - iii. C – call on Jesus to save you; ask Him to be the boss of your life.