

Sons Not Slaves

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Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0:00] Thank you, AJ. Let's pray together. Father, we're asking this morning that you would get some convincing done.

Lord, would you convince your children in this room that they are in fact your sons and daughters. God, for those of your children who came into this building this morning more aware of their failures, more aware of coming to you in fear, God, would you impress upon them this morning that you love them as much as you have ever loved them.

That you've given them the full right of sonship. And that you've secured a loving relationship with them through the death of Jesus. God, we pray for the Bickles Grand Adorena.

God, would you pour out your mercy on her as she's pulled out of a coma today or tomorrow. God, would you save her.

God, we do pray as well for Second Baptist Church. We thank you for our brothers and sisters in that congregation who are 100 years old today and celebrating that.

[1:26] God, we rejoice with them. We pray that, God, you would pour out your spirit on Demetrius, the lead pastor there. And we ask that you would bless that church's ministry.

That you would gather for yourself more and more followers of Jesus. That, God, you would use that church to bring gospel blessing to this city.

God, we thank you so much that we have so much in common with so many brothers and sisters in this city who you have called to be your own. Now, Father, would you pour out your spirit afresh upon us.

Give us eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to cry out to you. Abba, Father, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

You may be seated. Children, you may go to your Sunday school class with God's blessing. If you'd open up to your Bibles to Galatians chapter 4.

[2:28] Thank you again, AJ, for reading. That was a joy. Now, imagine with me, my wife, Jenny, who wasn't able to be here this morning.

Let's just pretend that we adopt a little boy from Venezuela. His name is Victor. And Victor's five years old, and we bring him home, and we've paid all the expenses for this adoption.

We have gone through all of the complicated paperwork in order for him to release his Venezuelan citizenship, to become a U.S. citizen, and to become a legal son of Mike and Jenny Salvati.

We put him in our will. He's going to receive an inheritance. We love him. We love this Victor. And his fellow brothers and sisters, they love him too.

But let's say this Victor, when he turns six years old, he approaches me, and he says, you know, Mr. Salvati, he doesn't call me dad.

[3:35] He doesn't call me pops. Mr. Salvati, I really appreciate you welcoming into your family. I'll keep mowing the lawn.

I'll keep making my bed. I'll try to make you proud of me for the good grades I get at school.

Whatever I do, I'll do it out of respect for you.

Just don't kick me out of your family. At that point, if you were in on that conversation, I'd probably be kind of looking at him and thinking, hmm, Victor, I think, I think you're failing to understand something.

In fact, I'm concerned for you, son. I'm concerned you don't understand that you are rightfully my son. And I love you.

It's a similar concern that Paul is writing for these Galatian Christians in the first century. You pick up on this concern in verse 11. I'm afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

[4:54] Why? Verse 10. You observe days and months and seasons and years. These Christians in Galatia who became Christians in the first century, Paul had been there, preached the gospel, and left, and then these false teachers came in and began teaching them that in order for them to be good with God, they needed to not only believe in Jesus, but they also needed to be circumcised.

They needed to take up kind of Jewish dietary regulations, so no more pork for you. And then, they needed to start observing the Jewish calendar. That's the reference in verse 10.

You observe days, months, seasons, and years. Paul gets wind of all this stuff, and he's like, I don't think you guys are getting it. You don't need to do any of this anymore.

None of this observance is going to get you into God's family or keep you in God's family. I'm afraid that you missed it.

I'm concerned that you don't understand what the gospel is. For many people in this room, we approach God not as calling him our loving father, but in our hearts, we approach it more like this.

[6:18] Oh, dear Mr. God. Oh, dear Mr. Jehovah. Oh, dear Mr. Judge of all. You're really nice. You're very powerful.

Thank you so much for showing me your kindness. But I promise I'll not sin like that again. Just don't kick me out of your family. And when we pray like that, you know what it reveals?

It reveals that we think somehow God's love for us is dependent on our obedience to him.

Somehow we have this power power by obedience to keep ourselves into his family.

It's a soft form of what's called legalism. When you import your obedience into your standing with God. And so this morning, I believe that God through his word wants to convince those of us who are in Christ of this truth.

God wants to convince you that you are no longer a slave living in fear, praying Mr. God, Mr. Judge prayers.

[7:37] You're no longer a slave, but you, by his grace, are his son and with confidence you can call him father. So this morning, if I were to sum up this whole sermon, this whole passage, I'd say it like this.

In Christ, you're no longer a slave, you are a son. You have been given the right of sonship. So here's how we're going to proceed this morning.

We've got this passage, verses 1-11 in chapter 4. I'm going to focus in on verses 3-7, but I will be making reference to verses 1-2 and 8-11.

Just, I won't be spending too much time there because the gospel action is in verses 3-7. And what we're going to see is this before and after situation.

A then and now with this game-changer event in between. Has anybody seen the show Extreme Makeover? Home Edition?

[8:42] With Ty Pennington? I see that hand. I see that one hand. I see two hands. Three hands. Well, here's the idea. There's this family in need in a dumpy house.

Ty Pennington and his crew get word of it. They show up. He and his designers and super carpenters, they kick that family out and for a week they make this house into something spectacular and then they bring this family back.

They put them in front of a big bus. They say, move that bus. Bus moves. They see this new home and they're like, that is amazing. And then some banker comes up and say, we paid the mortgage. Here's the key. And it's, woo! Here we have in Galatians 4, 1 through 11, an extreme makeover, gospel style.

You go from being a slave living in fear to being a son living in confidence. And the change is the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

[9:46] Christ. You guys ready? Let's dig in. If you're in Christ, you're not a slave anymore. You've been given the right of sonship.

So in verse 3, we're going to see the before. And we read in verse 3, we start reading and we relate, in the same way, we also.

And immediately, you feel like you've just walked into someone's family room into a conversation. You're like, what is going on here? When Paul says, in the same way also, he is making a comparison, comparison to what he's just written in verses 1 and 2, and he's going to compare it to

what he is about to write in verses 3 through 7.

So in the same way also. And the comparison he's making, in verse 1 and 2, is that of a first century Roman heir of an inheritance.

Let's just say he's going to get \$250,000. And the point that Paul is making is, this heir of \$250,000, before a certain time is set, he's a miner.

[11:00] And he doesn't have access to that \$250,000. So in one sense, he's loaded, but in another sense, he has no access to it. And so he's like everybody else that doesn't have \$250,000.

In Paul's word, the heir is like a slave. That's the before. And then we get to the after.

And we see that in verse 2, where Paul says, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

Until the date set by his father. On that date, where the master, who the giver of the inheritance says, at this date, my son can have that \$250,000.

Until then, he's under managers and guardians. He's under the estate lawyers. He's keeping him from accessing that \$250,000. But when that date comes, that heir is no longer under those estate attorneys, but he's got free and full access to the inheritance.

[12:12] And the game changer is that word until. Until the date set by the father. At that time, at that precise moment, that heir who's like a slave gets access to the full inheritance and he's free.

So what we see going on in 1 and 2 is we have a before and we have an after and there's this game changer time event in between. And so when Paul says in verse 3, in the same way also, he's referring back to that.

It's getting a time frame in our minds. And what Paul says in verse 3 is, in the same way also, when we were children, when we were like that heir who was more like a slave, when we were children, look what he says.

When we were children, we were enslaved. But what Paul's about to say is we weren't enslaved to a tax estate, an estate attorney.

We were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world, which is a mouthful, which thousands of scholars have written millions of pages to explain what this is.

[13:33] So let me take a stab. What does it mean to be enslaved to the elementary principles of the world? Well, what you need to understand is Paul is talking in the past tense.

He's talking about what was true of us before we were converted unto Christ. We were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

Some say this is a reference to demons. Others say this is a reference to the essential building blocks of planet Earth. Other people argue that these are ideas, worldly ideas of being.

I tend to think with others that it's kind of a compilation of it all. It'd be akin to, if you flip over to Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1 and 2, and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

Here's what I think, generally speaking, Paul is getting at. being enslaved to the elementary principles of this world. It's a worldly approach to life.

[14:47] It's a basic default position of one's heart on life. The elementary principles of this world.

It's kind of like this. when we boil it down to it, it boils down to who are you trusting to rescue yourself?

And the elementary principle of the world is to say you need to trust yourself to rescue yourself. Self-made saviors.

So whether that's a religious context, whether it's Judaism or whether it's Islam or whether it's Confucianism or Buddhism, or what's some kind of paganism or some kind of secularism, what they all have in common is this humanism, this man at the center, this man-mediated salvation, whether it's religious or secular, what they have all in common is that it all depends on me.

And if you look forward to verse 9, Paul says something very interesting about this, these elementary principles of the world. He's saying to these Gentiles, 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?

[16:28] Weak and that they are powerless to save and worthless because they are powerless to save. They have no value.

So any system that is promoting a dependence on oneself oneself to get saved or stay saved falls into this elementary principle of the world.

This is worldly way of thinking. And the world classically defined is all of humanity in opposition to God living for anything but the one true God.

So this is any approach to life that makes human beings their own saviors.

And it's our default position. Does anybody have a computer and when they go to print they have a default printer set?

[17:33] It drives me nuts. I bring my computer home. I want to print something out. I go to print it. I print it. Nothing happens. I go into the settings.

Oh, it's on the wrong printer. I adjust it and then it prints. All of us came out of our mamas with a default setting in our hearts for salvation.

Sinfully set on ourselves. And so what Christians are called to do is to remember we have a new Savior Jesus.

And if you're like me I've got to go into the settings every day to remind myself of that. And that's essentially what Paul is doing here for these Galatian Christians.

You see Jews were seeking to earn God's blessing by the observance to the Old Testament law. and Gentiles were seeking to earn standing with whatever their pagan God was by obedience and sacrifice.

[18:42] And what they have in common is both are trying to earn their salvation in the eyes of whatever God they are seeking to serve. What they have in common are self-made saviors.

And I think that's getting at the very principle the sense of these elementary principles of the world. and it's complicated because there's demonic activity involved.

It's complicated because there's things built into our systems and cultures that work against this. But at its heart it's this posture of an unbelieving heart to trust in themselves to get right with God. Both are legalism. Man-centered salvation. And what I want to impress upon you is that they are weak and worthless.

They cannot save and because they cannot save they are of no value. In fact there's no blessing in it. God doesn't bless that.

[19:49] That provokes God's curse because instead of trusting God as the one and only Savior you're turning to other saviors and it's grievous in God's sight.

This was our state slavery beforehand. We were trying to live for ourselves. But that all changed because God did something that was a gospel game changer.

And so we've gone from beforehand verse 3 we were enslaved to this self-made Savior complex and now we go into the gospel game changer.

We see that in verses 4 and 5. These are some of the most lovely verses for you to see. We read 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.

Remember in verse 2 Paul talked about hey in this illustration opening illustration he talked about you're under these managers this heir until the time set by the father. This is Paul's use of that illustration.

[21:16] The time set by the father. Verse 4 but when the fullness of time had come the fullness of time is talking about a specific moment that God had been planning on.

Now if you are a pregnant woman in the room you understand the concept of fullness of time more than anybody because if you're three months pregnant you're like no the fullness of time hasn't come. If you're six months pregnant you're like I'm closer to the fullness of time but not the fullness of time has come and when you're nine months pregnant and you're ready to pop the fullness of time has come.

This baby is coming. So when we read about the fullness of time has come look back in verse 23 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.

God has been orchestrating all of history all of time for a particular moment. God the father the first person of the trinity he's not ruled by time he rules time and he is orchestrating historic events and times for his glorious purpose and we see it right here but when the fullness of time had come what did God in his sovereignty do?

God sent forth his son the second person of the trinity this son is of course Jesus Christ and what you need to understand in this sending forth of the son is that Jesus didn't come into existence when he was sent by the father because the second person of the trinity has eternally existed with the first person of the trinity and the third person of the trinity for eternity past so the sending of the second person of the trinity was the sending of God so in the fullness of time God was orchestrating time human history all the actors on the stage just in time at the right time to send Jesus the second person of the trinity to earth remember

[24:09] John 3 16 for God so loved the world that he gave he sent his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life in love God sent his son at just the right time perfect timing in the sending of the son God in the flesh notice Paul is very specific he wants us to understand a couple things about this son Jesus he's born of a woman which means this he's fully man it could be a reference way back to the earliest proclaiming of the gospel in Genesis 3 where the offspring of Eve would be born to crush the head of the serpent it could be that but most likely the emphasis is on Jesus humanity he was fully man born of a woman he is the second person of the trinity fully

God but he's fully man and then we learn as well that he's born under the law here's what that means just as all of us in one sense are under the law imprisoned by the law Jesus was born under the Mosaic law all 613 commandments he was born under them and Jesus did what none of us can do do you know who Simone Bales is the gymnast she's won more gold medals than anybody else have you seen her stick something she's like bop bop bop bop stuck ten Jesus every day of his life stuck tens and his attitude and his actions and his feelings he fulfilled all 513 613 commandments of the

Mosaic law every day of his life 24 7 365 110 after another stick stick stick stick perfect fulfilling on all God's commands in attitude and action and feeling he did what none of us can do because we've already learned from Galatians 3 that we've been imprisoned by the scriptures the law is a jailer to us it exposes how much we fail we don't hit 10 after 10 after 10 we hit 1.2 0.7 all of us come up short all the time and the law exposes that but what the law reveals in the coming of the son is Jesus fulfilled it all so let me kind of sew this together in this sense do you know why Paul wants you to know that Jesus the second person of the trinity was born of a woman and born under the law do you know what that makes

Jesus it makes him the perfect substitute makes him the perfect substitute for those under the curse of the law and so in verse five we read this to redeem those under the law so that excuse me born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive the adoption as sons those are two purpose clauses the perfectly timed sending of this perfect substitute was on purpose to redeem us to redeem those who were under the law for those of us who have been exposed by God's law exposed we know we come up short there's nothing that we can do it imprisons us and we are just hearing guilty guilty guilty condemned condemned by the law Jesus was sent by the father in order to redeem us from the law that word redeem is a great word it means to purchase out of slavery to ransom someone from the power of another and Jesus came and he gave his life as a ransom for all who would believe in order to pull us rescue us from the curse of law by becoming a curse for us he came to redeem us you know when you've got a pocket full of coal's cash and you go to coal's and you're like hey I'm redeeming this I'm buying those jeans with this coal cash Jesus came to earth to redeem us not with coal's cash with his blood on the cross and by the way

[29:26] Jesus just didn't redeem us from the penalty of our sins he came to rescue us from the slavery to self made saviors this enslavement to

these elementary principles of the world that we default to he came to save us from that so he has come he was sent as a liberator to redeem us from the whole cocktail of sin of under the law of under and enslaved to these elementary principles of the world but it wasn't just to redeem us he came for more he came to grant you a right the second purpose clause so that we might receive adoption as sons not only to rescue us from sin and slavery he came so that we might receive literally translated sonship the right of sonship to be made sons of

God if you're in Christ you're no longer a slave you're a son that's what the father sent the son for in first century greco-roman culture wealth was passed on from a father to a son and so if a father didn't have a son do you know what he would do he would adopt a full grown man he would give him the right of sonship so that he could pass all of his wealth on to this man and keep that wealth in his family which means this sonship doesn't travel down DNA the point that Paul is making is this right of sonship of becoming an heir of God comes all by God's grace by his declaration you don't need to become a

Jew in order to receive the blessing of Abraham you got to be in Christ to receive the right of sonship so when God sent his son he sent with him the right of sonship for all who would believe in Christ this right is based on sealed with the finished work of Jesus Christ so when you trust Jesus and you're given the right of sonship it is irrevocable because Christ earned it for you in other words there's nothing that we can do in and of ourselves to earn or obey our way into the right of sonship it's received by faith because it's given by grace so do you know why you're no longer a slave to the law a slave to these elementary principles of the world it's because if you're in

Christ you have received the full right of sonship and it is a gospel game changer and now we go to after before we were slaves there was the gospel game changer God sent his son to redeem and to give the right of sonship and now after what happens what's true of us we find that out in verses 6 and 7 Paul says and because you are sons God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba Father so you're no longer a slave but a son and if a son then an heir through God we've got another sending the first sending was the first person of the Trinity the father sending the second person of the Trinity the son and now in verse 6 we have the first person of the Trinity sending the third person of the

Trinity right into your heart it's another sending God so loves you child of God the triune God of the universe loves you so much he has gone to great lengths to call you as his own and to secure you in a relationship with him the moment you believe the moment you're converted the moment you say yes to Jesus I can't do it on my own Jesus I'll take what you have to give at that moment you believe the Holy Spirit comes and indwells you God sent him to you this is the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 it's the hallmark of the new covenant God sending his spirit to make stony hearts flesh hearts so that they would obey

[34:58] God want to obey him you see God the father sent God the son so that when you believe in that and you're given the right of sonship the spirit is sent in order to validate your sonship changing changing your heart from wanting to live for me to wanting Abba father you've given a whole new heart by the spirit it's a new heart cry it is something that happens inside of you by the holy spirit in which you want your father you cry out to your father if you're in the room and you have been raised in a context where your father was anything but loving or anything but presence this may be hard for you to swallow but think about it the third person of the trinity he is wanting to do a work in you in which you cry out to

God the father who is all loving all trust worthy always working for your good you never have to question his motives you don't need to fear his wrath because it was all poured out on Jesus the son and he will never leave you nor forsake you to that father the spirit is working in your heart to say father there is some teaching out there that says this in order to demonstrate that you're a Christian the moment you believe you should speak in tongues tongues of the Holy Spirit it validates the work of God in you well it's just not true but you know what is true it's a different spirit language when you are converted and you trust Christ the spirit comes and lives inside of you and cries out through your heart Abba father it's a spirit language it's a new heart this is the same

wording in

Romans 8 15 where Paul is writing the Romans these Roman Christians and saying the spirit bears witness that you are sons of God crying out Abba father do you know why it's Abba father Abba is a term of intimacy but that's not the real reason why if you flip back in your Bible to Mark chapter 14 verse 36 Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane do you know who he addresses his God Abba father the spirit of the son is doing a work in your heart to call out with Christ Abba father validating that you are in fact a legitimate son of God so I have a quick question for you here when you call out to God when you pray is your heart crying out to

God your father from a deep down sense that you belong to him because of what Christ has done are you calling out from a secure loving relationship to God the father or when you pray to God are you praying the bargaining prayers the Mr.

God Mr. Jehovah Mr. Judge of all prayers you're not addressing him as father you're praying with a certain degree of fear and wincing and saying things like well I promise I'll never do that again God just don't kick me out of your people if it's the former there's a work of God going on in you and rejoice if it's the latter you know what you need to do you need to call out to God the father and say oh God would you pour your spirit out on me show me what Christ has done for me and I'm confident that soon thereafter you will find yourself a work inside of you which you know is not of yourself by which you're calling God as your own father the difference is confidence of a son and the fear of a slave if you're in

[39:59] Christ you're no longer a slave you're a son you've been given the right of sonship so let me scoot to verse seven we read so you're no longer a slave but a son and if a son then an heir through God so so what we've seen so far is before we were slaves to the elementary principles of the world and then we saw the gospel game changer Jesus was sent by God the father to redeem and for us to receive sonship and then so far the result is the spirit has come to dwell in us validating our sonship and in verse seven we see a very interesting phrase so you are no longer a slave but a son and if a son then an heir through God an heir a recipient of the inheritance all that

God promised to Abraham is yours in Christ and it's through God when I'm traveling with my family and I'm driving it's not unusual for this to happen driving along everybody's in back Jenny's in the side they're doing their thing I'll be driving like did you see that did you see the giant musky statue most people most of my family missed it we're driving by O'Hare did you see that 747 missed it we've been making our way through this text and I'm going to ask you the question did you see it did you see the trinity did you see the God the triune

God working for the good of his sons and daughters in verse 4 God the father ordained our sonship verse 5 verse 4 and 5 God the son accomplished our sonship in verse 6 God the spirit applied sonship to us Abba father what we see here is this status as being God's son being heirs to the promise it comes through God he's already done it it's all by his grace so when we read in verses 8 through 11 Paul says hey when you didn't know God beforehand before you were converted you were enslaved to those pagan gods then you didn't know any better but now that you have come to know

God or rather be adopted by the father being given the right of sonship how can you then turn back again to those powerless and valueless elementary principles of the world that are just trying to save yourself by observing religious calendars eating the right things getting circumcised that doesn't save you none of that what we see is that our sonship has been secured by the triune God the father ordained it the son accomplished it in the spirit applied it so maybe this morning you came into here praying those kind of prayers where you're not calling on your father as father but you're calling on him as Mr.

God if you're in Christ you don't need to do that anymore you're no longer a slave you're a son I started off this sermon with an illustration about Victor what would you say to Victor what would you say to Victor if you heard him saying to me his adoptive father Mr.

[44:36] Salvati I'll do I'll mow the lawn I'll make my bed just don't kick me out of your family you know what I'd say to him Victor I don't think you get it there's nothing that you need to do in order to get or stay in our family I've done everything you need so that you are in our

family and I love you and for many of you this morning you need to hear this there's nothing that you need to do in order to stay in the family of God because God the triune God has done everything to make you a son and daughter you're no longer a slave if you're in Christ you are a son let's pray God thank you so much for this section of scripture would you press it into our hearts would you help us to live in the freedom of being your sons and not in the fear of being slaves you've delivered us from that by the power of the gospel of

Jesus Christ spirit of God would you bear witness to our spirits that we are in fact your children