

The Gospel's Defense: Sons of God

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[0 : 00] Galatians chapter 3, beginning in verse 25. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you were baptized into Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free man. There is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

And if you belong to Christ, then you're Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave, although he is owner of everything.

But he is under guardians and managers until the day set by the Father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage underneath the elemental things of the world.

[1 : 10] But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son.

And if a son, then an heir through God. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for your word. We recognize that apart from you speaking, we would not know anything.

Apart from you sharing and giving to us your perfect treasure in the word of God, we even have no hope. And so, Lord, I pray that you would help us.

I pray that you would give us understanding of your word. We might know how we ought to believe and act and live in this world. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

[2 : 18] Just going to go back again and again as we look at what's going on in Galatians. The Judaizers are telling these Gentile Christians that they're not going to get an inheritance as children of Abraham because they're not really Jews, because they've not been circumcised.

Paul is fighting that false gospel. He's fighting it first by telling them that the gospel is from God, and it's not about faith but works.

It's not about promise but law. And today, it's about being sons of God. So what I want us to do is I want us to explore just a little bit about what it means to be sons of God.

And I want to do that under three questions. The first is who are the sons of God? In other words, how would we identify them if we were to look at them today and say, well, these are the sons of God.

Who are they? And there's three things about that. Number one, the sons of God are all those who have faith in Christ. Faith in Christ. You'll notice verse 26 says, for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

[3 : 27] So these Galatians, he's telling them, listen, if you have faith in Christ, you're a son of God. They have the conviction of the truth of the gospel, and they have a commitment to the Christ of the gospel.

And because of that, they're sons of God. Secondly, all who are united to Christ, united to Christ. This is kind of a strange way.

We don't normally talk about this in a lot of Baptist circles, but this is a truth from Scripture we need to grasp. It comes from verse 27, where he says, for all of you were baptized into Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ.

That's strange. Let's talk about it for a second. Break that up into a couple of phrases. Number one, what does it mean to be baptized into Christ? Well, it means that it was something that happened to

the Galatians in their past, once for all, done to them.

They're baptized into Christ, not into water, not into the church or anything else. It's a spiritual reality. One of the things about the word baptized in the New Testament is that it means that two things sort of come together and become one.

[4 : 39] Or if you will, one thing is put into another, and it takes on the characteristics of that other. It's like Judas sitting at the Last Supper. He takes the bread. He dips it in the bowl.

Jesus says, the one who betrays me dips his bread in the bowl with me. The word there for dip is baptize. Judas baptized that bread in that bowl, right?

So it became one with what's in that bowl. So the next time you go to Pabst, order some olive oil with garlic, take the bread and say, I baptize you.

Now take and do all you can to get that olive oil off that bread. There's no way. You can't do it because it has become one with that olive oil, right?

This is what we're saying, that we're baptized into Christ. We're made one with Christ. We're immersed in Christ in a spiritual way at our conversion, and therefore we are clothed with Christ.

[5 : 40] We are covered with Christ. You can just imagine that if something is immersed, it gets covered, right? So we're covered with Christ, which means what we've been talking about all along, our justification, our being clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

So what Paul is saying is that all who are of faith and all who are united to Christ are sons of God. And there's one more thing I want to pull out here, verse 28, and it's all of all sorts.

Verse 28, Paul applies this faith and union with Christ, this oneness with Christ, to these various class divisions that are in the church.

First, Paul points out that sons of God can come from those who are Jews or Greeks. And by Greeks, he means Gentiles. A Jew is no more a son of God than a Greek is a son of God. Both are just as much sons of God because they come to God in the exact same way, faith in Christ.

[6 : 51] Secondly, Paul points out that sons of God can come from free men and slaves.

Regardless then of the economic or social status of a person, a rich person is no more a son of God than a poor person or a slave.

Both come to God in exactly the same way because faith is the great equalizer of humanity. We come to God by faith.

Third, Paul points out male and female is the new American standard, but the Greek words are really men and women. Paul is saying that regardless of which you are, if you are a man or you are a woman, you are both, because of faith in Christ, sons of God.

A woman who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has trusted in him, she is as much a son of God as any man. And I know that sounds weird.

It sounds like that doesn't even make any sense, but we're going to come back to it in a second, and it'll make all kinds of sense to you. So this is who is a son of God.

[8 : 01] A son of God is defined not by your DNA, not by your social standing, not by your upbringing, not by whether or not you've done something great or not, or whether you've been kind or gentle or whatever.

A son of God is someone who trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ. Plain and simple. That means that not everyone is a son of God. But as Christians, what this means for us is that this is our identity.

You need to walk around, rather than trying to label yourself in the way the world does with about 20 different labels, you have one label. You are a son of God. That is your identity.

You know, we have all kinds of questions, basic questions in life. Basic questions we all need to be asking and answering. Who are you?

Why are you here? What are you supposed to do with your life? Who is your family? How should you view this world?

[9 : 14] Because you are a son of God, the answers to those questions are already given in his word. And any person who seeks to try to make their own identity, who seeks to craft their own image apart from God and apart from his word, history shows us and teaches us, it always ends in either some insanity of the person because they cannot belong to themselves, or they become hostile to God or to the Lord's people.

As a Christian, your identity, listen, listen, your identity is not the sin that you sinned. Your identity is not the trauma that has happened to you.

Your identity is not your behavior. Your identity, it's not even your parents. Your identity is that you are a son of God.

And so ladies, you understand what that means for you. If you have trusted Christ, if you are a Christian, then you are a son of God.

And the reason this is important, the reason Paul does not call you daughters of God is because in the Roman Empire, a daughter did not have full inheritance rights.

[10:44] But in Christ, you have full inheritance rights in Christ.

You are as much, you are as much a son of God with full blessing and inheritance from the Lord God Almighty as any man among us.

This is our identity. We are sons of God. And so I would just say, we need to act like it. We need to act like it. Let's talk then about my second question here.

How did we become sons of God? How did this happen? I know part of what I just said answers that question, right? Faith and union with Christ. So that's there, but there's more to it.

I'm looking more of the background to this and it's really the work of Christ that we're going to look at. Verses one through five, chapter four gives us this answer and it gives us two answers.

[11:47] One is the incarnation. The other is the redemption. How did we become sons of God?

We became sons of God first because the incarnation makes us sons of God.

The incarnation makes us sons of God. In verses one through three, Paul is setting up this analogy that a child is held under guardians until the date set by the father.

The father's got this date. You're going to be under guardians. You're going to be under tutors. You can't get your license. You're a provisional driver. You're not free to just do what you want to.

There's a date set.

When that date is reached, then you can be free. Then you can be on your own. Then you can be a full-fledged driver, if you will. That's the analogy that Paul is setting up.

So he comes to verse four, the verse that we all know, in the fullness of time, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law.

[12:43] Do you get the feel of that? It's at the right time. Do you know when Christ came? I mean, we think to ourselves, well, maybe Christ could have come at any time in history, but no, this is the perfect time in history.

There was never a time before this that there was such a one world government. There was never such a time when the language had come back together to being almost one single language.

There was never a time when all of the countries were connected by these roads that Rome built.

What an irony of God to take the roads of the enemy and use it to spread the gospel at just the right time, in the fullness of time, when time was ripe and ready, the date set by the father, the father sent forth his son.

This sent forth is, he apostled his son. The word apostle means sent one. And so the father sent his son. This is not the son's idea trying to placate an angry father.

This is the father's idea. Sending his son into this world, born of a woman, fully human, born under the law. And this is where we start getting this put together.

[13:55] When we are born, we are born under Adam. Because of that, we're born under law.

The law stands to condemn us. The law stands to expose us. The law then is the tutor that leads us to Christ. He was born under the law.

He came to be the second Adam. But he had to be born under the law like the first Adam because the first Adam failed. The second Adam succeeds.

The debt that Adam, the first Adam incurred because of his sin could not be satisfied by our death because that sin was an infinite offense to God.

And only the perfect son of God could pay off that offense so that he became as the second Adam the head of a new race.

[15:00] This is how the incarnation makes us sons. But secondly, the redemption of Christ makes us sons because here in verse 5 he goes further telling us that this redemption is so that he redeems us those who are under the law.

Redeem. Redeem. Remember, is to buy back. There would be a situation that might happen. You might have lots of debt and you would go to the marketplace. You would stand around and you would try to get people to buy up your debt.

If they buy up your debt then you went home with them and you became their indentured servant until you could pay it off. The image of Christ redeeming us as he comes into the marketplace he sees your sin debt he pays it off and says you're free.

He redeemed by his blood upon the cross. He redeemed us from the weight and the curse and the condemnation of the law. Why?

So that we might receive adoption as sons. In other words, the work of Christ, his incarnation, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his ruling, his reigning, his return, through all the work of Christ we have been adopted as sons of God and that's how we're made sons of God by the work of Christ.

[16:20] In other words, the work of Christ does so much more for us than just giving us a get out of hell free card. You played Monopoly. You love to get that little card get out of jail free. I mean, you'd sit there and you'd spend every bit of money you got in property just to get that because that just slows you down.

And so often people have looked at Christianity as that's all there is. That's all there is. There's some God ready to just pounce on us and destroy us and there's nothing else that we need. Just get your fire insurance and that's it.

But Christ did not die just to give us fire insurance just to get us out of hell and then leave us to do what we want. That's a deist approach to the gospel. No, he bought you, he owns you, and he wants to give you more than just fire insurance.

He wants to give you He's adopting you as His Son. You were His enemy. We were born God-haters. We were born not wanting anything to do with Him.

We were wanting to call our own shots, be our own boss. But the work of Christ has made us not just forgiven, not just okay, not just set free, but sons of God.

[17:31] The problem is is that being a son of God brings us great joy, but there is a sadness to it.

And the sadness is the truth that not everybody is a son of God. some of you, you have relatives, you have friends, you have people you love, and it is not automatic that they are a son of God. Becoming a son doesn't happen because of who your parents were, where you were born, what church you attend, what religious activities you get involved in.

It comes because you recognize your sin and you turn to Christ for salvation. It happens because you see yourself dead in sins and the Spirit calls you and gives you life.

I don't know if you know this, if you go to the City Data website and you look up zip code 78055, there are 2,700 people in that zip code.

[19:00] 2,700 people in zip code 78055. And on any given Sunday, take a census of this church, that church, that church, that church, Kerrville Church, Bandera Church, another church a little ways away, people will drive all kinds of distances to go to church.

I would be hard-pressed to say that 2,000 of those people go every Sunday. What I'm saying to you is this, there are more non-sons of God in this zip code than we would like to think and believe.

why does this church exist? We exist for the glory of God, for the spread of his fame.

And this county, this zip code, just this zip code, has enough people in us in this zip code to keep us busy for a long time spreading the gospel.

Becoming a son is not automatic, and we need to do everything we can to take the gospel to this entire zip code. The first step is to test yourself to see if you are in the faith.

[20:23] Are you one who belongs to Christ? Are you one who has been united to Christ? Is he your soul identity?

Do you love Jesus? Secondly, we need to spread the gospel. And by all means, learn your story, learn your testimony, use your testimony, but do not stop there.

The testimony is not the power of God unto salvation. Romans chapter 1 verse 16, Paul says, for I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

You can share your story, and you should. You should know your story. You should know how you got saved, and you should rewrite your story and make it line up with what the word says about the gospel and how people are saved.

It doesn't need to be about this person or that person or what happened there. It needs to be about you were lost in sin, Christ saved you, and you were living for him today.

[21:33] But that testimony is just to be an introduction to the real story, and that's the story of Jesus Christ and what he has done. The power of God to save people is in the gospel, not my

testimony.

Know it, share it, but get to the gospel. gospel. Because you see, someone's not going to become a son of God until the Lord reaches out to them first.

And if you're not a Christian, and I would dare say that it's very possible that there's someone in here who's not a believer, not a Christian, you will never become a son of God until you turn from your sin and you turn to Christ.

Our culture is so full of this concept when someone, when they lose someone, everyone's talking, you know, about heaven, like everybody gets to heaven, right? Have you noticed that? That throughout our whole culture, everyone's in a better place, everyone's in a better place.

You and I as Christians know that it's those who love the Lord, those who he has saved, they're the ones that go on to a better place. And so we've got a culture out there deceived. Heaven is not automatic.

[22 : 55] Only the sons of God who have seen their sin and their wretchedness and have repented and turned to Christ who are sons of God will ever enter into heaven.

And I don't want you to go there. I want you to trust in Christ. I just said that backwards, but you get what I mean. you get what I mean.

I don't want you to miss heaven. I want you to go. Third question, what does it mean to be a son? Verse 6 and 7 chapter 4 means two things. Number one, it means that we have the spirit of Christ in us. It means we have the spirit of Christ in us. You'll notice that verse 4, the father sent forth the son, but look at verse 6, the father sent forth the spirit of his son.

I love that parallel. The father apostled his son and the father apostled the spirit. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. The Trinity, for a second, there is one God and three distinct indivisible persons.

[24 : 12] They share one and the same divinity and glory, yet the father is not the son, and the son is not the spirit, and the spirit is not the father. Father is the first, the son is the second, the spirit is third, and so the spirit comes, he comes, and becomes the spirit of Christ once Christ has come and died and risen again.

It is the spirit of Christ whose drive it is to glorify Christ, to honor Christ. That's what he does. The spirit does not draw attention to himself.

He draws attention to the son. That's what John chapter 16 verse 13 and 14 is about. As Jesus shares his promise to the apostles for the apostles' sake, he says, but when he, the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

That's for the apostles, not for us. We benefit from it. Whole nother sermon. For he will not speak of his own initiative, but whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify me, for he will take of mine and disclose it to you. It is the spirit's role to glorify Christ.

[25 : 34] So, if we are sons of God, and we have been given the spirit of God, then all that we do will be driven to glorify Jesus Christ.

Christ, you see what I'm saying? Being a son of God means that we have spirit wrought glory and praise to Jesus Christ.

I mean, think about what your spiritual conversations are like with people. Is there just a whole lot of talking about God, God, God, God, God?

You know that any Jehovah's witness, Mormon, and any Muslim can talk about God and God and God and God. I want to know, do you talk about Jesus Christ?

Do you talk about the second person of the Trinity? Do you say to people, you know, I just love Jesus? Or do you feel really weird about it? If we have the spirit in us because we're sons of God, then we glorify Jesus.

[26 : 41] second thing, it means that we're adopted. We've talked about this, but let's talk about adoption for just a second. Not only do we have the spirit, but we are adopted. You'll notice verse 5 says that we might receive adoption as sons.

And verse 6 says that we will cry out Abba, Father. And verse 7 says that we're no longer slaves, but a son. So what does it mean to be adopted by God?

It means that all those that God has credited to their account, the righteousness of Jesus are adopted by God. We enjoy the freedom and the privileges of the free relationship that we have with the Father.

We're given a new name, a new legal status. We're given a new family relationship. We have a new image, the image of Christ. We now have access to the throne of grace, which we can approach boldly to get grace in times of need.

It means we can cry out in our moments of need, Abba, Father, would you help me? You're not crying to someone who doesn't care about you. We are given compassion, protection, provision.

[27 : 49] We're also given discipline and chastisement sometimes. But we are never cast off because we are sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption as a down payment for the inheritance.

We're adopted, so we're going to inherit something. And Peter says it's an inheritance that's undefiled, unfading, and unending, and it's protected in heaven for you, waiting for you.

Do you know why Paul uses this language of adoption? Do you understand what Roman adoption was like? A father could look at his biological son and disinherit him.

But if he had an adopted son, it was illegal to disinherit the adopted son. Paul is saying that if you've trusted Christ, you're a son of God because he has adopted you, and it can never be revoked.

He will never take it back. And listen, all of this that I'm saying, all of this should absolutely and entirely impact everything in our lives.

[29 : 19] If we are spirit-filled, that's glorifying Christ and adopted with this inheritance waiting for us undefiled, this glorious thing that we've got, if that is true, then it ought to show up in our singing.

I remember back in the 90s, we had what was called the worship wars. You remember the worship wars? No, you don't. You guys never thought about anything. I'm so glad I'm here.

I remember being in this church and I remember these worship wars. It's like you got old songs, new songs, and you got old songs, and some of the new songs, quite frankly, were really kind of bad.

some of them old songs are pretty trashy too. And the whole problem with this idea is that if I'm spirit-filled glorifying Christ and I am adopted and I've got this inheritance waiting for me, then the wrong idea is to say, but I like this song.

Really? Your preference, pardon my frankness, doesn't matter. What matters is, are these words glorifying Jesus?

[30 : 32] Are these words drawing us to Jesus? Are these, I mean, because he lives, I can face tomorrow. That's drawing us to Jesus, you see? I mean, I've seen, I've been in churches that were nothing but hymns and older songs, and I've been in churches that were like, what's a hymn?

You talking about that guy over there? And it's like, no. And you know what? Everybody, it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter which style you like or whatever, everybody can get in that place of wanting preference over praise to Christ.

If we've been redeemed, if we've been adopted, if we have the spirit of Christ in us, then it should cause us to want to come in here and just bellow it out in praise to Jesus Christ.

You don't know the song? I know, there's some times I don't know a song, and I sit there and go blah, blah, blah, blah, but eventually we'll learn it, you know? I'm not done, I got about five more of these.

It ought to show up in the way we talk about the Lord. I hit this a little bit, but I just, I hear so many people talk about that they believe in God, they believe in God, and you do know James talks about that the demons believe that God is one, and shudder.

[32 : 02] I will go back to this question, what are you going to do with Jesus? That's really the important question. But tagged with this is not just about our talking about the Lord, but it's our talking about the church.

We talked in Sunday school this morning about the church, who the church, the church of the people. So here's the thing, if you're adopted, and I'm adopted, that makes us siblings.

You see? You see how that works? That's pretty simple, pretty straightforward. If you're adopted, and you're adopted, and you're adopted, and you're adopted, it makes us family.

So let me ask you something. Do you stick up for your family when you go out there somewhere, and you hear one of your siblings being taken down, talked bad about?

It's easy because sometimes we just don't want the pressure of somebody starting to talk about us, so it's easier to just sort of grin and bear it. But let me ask you something.

[33 : 13] What if I came up to you and I just started talking about your blood relatives, and I started talking to you about how terrible they were? Would you defend them to me? Would you get mad at

me? Yeah, you probably would. Let me tell you something, and this is a hard thing, and I don't really understand all this.

I really do believe this, but I really don't understand all of it. We live like blood is thicker than faith, but I think the Bible would call us to believe that faith is thicker than blood. Or, let's do this one. Shows up in how you would talk to people you've known for years. Let me just thought experiment for a second. What if tomorrow you woke up and found out that you are the long-lost heir of the royal treasure?

Yeah, I mean, that is ridiculous, especially some of you. You. Can you imagine? Can you imagine you woke up tomorrow morning, you got a phone call, someone drove up in your driveway, they started coming in saying, listen, here's the proof, you are a child of the royal family, this is yours, forget these other two that are doing all kinds of crazy things, you're now part of the royal family. When you go to coffee, would you just sort of sit back and be like, nothing, happened today? Or would you sit there and say, I can't say this to anybody, because if they found out, that would be, I mean, this would be just, or would you end up going like, you know, somebody said something today, they came and told me that I'm this.

[34 : 56] You see what I'm saying? Like, if all of a sudden you found out that Elon Musk was fixing to give you half his fortune, or Bill Gates was about to drop on you all of his wealth, you didn't know it before, but now it's there, how is that going to affect how you talk to the people you've known for years?

Because for years you've known them, and you've visited with them, you've talked with them, and you've got a pattern and a way of talking to them, and you've built up a habit in the way you speak to them, and what you talk about, and where you go, and you're afraid to go any further than where you've been.

You're afraid to cross that line of saying, well, you know, actually, all that I've been saying, really, the thing that really drives me most is that Jesus died for me, and I'm a child of the king.

All those years built up, responding in certain ways, I'm just saying that if it's true that we're filled with the spirit and that, and that we're adopted by him, it ought to affect the way we talk to people we've known for years.

So what do we need to do? We need to pursue unity in the body.

[36 : 14] We need, we are brothers and sisters in Christ. Here's, here is the difference between what we need to think of as objective fact and subjective experience.

objective fact. Objective fact. What is an objective fact? Anyway, it's something that's true whether you like it or not. If I jump off this building, it's gonna hurt.

That is an objective fact. If I stand in the middle of the road in front of a truck and it hits me, that's gonna hurt. That's an objective fact. I'm standing here, you're sitting there, that's an objective fact.

We are brothers and sisters in Christ because we're filled with the spirit, we've been adopted by him, we are all sons of God. Objective fact. But what about our experience of that?

Have you experienced being in a family with one another? Listen, I'm gonna tell you something, I'm so thankful to the Lord for being here. You do not understand how much I am thankful for being here, how much I do not believe that I deserve it, and how gracious and kind and loving you have been to me and to my family.

[37 : 30] It is something that I treasure. I think about it, there's some of you, we have talked, we have shared, you have just been so gracious and kind to me.

And I think that you're a very, very welcoming and warm and loving church. And so this is not sitting here spanking you for something that you don't have, this is saying, listen, you're doing great, but we could do better.

To pursue unity is to recognize, because you know, when I was a kid, my grandparents, after church on Sunday morning, we would have a meal at grandma's house.

And my mom, and my dad, and my aunt, and my uncle, we were there every Sunday. And I think about those times, and it was a great time. But you know what? My family never did, and I wish that they had.

I wish they had because it would have taught me something. We never once invited anybody from our church to come share that meal with us. And I thought to myself, how can we say that we love them if we don't want to spend any time with them?

[38 : 36] Well, but all of our family is going to be here. Well, maybe all of our family doesn't have to be here this Sunday. I mean, do you have friends right here in this body of believers?

Or if you have to go to a friend, do you have to leave this place and find someone that doesn't even go to church anywhere? pursuing unity is saying, listen, we've got to pursue one another.

You've been filled with the spirit. You've been adopted by the father. You're brothers and sisters in Christ because we're sons of God.

And if you're not a Christian today, I'm just going to plead with you for a second because all of these things that we're talking about, it is true that if you don't trust Christ, there is this punishment to pay in the future.

But I want to encourage you to come to Christ because look at what you get. Look at what you get. You get forgiven of all your sin. You get an inheritance in Christ.

[39 : 43] You get the perfect righteousness from Christ. This adoption into the family of God being a son and not an enemy. You get the spirit and you get the freedom and the legal right to cry out, Abba, Father, help me.

This, this is what it means to be a son of God. Amen. Amen.