**Galatians 3:23 - 4:7**

Last week we saw how Paul show the relationship of the Covenant Promise to Abraham and the Law given to Moses. He shows that under the law we are all in bondage, but under the covenant of promise we have freedom. Paul explains that further in this week’s study. He shows us that we have become sons and heirs of the Father, not slaves to the law.

***23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.***

Paul has been using the third person in most of the letter, but here he goes back to the first, “we”, stressing his identity with the Galatians.

All men are under God’s law whether by conscience or by reading the law.

***18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Rom 1:18-23***

He kept us in prison because we could not get out from under it by ourselves. We will always have a void and guilt until we accept the payment for our sin that Christ made.

The most religious Jew could not keep all the law perfectly. But in their effort to serve the law they became exclusive and prideful. They believed they were better than others and special to God.

Paul was the perfect example:

***4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;***

***7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ***

***Phil. 3:4 - 8***

Paul had followed the law as well as any man could and still came up lacking.

***24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.***

**paidagōgos**; from *3816* and *71; a trainer of boys,* i.e. *a tutor*:—tutor(2), tutors(1).

The law was also our guardian, our tutor, our teacher. It showed us how lacking we were. Romans often had guardians for their children. The guardians had complete responsibility for the child until he was an adult. It was usually an older servant that could serve as a role model for the child. It was always a temporary relationship that ended with adulthood. There is an extensive article in the Biblical Illustrator on these guardians.

The law is there to show us our sin, to drive us to Christ.

***25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,***

The law was the guardian, now that Christ has come - we are released from the law and have liberty.

***14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.Rom 6:14***

***26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.***

All is referring to all believers, that’s was Paul’s audience, not to all mankind. When we accept Christ we become part of God’s family and He becomes a part of us through the Holy Spirit. Without Christ we are nothing and can do nothing.

Illustration from John MacAuthor,

“Because of his trust by many Arab tribes, the famous British scholar and soldier Lawrence of Arabia participated in the Paris peace talks after World War I. Several Arab leaders came with him to Paris and stayed in the same hotel. When they went into their bathrooms they were astounded to discover they could bring seemingly unlimited amounts of water into the bathtub or sink simply by turning the handle on a faucet. When preparing to leave Paris, they removed the faucets and packed them in their luggage, thinking that the faucets themselves magically created the vast amounts of water. When they told Lawrence what they had done, he explained that the faucets were useless unless connected to pipes that were, in turn, connected to a source of water.”

Because we are sons of God, we can approach Him with confidence.

***16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. 4:16***

***27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

“put on” **enduō**; from *1722* and the same as *1416; to clothe* or *be clothed with* **(in the sense of sinking into a garment)**:—clothed(6), dressed(1), enter(1), put(21).

Being completely covered by Christ. He affects every area of our life.

Baptized into Christ is spiritual baptism through the Holy Spirit where God joins the Holy Spirit to our spirit and His nature becomes our nature. At salvation we have all the Spirit we will ever receive, but we allow that Spirit to control us little by little in the process of sanctification.

***28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

There are obvious distinctions between people. Race, culture, gender, and social status are things that naturally separate us. Those distinctions do not disappear, but spiritually everyone has the same status in Christ.

The Pharisee would pray each morning, “I thank Thee, God, that I am a Jew, not a Gentile; a man, not a woman; and a freeman, and not a slave.

Paul was trying to combat the idea of the Judaizers that Jews were better than everyone else and if you wanted to be right with God, the only way was to become a Jew.

This was not only radical thinking for the Jews, it was radical for the non-Jew in the Roman world. They too were a male dominated society. They too had different strata of society - free and slave, wealthy and poor. There is a good Biblical Illustrator article on social status in the Roman world.

***29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.***

When we become Christians we also become heirs of the promise given to Abraham.

***6 And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness. Gen. 15:6***

***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.***

The guardian was accountable to the master and the child was accountable to the guardian. In a way the child was lower than the slave.

The Jews had a bar mitzvah where a boy became a man.

The Greeks had a ceremony at age 18 called apatouria that announced his manhood.

The Romans had the toga virilis where a young boy took off his childish clothes and put on a toga to announce that he was a man. The father would determine when the boy was ready to become a man and he would set a date for the ceremony. The children would take their toys and sacrifice them to the gods as a way of putting childhood behind them. Paul may have had that in mind when he said,

***“11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” 1 Cor. 13:11***

***3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.***

**στοιχεῖον** **stoicheion**; from the same as *4748; one of a row,* hence *a letter* (of the alphabet), by ext. *the elements* (of knowledge):—elemental things(2), elementary principles(2), elementary\*(1), elements(2), principles(1).

The elementary principles of the world have been thought to be demons, astrology, but probably the fundamentals of man-made religion. Paul uses the same word in Col. 2:8,

***8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental principles of the world, and not according to Christ.***

All of man’s religions go back to the same thing. If you do enough good works, you’ll be okay.

***4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,***

**plērōma**; from *4137; fullness, a filling up*:—all … contains(1), fulfillment(2), full(2), fullness(10), patch(2).

Why was first century Israel the “fullness of time”. Only God knows for sure. It was His sovereign time to redeem mankind. However, scholars have put forth many things that were ripe for the spread of the gospel.

* After coming back from the Babylonian captivity the Jews never again went after idols.
* During the Babylonian captivity Jews developed synagogues and the center of Jewish society. Which gave the apostles a natural place to start.
* The Jews had taken the law and turned it into a legalistic burden that very few even tried to master. Only a remnant of Jews had remained faithful to God.
* The Jews had tried idols, they had tried the law - neither satisfied.
* The “Pax Romana” - Roman Peace allowed the gospel to spread freely.
* The system of Roman roads made missionary trips much safer and easier.
* Alexander the Great had made Greek the international language which made the scripture available to most of the known world.

Born of a woman stresses that Jesus was fully human and under the law, just like any Jew. But, unlike any other Jew, He fulfilled the law perfectly. Because He was fully God, He could be the perfect sacrifice to redeem mankind.

***5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.***

**exagorazō**; from *1537* and *59; to buy up,* i.e. *ransom,* fig. *to rescue from loss*:—making the most(2), redeem(1), redeemed(1).

We saw last week that redeem meant to rescue or buy up. To pay the ransom for a slave. So, that we might receive adoption.

Adoption takes someone from outside the family that has no legal rights, they have no privileges, and they make the family. Once adopted legally they are just like biological children. It is as if they were born into the family.

In the Roman world adoption was an honored custom that gave special dignity and family membership to those who were not born into a family. Often a wealthy, childless man would adopt a young slave, who would trade his slavery for sonship, with all its concomitant privileges.

***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.***

By sending the Holy Spirit into our hearts, God has given us His nature. A natural son may or may not take on the nature of his father. But God puts His nature inside of us. As we follow that nature, we become more and more like Him.

We not only get His nature, but we get an intimate and personal relationship with Him. Abba was a term of endearment like papa or daddy. It would have never been used by a Jew, a Greek, or a Roman when referring to God. We have a never before access to God.

***14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons[f] of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.***