



## Lazybrook Baptist Church

GALATIANS: FREEDOM THROUGH CHRIST • NOT A SLAVE, BUT A SON •  
GALATIANS 3:27 - 4:7 • 8/17/2020 - 8/23/2020

### MAIN POINT

We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and through adoption we are given the position and privileges of sons.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What influences your perception of yourself and those around you? What things shape your identity? Why did you identify these things?**

**If you had to tell someone the three most important things about you, what would you say?**

It is easy to let the world around us define who we are. Culture inundates us at every turn with ideas about who we are and who we should be. However, as Christians there is one basic reality that defines who we are: we are known by God. When God looks at you, He sees His child—one who has been adopted into His own family. All believers have been forever changed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in them. The ministry of the Holy Spirit radically changes our core reality and allows us to see ourselves the way God sees us.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 3:26 - 29

**What are some barriers that divide people in our world today?**

**What does the gospel have to say about the things that we allow to divide us (race, social status, etc...)? How are these barriers broken down by the gospel?**

The gospel brings unity with Christ, one another and believers throughout history! In the words of Tim Keller, *"The gospel...means I am a Christian before I am anyone or anything else. It means that all the barriers that separate people in the world into warring factions come down in Christ."* This means that the gospel brings unity among believers of every nation, tribe, tongue, socio-economic status, gender, political affiliation, etc... Jesus tells us in John 3:15 that, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." It is our unity around the gospel in the midst of our differences that speak to God's power!

**Read aloud the brief article by J.D. Greear, President of the Southern Baptist Convention, entitled 'Racial Diversity and our Third Race' and discuss what it means to 'elevate our third race.'** [Click here to access the article.](#)

**REFLECTION: How are you doing loving your brothers and sisters in Christ that are different than you (race, social status, gender, political affiliation, etc...)? Are your actions a testament to the unifying power of the gospel? Or, are they more of a testament to your own selfish desires, preconceived ideas or political preferences?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 4:1-2.

**What does Paul mean when he says that "as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a slave, though he is the owner of everything?"**

**In Galatians 4:2, what does Paul mean when he refers to guardians and trustees?**

Paul is alluding to a well-known legal and ceremonial process in the Roman world called the Liberalia. Celebrated on March 17, Liberalia involved Roman fathers deciding whether their boys would officially become men. On that day the son would be adopted by his father and take on the full rights of an heir. Before that day—though a child of his father—the son was functionally a slave with no rights or privileges to his father's estate, merely living under the watch and protection of guardians and managers (**Note:** There is a strong correlation between these 'guardians and managers' and the law which Paul refers to as our guardian in Galatians 3:24-25). After that day, the son's primary relationship would be with his father.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 4:3-5.

**Paul now relates the illustration in vs. 1-2 to us as believers. What does it mean that we were under a guardian? What was that guardian (Gal. 3:24-25)? What was its purpose (Gal. 3:19)?**

**What do you think “fullness of time” means? What does it mean for the work of Christ?**

**Based on verse 5, what do we receive as a result of our redemption?**

**How does Christ transfer His rightful status as a Son to us? In what must we believe to receive the status of son?**

Before the advent of Christ, the Jews (much like the minor described in verses 1-2) had been enslaved to the law. They had yet to attain the full inheritance as sons of God. Likewise, the Galatians had been enslaved to the pagan idolatry of the surrounding culture. The “fullness of time” refers to an appointed time. It is a time purposefully set to accomplish a prepared task. In this instance, the appointed time refers to the coming of Christ and His redeeming death. Believing by grace and through faith in the life and ministry of Jesus, we are adopted into God’s family.

**What is the prerequisite for receiving the Holy Spirit?**

**How does the gospel radically alter our legal standing (status) before God?**

Paul uses a Roman custom as a metaphor for our relationship with God. The prerequisite to receiving the Holy Spirit is sonship. When we are saved, our legal status before God is changed to that of a son and an heir. We now enjoy all the rights and privileges of our Father and our primary relationship is with Him.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 4:6-7.

**What is significant about the word “Abba”? What does it say about the relational status that we get to enjoy with our heavenly father?**

**What do you think about when you see the verb “crying” in verse 6? Do you think this is an experience that is common to most believers? Why or why not?**

The word “Abba” is an Aramaic word that was translated into Greek. It is an affectionate title that young children would use for their fathers. When we cry to God, we are not reaching for a distant Father, but a loving daddy. We are able to do this because of the Spirit working within us. The word

"Abba" is speaking to the relational status, the fellowship and communion that we get to share with our heavenly father.

The word used for "crying" is a word that carries with it the idea of passionate expression. This crying is not chiefly about the words that come out of your mouth but the disposition of your heart that will produce these instinctively. As we see more of Jesus in the gospel and are overwhelmed by the goodness of God, our hearts cry out in praise.

**What events in your life lead to the instinctive cries that Paul describes in these verses?**

**Read Romans 8:15-17. How is the ministry of the Spirit described in these verses?**

The cries of the Spirit through us are both an ordinary and extraordinary experience. When we are adopted as sons, we have an immediate, irreversible change in status before God. However, it is also an objective experience in the life of a believer, because at times the Spirit is more or less active in our lives. As we grow as children of God, we learn to see ourselves the way God sees us and depend more deeply on the sanctifying work of the Spirit. Increasingly, the Spirit will bear witness to us that we are children of God. The Spirit cries out through us and for us as we live dependent on His power.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Are you satisfied merely with the change in status [legal standing] that Christ has provided? Or, are you living in daily relation [relational status], daily fellowship with your heavenly Father?**

**How can you increasingly make room in your life for the ministry of the Holy Spirit this week? What attitudes, actions, and practices foster His work in your life?**

**How does knowing and being known by God combat the pull back to the slavery of legalism?**

## PRAYER

Praise God that because we have been adopted, we live with a new identity before God, enjoy intimacy with God, and are guaranteed an inheritance.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Relisten to Pastor Zach's sermon from Sunday, July 26.](#)
- Listen to 'Freed and Called Me Son,' the son used in Pastor Zach's sermon on [YouTube](#) or [Spotify](#).
- [Racial Reconciliation, the Gospel and the Church](#) by Jarvis J. Williams
- [Racial Diversity and Our 'Third Race'](#) by J.D. Greear
- Great commentaries on Galatians:
  - Exalting Christ in Galatians by David Platt and Tony Merida
  - Galatians For You by Timothy Keller

## DISCOVERY PROCESS REMINDERS

Please remind everyone in your small group to take the [Discovery Team's Congregational Survey](#) if they have yet to do so; the deadline for all surveys to be submitted is Sunday, August 23.

Remind your group of the importance of our Discovery Process and to continually be in prayer for our Discovery Team as they prayerfully discern where we are currently and where God is calling our church to go!

## COMMENTARY

### | GALATIANS 3:26-29

3:26. Verse 26 is the key to understanding this passage. Paul countered the divisive teaching promoted by the Judaizers by declaring that “all” the Galatian believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, had received the promise as evidenced by their relationship with God through Christ. That relationship came, not through keeping the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, they were “sons of God.” They had entered full adult sonship. The services of a pedagogue to guide them were no longer required. They could enjoy the privileges and freedom of their sonship.

3:27-29. Not only are those who have faith in Christ Jesus “Abraham’s sons” (v. 7), but they are also adopted sons of God (4:5-7; Rom. 8:14-17). Paul used the image of a person emerging from the water after being baptized to put on new clothes. The equality and unity spoken of here is of a spiritual nature—in Christ. Paul had just discussed at length that the Jew has no spiritual advantage over the Greek (Gentile), and now he says the same equality is true for social and gender distinctions. No one people group or gender is to be exalted above others. To be Abraham’s seed is the same thing as being his “sons” (v. 7), but now the additional element of being heirs is introduced, previewing 4:7 (Rom. 8:15-17).

## | GALATIANS 4:1-7

4:1. In the ancient world, an underage heir had no right to his inheritance and was temporarily in the same legal situation as a slave, owning nothing.

4:2. "Guardians" (Gk "epitropoi") does not refer to the same idea as in 3:24-25 (see note there), where the Greek word is "paidagogos." In this case, a "guardian" was a slave who protected the underage heir, while stewards were trustees responsible for the heir's other needs until he came of age (the time set by his father). The analogy was to illustrate that God had everything under control during the period of the Mosaic law, setting things up perfectly for the coming of Christ.

4:3. The elemental forces of the world are called "things that by nature are not gods" in verse 8 and "the weak and bankrupt elemental forces" in verse 9. Since these descriptions are linked to the observance of "special days, months, seasons, and years" in verse 10, it appears they are related to religious observances based in the laws and rhythms of nature.

4:4. The Greek word translated "completion" is "pleroma," indicating that Christ came at the perfect time. Factors that made this such a suitable time included: worldwide peace (Pax Romana), an excellent road system, and the dominance of one language all across the empire (Koine Greek). By these means the gospel spread in ways that would not have been possible in earlier times. "God sent His Son, born of a woman" looks back to God's promise in regard to "the seed of the woman" in Gen 3:15, and it may allude to Christ's virgin birth (Isa 7:14; Mt 1:18-25). "Born under the law" refers to the fact that Jesus knew what it was like to live under the Mosaic law. This phrase implies that He perfectly kept the whole law, which no other human being could do (see notes at Gal 3:10 and 3:21-23).

4:5-6. One big difference between unbelievers and the underage heir of verses 1-2 is that, apart from a relationship with Christ, all people are actually spiritual slaves to sin, which is made clear by the law. Thus, it was necessary for Jesus to die; to redeem (Gk "exagoraz;" "set free by purchase") sinners out of the slave market. A second great difference is that Christians receive adoption as sons instead of being a son of the bloodline. Jesus Christ is the only Son naturally related to God the Father. All other sons (including females, since "sonship" was a legal status) are by adoption. "Abba" means "Father" in Aramaic, but it has a personal tone, such as "Daddy" or "Papa."

4:7. Paul's appeal to those in the churches in Galatia was that the person who tries to be justified before God by works is a slave to the Mosaic law. But he who is justified by faith in Christ is no longer a slave, but a son, with full rights as an heir to God's infinite treasures.