

Galatians 4:4-7
(Christmas Eve - 2025)

Merry Christmas!

- My **name is Chris**, and I'm one of the pastors here at Selah Hills Church.
- **Thank you** for being here today. This is **my favorite time of year!**
- The **candles, lights, songs, and the sense that something important** happened (**millions**)
- We have **kids, adults, long-time believers, people still exploring, and people who aren't sure...**
- **We're honored** you would join us! (**hope you feel loved and welcomed!**)

Spoiler alert: We're **talking about a baby**—the Savior of the world.

- **Jesus** means **"God who saves."**
- **Christ** means **"Anointed One."**
- **By round of applause:** *Has the Anointed One changed your life?*

*****Simple*** Gospel Mission...**

Message Title: **The Manger Mission**

- *Rescue operation... planned... strategic... intentional... risky... costly...*

Galatians 4:4-7, NLT - "When the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir."

PRAY

Just The Right Time (v. 4a)

In some ways, for us, **Christmas Eve is about waiting**...

- **Kids**, how many of you have waited for Christmas morning and *felt like the night would never end?* You check the clock at 1:00 a.m.! **Go back to bed!** Waiting is hard... (**any kids excited?**)
- **Adults**, too—for *answers, healing, change, hope. Some with joy; others with exhaustion, grief, a spouse, a child, a job... or simply peace...*
- Ecc. 3:11 - "He has made **everything beautiful in its time.**"

Today's passage begins with **powerful words** to consider:

- **"When just the right time came..."**
- Or, **"in the fullness of time..."**
- *Garden, curse, seed of the woman (protoevangelium)*
- *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David - as promised king*
- *Prophets like Isaiah (a son/virgin/prince of peace), and Micah (born in Bethlehem)*

Generations came and went, 400 years of silence since Malachi wondering, "Has God forgotten us?"

- Some of you **feel like God has been silent in your life...**

- Christmas tells us: **silence does not mean absence.**
- **God's timing is perfect**, *even when we don't understand it.*
 - *Maybe today is His perfect time for some of you...*
- In those days, **God was working even in the silence.** He was positioning the world...
- Building **roads through the Roman Empire** that would carry the gospel...
- Establishing **Greek as a common language**, to aid the spread of the good news...

Then, at **precisely the right moment**—not too early, not too late—God said, **"Now."**

- Like waiting on a **delicious christmas dinner** - *not too soon, not too long, but just right!*
- Maybe some of you have an **advent calendar**... *(each day is marked)*
 - *Hundreds of yrs after the prophecies...*
 - *An angel would appear to Zechariah & Elizabeth, and Joseph & Mary*
 - *A royal census decree would send Joseph & Mary riding to Bethlehem on a donkey.*
 - *Angels would appear to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem - Glory to God. Peace*
 - *Then the Magi and the star in the east! (Gold, Frankincense, but wait... there's Myrrh!)*

The stage was set, at just the right time...

God Sent His Son (v. 4b)

"God sent forth his Son" is huge: **That baby wasn't just born—He was sent.** *(A Mission!)*

- Christmas is **not about humanity climbing up** to God. *(as in all of other man's systems)*
- It is about **God coming down to us.**

He came down into our mess ...as the **most vulnerable thing imaginable: a baby!**

- He didn't come as a **full grown super hero on a decorated stallion with hosts of armies.** Nor in a **golden palace with a legion of guards**... He came *undercover, no room in the inn, born in a stable for animals, laid in a feeding trough...*

And further, He came: **"Born of a woman"**

- **FULLY human. (incarnation)** *(not pretending... or an illusion) - wrapped in human flesh*
- As a baby—*weak, dependent, poor, hungry, ordinary, common...* *(I remember my children)*
- The **God who made the galaxies** let Himself be carried, fed, and changed...
- The **One who holds everything together** let Himself be held...
 - He experienced *hunger, pain, temptation, and sorrow.* *(identifies with us)*

Why **"born under the law"** matters:

- He stepped **under the same moral standard** we're under in this universe.
- He knows what it is to be *tired, tempted, misunderstood, rejected, grieved.*
- You are *never suffering alone*—**He understands** from the inside.
- He lived under the *same rules and pressures we do*—yet He lived **perfectly.**

What a glorious mission!

- **Imagine a great king whose soldiers are losing the war.** *Instead of staying safe* in his palace, he **takes off his robe, puts on their uniform, and joins them on the front lines.**
- That's Jesus—**entering our battlefield to fight for us...**

If Christ hadn't come, the world would be in darkness, no hope beyond the grave.

- But thank God—He came!

To Buy Us Freedom (v. 5a)

"God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law"

- This is: rescue language!

Every mission has an objective.

- Jesus came to **"redeem"** us—to pay the price to set us free.
- In those days, if one was enslaved because of debt, a price could be paid to set them free.
- That's the picture: someone trapped who cannot get themselves out. (Eph 2:8-9)

Here's the problem: *every one of us is enslaved to sin.*

- We are not just people who *"occasionally make mistakes."*
- We've turned our backs on God, broken His commands....
- Many of us know what this **slavery** feels like: *Stuck in patterns or habits we can't break.*
- *We're trapped by sin, guilt, and shame.* Trying to be *"good enough,"* but always feeling like we *fall short*. The Bible says, *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). And the penalty is death—separation from God forever (**spiritual death**)
- We needed someone to pay the ransom we couldn't pay, ourselves. *We're prisoners of war and we need a rescue operation!* We needed a Redeemer.

The manger is the beginning of that great rescue operation:

- During his life, Jesus lived the only perfect life. (*spotless, precious, without blemish*)
- *After roughly 30 years*, Jesus would die. (*crucifixion, darkness, earthquake, veil torn*)
- Taking on Himself the judgment we deserved. (*"it is finished"* (mission accomplished))
- Rose from the dead, proving that sin/death do not get the last word. (*where is your sting?*)

Christmas celebrates the beginning of the mission. *Easter celebrates the completion of it.*

- But if that wasn't good news enough, it gets even better...

To Bring Us Home (vv. 5b-7)

"So that he could adopt us as his very own children..."

The Heart of the Mission:

- In a normal rescue mission, the rescuer saves the hostages and sends them on their way.
- But God does something staggering: The mission wasn't just freedom from something—it was freedom unto something. He doesn't just rescue us; **He adopts us** into His family!
- Adoption means: *You belong. You have a purpose. You have a future. You have hope!*
- He makes us His children, gives us **His Spirit**. (*regeneration, indwelling, identity!*)

Prompting us to call out, 'Abba, Father.'

- **"Abba"** means **"Dad" or "Papa"**—an intimate family word. (*not distant....*)

- The God who created the universe is a God you can call **"Dad."** (closest...)
- He doesn't just pardon us like a judge; He welcomes us like a loving Father.
- Maybe some of you had a painful story with your earthly father. Absent or harsh...
- **God is not a reflection of that**—He is the perfect Father, full of compassion and mercy.
 - He's always present, always good, never abandoning.

"You are **no longer** a slave" = **absolute negation**

- But a son or daughter as an heir, with an inheritance.
- **Christ is returning** and you have eternal glories awaiting! (a co heir with Christ!)

If you belong to Jesus:

- You're not just forgiven—you're family
- You're not just pardoned—you're given an inheritance!
- **There is no great news!**

Gospel:

The **Manger Mission** was costly. It **cost Jesus everything**. His very life.

- But He considered you worth it. (treasure in a field)
- A **response is required**. You can stay in the dark, or you can step into the light.
- Christmas is an invitation to stop striving on your own and start trusting. (Matthew 11:28)

God calls you to:

- **Repent** - Turn from sin and self-rule
- **Believe** - Trust in Jesus Christ alone to save you
- **Receive** - Receive Him as your Savior and Lord

The Bible says in John 1:12, "To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, He gave the right to become children of God."

Today, **God is inviting you home**. You may be:

- A child hearing this for the first time
- An adult who's drifted far away
- You don't need to clean yourself up.
- You don't need all the answers.
- You just need to respond to the free gift of grace.
- **His timing is perfect!** (no accidents today)

Altar Call and Prayer

Welcome home. (the light of the world!)

Transition to the **candle lighting** and the song "O Holy Night"

Merry Christmas!