

## Children of the Promise

4:12-5:1

**vs. 12,**

Become like me -> Experience freedom.

I became like you -> I have left the law behind (the time of its guardianship is over).  
I have accepted that I too am a sinner and I have turned to Jesus.

You have not wronged *me*.

- Those listening to the Judaizers, and placing themselves under the law, are not hurting Paul. They are leaving God.
- Paul understood his role as a servant. He is not striving to please people (1:10).

**vs. 13-15,** Remember

The circumstances of me coming to you were difficult.

Weakness of the flesh -> Some sort of illness (physical condition) that was a trial for the Galatians.

**2 Corinthians 12:7** Therefore, so that I would not exalt myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to torment me so that I would not exalt myself.

**1 Corinthians 2:4-5** My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, **5** so that your faith might not be based on human wisdom but on God's power.

**vs. 15,** Reflective - Where is the joy?

**vs. 16,** What has changed? Have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

**Question:** How do you respond when those who deeply care for you speak truth to you? Are you open to refinement? How can you develop the grace of being a gentle truth teller?

**vs. 17,** They are zealous to persuade you.

The dark side to zealotry (emotions are high, anger is boiling), violence is stirring).

They are moving into an 'us or them' attitude.

- Their motives have become entangled into the nationalistic identity, ideology, and agenda.

The **truth** -> Through Jesus all nations can be blessed. By faith we are heirs to the promise given to Abraham.

**vs. 18,** There is a positive side to zeal.

What does it mean to have zeal for God, the gospel, truth?

There is tremendous comfort in being pursued without an underlying agenda.

A person who embraces the reality that they are known by God and uses it as fuel to help others feel known.

**Question:** Are you a Jesus person who helps others feel known?

**vs. 19-20,** My life is given for Christ to be formed in you.

- Written communication is a weak substitute for physical presence.

Walk in maturity.

Be shaped in the image of Jesus.

Live a life filled with the Spirit.

**Ephesians 4:22-24** to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, **23** to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

Paul's heart as a pastor.

- Be like me.
- Emotion at times is completely appropriate.
- Emotion isn't the only way to persuade. Paul is complex, reasoned, intellectual.

**2 Peter 3:15-16** Also, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. **16** He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some things hard to understand in them. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures.

Relational Communion

- Christ formed in us.
  - Experiencing the movement of God together (The Holy Spirit is active).
  - Shared intensity (the cost of nurturing, cultivating, mothering, fathering, in spiritual things)
  - Together overcoming difficulty (illness / communication)
- Our weaknesses are overcome by the power of the Spirit.

**Question:** How is your life shaped by relational communion? Are you in giving and receiving relationships shaped by the love of Jesus and values of his kingdom?

**vs. 21-31,**

Law	Abraham	Christ
Hagar		Sarah
Ishmael (flesh)		Isaac (promise)
Persecutor		Persecuted
Children (slaves)		Children (Free)
Mt. Sinai		Mt. Zion (Golgotha, Heaven)
Earthly Jerusalem		Heavenly Jerusalem
Judaizers		Paul
Old Covenant		New Covenant

Paul's point and method -> Paul is taking the very thing the Judaizers are so proud of and flipping it upside down.

You are "Abraham's flesh".

Concerning Abraham, flesh was not what God desired.

The real seed of Abraham is Christ who has come through the promise.

- Paul is making the association that Ishmael is the result of humanity trying to figure it out. Isaac is the result of the promise (only God).

Hagar represents Mt. Sinai

You, in present Jerusalem, continue to cling to the old era.

You lean on the law as your guardian.

As you cling to Mt. Sinai you continue to be more influenced by political pressure, self-righteousness, and focused on destroying your enemies.

Contrast -> But the Jerusalem above is free. The new city (Revelations 21-22; Isaiah 2:2-4)

**Isaiah 19:24-25** On that day Israel will form a triple alliance with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing within the land. **25** The Lord of Armies will bless them, saying, "Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance are blessed."

**vs. 27,** Paul is connecting Sarah's inability to conceive (Genesis 11:30) with the future Jerusalem, the new era, the time of fulfillment (Isaiah 54:1). Covenant renewal is the direct result of the achievement of the servant in Isaiah 53.

**vs. 28-29**, You, like Isaac, are children of promise.  
The flesh continues to mock / persecute the Spirit.

**Genesis 21:8-10** The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned. **9** But Sarah saw the son mocking—the one Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham. **10** So she said to Abraham, “Drive out this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a coheir with my son Isaac!”

Paul is using story to make a point. His point is simple The Judaizers are persecuting you. Drive them out!

We are children of the promise!

**5:1**, For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm, then, and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery.

**Question:** Do you view scripture as a burden that limits your human experience or do you view it as God's breath breathing life into the fullness of your potential?

What are the things that are keeping you tied to the flesh? Pray and ask Jesus to give you a heart of renewal. Pray that the Holy Spirit will fill your soul with the joy of his fruit.