

I. Intro

A. Scriptural Focus: 4:1-5

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Gal. 4:1-5)

B. Re-Cap

1. **Freedom (Faith, Grace, Spirit):** as a consequence of our faith (trust and reliance) on Jesus, the Holy Spirit took up residence within us and alone accomplishes in us/ through us what the Father demands from us (justification, sanctification, etc.)
2. **Slavery (Law, Works, Flesh):** as a consequence of our faith (trust and reliance) in our own abilities, we reject the free gift of the Spirit and attempt to prove that we can accomplish what the Father demands (justification, sanctification, etc.)

II. Sons or Slaves?

*¹ Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a **child, does not differ at all from a slave**, though he is master of all,² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. (Gal. 4:1-3)*

A. First Things: Bondage (We all know something about bondage to this world)

1. Children often look exactly like slaves
 - a. Freely given all that the Father has
 - b. Stuck in bondage of not knowing all the current benefits and riches he has in the Father.
 - c. Not knowing that the Father has future benefits prepared for him.

2. Slaves often look exactly like children.
 - a. Enjoying the residual, temporary circumstances of loose association with the Father.
 - b. Stuck in the bondage of never having the access to true abundant living (in this life or the next).
 - i. Operating by their own strength and ability.
3. Either way you slice it (whether child or slave), we all know something about bondage.
 - a. God actually allowed it for a season.

B. But in the Nick of Time...

*⁴But when **the fullness of the time** had come, **God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵**to redeem** those who were under the law, that we might **receive the adoption as sons**. (Gal. 4:4-5)*

1. At the perfect time,
 - a. Thousands and thousands of years after the promise through Eve
 - i. *“I will put enmity between your seed and the Seed of the Woman. He will crush your head and you shall bruise His heel.” (Gen. 3:15)*
 - b. 42 generations after God the Father promised the Seed to and through Abraham.
 - i. *“In you all the nations of the earth will be blessed.” (Gen.12:3)*
 - c. After Israel had been conquered by the Assyrian Empire; Judah by the Babylonian Empire
 - i. Mede- Persian Empire
 - ii. Greek Empire
 - iii. Roman Empire
2. It was the perfect time...

*⁴But when **the fullness of the time** had come, **God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵**to redeem** those who were under the law, that we might **receive the adoption as sons**. (Gal. 4:4-5)*

- a. Jesus bought us back from slavery under the law (redeemed us)
- b. Transition from slaves to sons
 - i. As sons, we patiently await our future inheritance

C. Our Inheritance: Jesus Himself

*⁶And because you are sons, God has **sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts**, crying out, “Abba, Father!” (Gal. 4:6)*

- 1. Hidden in the Son (Positionally)
- 2. Spirit of the Son has invaded our hearts
 - a. Utter dependence on the Father
 - b. Intimate communion with the Father and Holy Spirit
 - c. Humble surrender that brings glory to our Father
- 3. From Slave to Son (and heir of our Heavenly Father)

⁷Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Gal. 4:7)

III. Do You Miss Bondage?

⁸But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. (Gal. 4:8)

- A. Before enjoying Relationship with God, we placed other things in the place of God
 - 1. Example #1: The Obvious (Pagan Religions, witchcraft, recognized idolatry)
 - a. We served thingamajigs as if they were God, but they are no gods at all.
 - b. Bondage (spiritual)!
 - c. When you worship an object, statue, a false god... it's just a thing (not a god), but there's a spirit behind the thing.
 - i. The voodoo doll looks like a childish toy, but you better believe that there's a spirit driving behind that thing.

- ii. The Ouija Board is just a wooden board game, but there is a spirit behind it.
- 2. Example #2: The Subtle (Human ability to keep rules and religion)
 - a. Placed the spotlight on the ability of someone (other than the Son) in order to win the favor of God.
 - i. Instead of relying on God, we relied on self, other people, rules, circumstances, denominations, etc.
 - b. Bondage (Spiritual)
 - c. Much like the fact that there is a spirit behind the act of worshiping objects, statues, false gods... There is a spirit behind us relying on human ability to perform works or fulfill laws in order to gain divine approval
 - i. It looks like mere dead religion, but there's a spirit behind what you think is dead.

- B. Placing things, laws, rules and self-sufficiency in the place of God's supernatural ability is actually spiritual (demonic) bondage.

*⁹But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which **you desire again to be in bondage?** ¹⁰You observe days and months and seasons and years. (Gal. 4:9-10)*

- 1. Interesting that Paul is writing the Galatians
 - a. People who were formerly enslaved to pagan worship
 - b. Encouraging them not to go back into that same bondage.
- 2. Implication: Galatians going from the true gospel (faith, grace, spirit, freedom) to a false gospel (legalism, works, flesh) is the same as going back to idol worship.
 - a. Anything that promotes rules, religion, reliance on self to meet legalistic rules is the same as going back to that same paganistic bondage that they just left.

*The enemy don't care nothing about you doing good, as long as you take the credit for doing good. You can feed the homeless, house the homeless, do

monthly clothing drives, refrain from cursing and drinking, then go to church 30 times a week. None of that bothers Satan (as long as you take personal credit for doing it).

C. I'm troubled

¹¹ I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain. (Gal. 4:11)

1. I've got doubts about you.
 - a. All the hard work we put so that you could be free.
 - b. Up late nights praying for you, so that you could be free.
 - c. All the persecutions I endured for you, so that you could be free from spiritual bondage.
 - d. I was chased from town to town for you.
 - e. I got stoned, left for dead for you.
 - f. But it didn't move me as long as you got to see what true freedom looked like.

D. Just Be Like Me: Free

*¹² Brethren, I urge you to **become like me**, for I **became like you**. You have not injured me at all. ¹³ You know that **because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first**. ¹⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, **if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me**. ¹⁶ Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? (Gal. 4:17)*

1. We Were Both Blind
 - a. Galatians were trapped in spiritual bondage (blind to the things of God).
 - i. Couldn't see the simplicity of the gospel (Jesus did it all and does it all).
 - b. What the Galatians were spiritually, Paul became physically
 - i. Ophthalmia rendered his eyes swollen, red, functionally blind

2. You would have done anything so that I could see (physically)
 - a. I wouldn't do so that you could see (spiritually)
 - i. My passion and purpose is that you could see like me
 - b. When Paul says, "I wish that you could be like me", he means "I wish you were free".
 - i. That Christ were formed in You and ruling on the throne of your heart.
 - ii. That your personal dependence on self would be Crucified.
 - c. **Gal. 2:20:** *²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

E. You are Hotly Pursued (With Opposing Motives)

1. **Slavery:** *Religious, Rules-Oriented, Works*

¹⁷ They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. (Gal. 4:17)

- a. They pursue you. They court you. But with Bad Intentions.

¹⁷ They make much of you, but for no good purpose; they want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. (Gal. 4:17 - RSV)

- b. Make much of You ... Make much of them
- c. Motives are buried in the need for approval of man.
 - i. Desire for human praise
 - ii. Desire to be liked
 - iii. Desire to be depended on

*A weight that is impossible to bear.

2. **Freedom:** *Faith, Spirit, Grace*

- a. You are being pursued and courted. But with Holy intentions.

- b. Instead of making much of man... Make much of Christ.
 - i. Dependence upon man dies
 - ii. Dependence on self... dies.
 - iii. You die and Christ rises up.
- c. Christ be formed in you.

¹⁸ But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. ¹⁹ My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, (Gal. 4:18-19)

- i. I'm having labor pains again. We've been here before.
- ii. The intense pain won't end until you're even like I am.
- iii. Crucified. But Christ formed in you.

F. I've Had a Few Doubts About You

²⁰ I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you. ²¹ Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? (Gal. 4:20-21)

- 1. I'd love to write you a nice, pretty, melodic letter.
 - a. But I have doubts about you.
 - i. Starting to wonder who you are and whose you are.
 - b. Anyone who brags about their ability to keep the law must not actually understand the law.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Two Different Gospels claimed roots to Abraham, but from different lineage
 - 1. Judaizers: pointed back to Abraham, promoting human doing (family lineage, outward circumcision, keeping the laws, celebrating the feasts, etc.)

vs.

Paul: pointed back to Abraham, but promoted Jesus' doing (family lineage, inward circumcision, Jesus fulfills the law, He is the fulfillment of every feast).

2. **Judaizers:** bragged that Abraham was their physical father.

vs

Paul: bragged that Abraham is the spiritual father (to all who simply rely on Jesus).

B. Confusion: Abraham had a kids by different women.

1. Not all were children of Promise
2. Problem was not one of paternity, but of maternity.

²² For it is written that **Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.** ²³ But he who was of the **bondwoman was born according to the flesh**, and he of the **freewoman through promise**, ²⁴ which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this **Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem** which now is, and is in bondage with her children— ²⁶ but the **Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.** ²⁷ For it is written:

“Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband.”

²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise (Gal. 4:22-28)

3. **Sarah (Free)**
 - a. The promise was about God doing for and through Sarah, what Sarah and Abraham could have never done on their own strength.

*Relying on the Promises of God can be actually painful.

4. **Hagar (Slave)**

- a. Hagar delivered Abraham a son (Ishmael) when he was 86 years old.
 - i. Extremely impressive, but not to God.
 - ii. Our best thinking only leads to turmoil, dissension, etc.
 - iii. Ishmael represents our best efforts to measure up to God's standards

C. Promised Realized

- 1. At 99, Abraham and Sarah were visited by 3 Angels and told that in 9 months, Sarah would be nursing a son.
 - a. All confidence in self had gone. Abraham definitely didn't have any confidence in Sarah.
 - i. When Abraham and Sarah looked at themselves, they couldn't help but laugh.
 - ii. What God had promised, only God could provide.
 - b. At 100 years old (Sarah was 90), God provided seed to and through Abraham.
 - i. Isaac was born and they called him Laughter.
 - ii. His very existence had nothing to do with human might.
 - iii. All glory is pointed to God.
 - iv. Only laughter pointed at human ability

D. What About those who Try to Enslave You?

²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. ²⁹ But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. ³⁰ Nevertheless **what does the Scripture say?** “**Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.**” ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. (Gal. 4:28-31)

- 1. Cast it out.
 - a. Everything in you

- b. Everything that draws you back
- c. *“I am crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live. But the life that I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20)*