

Adopted

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[0 : 00] I invite you to take your Bibles this morning and turn with me over to the New Testament book of Galatians. We're going to be in Galatians chapter 4 this morning, and we're going to begin in verse 1, work our way through verse 7.

Galatians 4, 1 through 7, and this morning we're going to talk a little bit about the topic of adoption. Now, we're not going to be talking about so much the topic of adoption as bringing a child into our home and them becoming our child and we becoming their parents, but we're going to be talking specifically this morning about the topic of adoption in regards to how when you repent of your sins and place your faith in Christ, you are adopted into a heavenly family.

And so that's what we're going to be looking at this morning. Galatians 4, 1 through 7. I trust that you have found our text. I want to invite you to stand as we honor the reading of God's holy and inerrant word.

Paul writes, 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, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

In the same way, we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

[1 : 25] And because that you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir through God.

Would you pray with me? Father, this is your word, and we are thankful this morning for it, Lord. It is inerrant, and it is authoritative to everything it speaks of. And Father, we are thankful this morning that we have it, and it is reliable.

And so, Father, as we open it up this morning to study this text, I pray that you would teach us, Father, that we would leave here changed, and we would take your holy word and apply it to our hearts. We pray this in Christ's name.

Amen. Thank you. You may be seated. When I was growing up, when I was a teenager, mainly 16, 17 years old, I thought that I had the strictest parents in the neighborhood because it seemed like I had to follow rules and regulations that the rest of my friends weren't necessarily required to follow.

It seemed like my friends could do what they wanted, and my mom and dad would always put these rules on me. And every time I went out, I remember my dad, we would have this conversation. He would ask me four questions.

[2 : 38] He wanted to know where I was going, who I was going out with, what I was going to do when I got there, and what time I was going to be home that night.

And it used to drive me crazy because it just seemed like my friends didn't have to answer these questions. My parents would put on me a curfew. I had to be home when I was 16, 17 years old when I was driving.

I had to be home on Friday, Saturday night, right around 11, 12 o'clock at night, which is fair. But at the time, it didn't seem like it was very fair. And I remember one Friday night, I went out with some friends.

We went bowling, and my curfew that night was midnight. And I remember leaving the bowling alley, getting in my car, driving home. And as I pulled into the neighborhood, looking at the clock on the dashboard, and it was 12.05, 12.05.

And so here I am. I go into ninja mode. I go into stealth mode. And what I did, if I was running late, I would put the car into neutral when I was about one house away from my parents' house.

[3 : 38] I put the car into neutral, turn the headlights off, and then turn the engine off and just kind of coast right up onto the house so that way my parents didn't hear me coming in. And I had done my homework already.

I had already oiled the lock on the front door so when I stuck the key in, it didn't make any noise. I mean, I was in bonafide ninja mode. And so I pull up to the house. It's 12.05.

I come up to the front door. It's well-oiled, ready to go. I stick my key in there, and I begin to turn that key. And there's no noise. It was beautiful. It was beautiful.

And I open the door, and the TV was on. My parents were never awake at 12.05. They were always in bed between 8 and 9 o'clock. And so the TV's on, and I can tell by what's on the television.

I can tell that it is my dad that is up because it's National Geographic. He's up watching something that us men like to watch. And so I go to Plan B. I had a Plan B. And so I open the door, and I walk in like there's nothing wrong.

[4 : 36] And I walk right by my dad. He's sitting in the Lazy Boy, and I just kind of wave at him as I walk by. I didn't want to say anything to him because I didn't want to strike up a conversation. So I just wave at him as I walk by. I get to the hallway.

And as soon as I get to the hallway to go to my room, my dad says, get over here, boy. And so I walk over to my dad.

I know I'm in trouble. I walk over to my dad, and I say, yeah, I play dumb. What's up, dad? He says, what time did I tell you to be home, son? And I said, midnight. He told me to be home at 12 a.m.

What time is it? And so I look at my clock. I knew what time it was. So I look at my watch. I said, oh, it's 12 o'clock. He says, so you're five minutes late. And I say, yes, sir.

He says, you're grounded for a week. At that moment, as a 17-year-old boy who knew everything, I began to buck up at my dad. And I told him how unfair it was.

[5 : 33] And, you know, you are grounding me for seven days for five minutes. That's not fair. And I just remember my dad sitting there in his lazy boy looking up at me, waiting for me to finish.

And after I finished ranting and raving, he looked at me. He said, Michael, you can either be grounded for seven days or I can ground you for 14 days.

And so I did what every smart 17-year-old boy would do. I stuck my tail in between my legs and I walked back to my room defeated.

Seven days of restriction for five minutes. I look back on those days and I think to myself how thankful I am today for a mom and a dad who were wise enough to put boundaries around me.

When I was at an age where I thought my parents didn't know anything and all of the adults in my life, they didn't know anything either. I'm thankful for those who invested their time into me.

- [6 : 38] I'm thankful for a dad who was willing to say, you know what, you're grounded for seven days. Because it made me who I am today. I bring that up because in the United States alone, there are over 581,000 foster children.
- And out of that 581,000, 129,000 of them are waiting for adoption. They don't have a mom and a dad who are waiting up for them to come home five minutes late.
- They don't have a mom and dad who are there always to love on them for one reason or another. And I often tell our teenagers, you complain about how hard your parents can be sometimes, but you know what, be thankful for them.
- Be thankful that you have them in your lives. And for some of these 129,000 children who are waiting for adoption, there's going to come a day. There's going to come a day where a couple is going to adopt them and they are going to become members of a family.
- They're going to be adopted by a mother and father who's going to love them and take care of them. And when they are adopted into that family, they inherit all of the rights, all of the privileges, and all of the benefits that come with being part of a family.
- [8 : 02] And so this morning, what I would like to do is take a few moments of your time to talk about an adoption process. And an adoption process that takes place the moment we repent of our sins and place our faith in Christ, we are adopted into a family.
- And when we are adopted into this family, there are some serious and great advantages that come with it. And so we're going to talk about those this morning. One of the advantages of being a member or being adopted into God's family is that you are no longer trapped in sin.
- You are no longer under the bondage, under the thumb of sin. Look what Paul says here in verses 1 and 2 again. He says, Now in Paul's day, there were three different customs.
- There was a Jewish custom. There was a Greek custom. And there was a Roman custom. And every single one of those customs had a particular age by which a boy became a man.
- In the Jewish custom, a boy became a man right around the age of 12 years old. And we're familiar with that here some because of the bar mitzvah. But in the Greek culture, a boy didn't become a man until he was around 18 years of age.
- [9 : 26] And we're familiar with that in our country because that's when we recognize children or youth as becoming adults in the eyes of the law. I often joke with our youth when they turn 18 years of age, I say to them, congratulations, you can now go to jail.
- Because you are now accountable for your actions. Your mom and dad are not accountable for you any longer. Now, in the Roman culture or in the Roman custom, the boy didn't become a man until the dad said so.
- And I like that one because I think every one of us here in this room knows not every 18-year-old boy is yet a man. I was one of them.
- And so the boy was under the thumb of his dad until his dad said, today, son, you are a man. The reason I bring up these three customs is because that's what Paul is talking about here in the first two verses of chapter 4.
- He is using the Roman custom of a boy becoming a man when the dad says so as an illustration to make a point in verse 3.
- [10 : 40] Okay? Look what he says here. In verse 2, he says that the child is considered a boy until the date set by his father. And each of these customs had a particular ceremony that marked the child as coming of age.
- And until that ceremony, Paul says the boy is no different than a slave, even though he would inherit the entire estate of his father. And so essentially what's going on here is the boy could make no decisions.

And he was under the thumb of his dad until his dad said so. And until that time, the boy was subject to guardians and trustees is how one translation puts it.

Essentially what the guardian would do, they're like modern-day nannies. They would take care of the boy, raise the boy if the parents were too busy, and the trustees would manage the estate that the boy was taking.

And so Paul was using an illustration. And he makes this point in verse 3. Look what he says. He says, And in the same way, in the same way as that Roman custom, okay, we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

[11 : 50] And so just like children, before they became adults, they were in slavery. We, the same way, before we came to faith in Jesus Christ, we were in slavery. We were under the thumb.

And we were under the thumb of sin. And so he says, we were in slavery under the basic principles or elementary principles of the world.

That word elementary comes from the Greek word for alphabet. And what is the alphabet? It's the building blocks of writing. Okay? It's how we write.

And so what Paul is saying is that before the Galatians came to Christ, they followed their own ways. Their own elementary ways. Right?

They followed their ceremonies. They followed their man-made religions that focused on pleasing God when, in fact, they could not do that. And since their religion could not save them, they were under the thumb of their sin.

[12 : 52] And they were under the thumb of the man-made religion that they chose to follow. I want to take just a moment here to talk about three things that are kind of taboo within the church, especially in the Baptist church.

Let's talk about cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. Cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. I'm a guy, I like to read statistics and research.

And one statistic that I looked at said this about youth, about young people. 30% of 8th graders, 44% of 10th graders, 52% of 12th graders have confessed to using illegal drugs.

I want to say that one more time. 30% of 8th graders, middle school, 44% of 10th graders, and 52% of 12th graders have confessed to using drugs. This doesn't include the ones who didn't confess.

This doesn't include the ones who didn't want mom and dad to find out, so they said nothing. And so what that equals is 42% of teenagers in our country have confessed to using illegal drugs.

[14 : 03] Underage drinking has cost our country right around in the neighborhood of \$58 billion a year. That's billion with a B. In the last 30 days, 50% of teenagers report of drinking alcohol, and 32% confessed to being drunk at least one time in that 30 days.

Listen to this statistic. Every year, over 276,000 men die from smoking cigarettes. Just men, 276,000. 142,000 women die from smoking cigarettes.

Alcohol is also attributed to car-related fatalities, suicide, sexual assault, and the contraction of STDs among teenagers.

You know what's ironic about all these things? We know this. And people who choose to live this kind of lifestyle know this. They may not know the statistics.

They may not know the exact research. But we don't live in 1940 anymore. We know that cigarettes cause cancer, and cancer kills you. Knowing the research, knowing that this stuff will kill, people still choose to do it.

[15 : 15] It just blows me away. And what happens is, is when you start abusing these things, your body becomes dependent upon them, and you get addicted. You get addicted to something that will eventually take your life.

They're in bondage. They're under the bondage of the cigarettes, of the alcohol, and the drugs. You know, this bondage that they find themselves in is a bondage that will kill them.

And sin's bondage is clothed in fun, independence, and pleasure. And what we fail to realize is that it kills.

It can kill us physically, and it will most definitely kill us spiritually. Glory be to God this morning that he has released us from these things.

When we come to faith in Christ, you are released from the bondage of sin. I often illustrate to our youth on Wednesday nights, and I know they're tired of this, but there's a line that goes right down the center of the exchange. It's a crack in the floor.

[16 : 29] And I say to our youth, you can't straddle that line. One foot in sin, bondage. One foot in the church, or your walk with Christ. And walk straight. You can't do it. It's incompatible.

No matter how many times I've read the Bible, it's just not there. You can't have one foot in the world, one foot in the church. You're either with Christ, or you're not with Christ.

You're either in bondage, or in Christ, you have been released from bondage. And that's what Paul talks about. When we are adopted into his family, when we are adopted into the heavenly family, we are free from this bondage.

Second thing that happens to us when we are adopted into a heavenly family is that we have an assurance of salvation. Now, if you've been in the church long enough, especially a Baptist church, you've heard the phrase, once saved, always saved.

And this is one of the texts that we get that doctrine from. Listen to what Paul says here in verses 4 and 5. Paul says, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

[17 : 39] And so Paul says, when the timing had fully come, in God's perfect timing, in God's sovereignty, he sent his Son. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, who was born of a woman. He fulfills the Isaiah prophecy of being born of a virgin, the Virgin Mary, and it says that Jesus was born under the law.

In other words, Jesus perfectly obeyed the law to a T. He never sinned. He never messed up. And he is our perfect, sinless sacrifice.

No one else could do that. Doesn't matter how you interpret the law. You can interpret the law as being all the Old Testament, the first five books of the Old Testament, or even just the Ten Commandments, all of which is correct, okay?

But we break them. I would argue that we break the Ten Commandments on a pretty regular basis. Jesus never did that. And so he was able to become our perfect sacrifice.

He took our punishment. I often illustrate it this way, especially when I'm talking to children and when my kids were younger, you know, explaining penal substitution, the atonement, propitiation, these big theological words to a three-, four-year-old is almost impossible.

[18 : 57] But, you know what? They do understand, hey, Jesus, he took your spanking. Maybe you don't like spanking. That's okay. He went to timeout for you. Right?

Jesus went to timeout for you. He took your punishment. And I know that illustration breaks down at a point, but you know what? In the mind of a three- or four-year-old, it makes perfect sense. Jesus took your punishment.

When he died on the cross, that was supposed to be us on the... That was supposed to be our death. That was supposed to be our punishment. And so when we place our faith in Christ, essentially what happens is there's a great transaction.

We give Jesus our sin, our guilt, our punishment, and what Jesus gives us in return is his imputed righteousness. And so when the Father looks at us, he no longer sees a guilty sinner and deserving punishment.

He sees the righteousness of his Son. In a sense, we are taken out of a family, which would be Satan's family, and we are put into God's family. And so Paul says in verse 6, he says, And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

[20 : 05] Because you have trusted in Christ, you are adopted. You are part of God's family. And even more, like it couldn't get any better, God gives us his Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity.

He comes and lives in our heart, and the Holy Spirit does a number of things. He regenerates us. He gives us spiritual gifts. But one of the things he does is he's our assurance that we are going to see God one day, that we're going to be with him in heaven one day.

For lack of better words, he is the guarantee, the ticket, that we are going to go to heaven when we die. 2 Corinthians 1, 21 and 22, Paul says this. He says, God anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and listen to this, 1 Baptist, and put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 Corinthians 5, Paul says, now it is God who made us for this very purpose and has given us the spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Ephesians 1, 13 and 14, having believed, you were marked in him with a seal. What's the seal? The promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance.

[21 : 20] It's like God looking at us and saying, I promise, there's going to come a day when we step out into eternity.

One out of one person dies. No one escapes him. It's like God saying, when that day comes, you're going to be with me.

Here's my Holy Spirit. I promise. When I was growing up, for those of you that don't know this, I'm an only child, and so I'm spoiled rotten, and I had the advantage, and I'll confess, I was a city boy.

I grew up in Virginia Beach and grew up in a big neighborhood. We didn't live out in the country or anything. Had lots of people around me, and since I was an only child, I was fortunate enough to have a little boy named Chad, who was my age, that grew up across the street from me, and Chad was my best friend.

Chad was my best friend, and I remember me and Chad, we used to hang out all the time, four or five years old. We would do things that four and five-year-olds would always do, right? We rode our big wheels. Y'all remember big wheels? Some of the generations in here don't know what big wheels are.

[22 : 28] That's all right. We rode our big wheels. That was that thing that we sat in and it had two little wheels on the back and one big old wheel up front, and we would ride our big wheels up and down the street, and my dad had a bunch of bricks and plywood in the backyard, and we would go back there and we'd build a ramp and we'd jump it with our big wheels, and every now and then we would start ghosting our big wheels.

If you don't know what ghosting is, that's when you build a really big, tall ramp, and then we would take our big wheels and run with them and just let it go and let it fly off, and my dad would get mad at us for doing that, but we still had a good time doing it.

And I remember we were never allowed inside. That's a good thing. Kids play too much inside these days, right? And we were never allowed inside. My mom wouldn't let us inside. Chad's parents wouldn't let us inside, and so when it was like 100 degrees outside, we would play on Chad's front porch, and we would play with three specific figurines.

We would play with G.I. Joe, Transformers, and He-Man. Those were the only three. Those were the three that were big back then. G.I. Joe, Transformers, and He-Man, and we would sit there and we would play these things, and I remember I had to be home right around 5, 5.30 for supper, and around that time, I would look at Chad, and I'd say, Chad, I've got to go home, man.

I'm going to go home. I've got to go eat supper, but I'll be back tomorrow, and I remember Chad looking at me. Now, we're four or five years old. I remember he'd look at me. It was almost like he didn't trust me. He says, You're leaving?

[23 : 49] I said, Well, yeah, Chad. I've got to go home. You're coming back tomorrow, right? I said, Yeah. And then Chad would look at me every time, and he would say, Do you promise? And I would say, Yes, Chad.

I promise. And it was like those words, I promise, brought him comfort. He's like, Okay, I'll see you tomorrow. Every now and then, we'd be up there playing with his He-Mans, and my parents never bought me He-Man for some reason.

They bought me Transformers. I still have my Transformers. Transformers and G.I. Joe, but they would never buy me the He-Man, and so we'd be playing He-Man, and it'd be time to go home and eat supper, and so I would say, Hey, Chad, I've got to go home.

I'll be back tomorrow. You think I can borrow Skeletor while I'm gone? Ooh, you ask a five-year-old back then in the 80s if you could borrow Skeletor, that was like asking for a million dollars, and so he would look at me.

He says, You want to borrow my Skeletor? Are you coming back tomorrow? And I said, Yeah, Chad. I'm coming back tomorrow. And he says, You promise? And I would say, Yes, Chad. I promise.

[24 : 48] I'm coming back tomorrow. Don't you worry, and I'll bring Skeletor with me. There is something about those words, I promise, that brings us comfort. Right?

Even as adults, when we have a friend looks at us and say, You know, I promise you I will do X, Y, and Z, it's almost like, you know, this sense of peace comes over us. Because we expect someone to do what they say, especially when they say the words, I promise.

The Holy Spirit of God, given to us at the moment of salvation, is God's I promise. You can never get rid of him. The Holy Spirit will never leave you.

He is always with you. He is your assurance. He is your promise that God will complete exactly what he began to do in your life.

When we are adopted into a heavenly family, we're released from the bondage of sin. We receive the assurance of salvation. And the last thing is, we become an heir of God. In closing, look with me at verse 7.

[25 : 52] Paul says, So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir through God. Like, it couldn't get any better. Right?

I mean, you know, you're released from under the thumb of sin. Okay? You have this assurance of salvation. But Paul also says here in verse 7, that God has made you an heir.

In other words, the promise of being a son of God includes a shared inheritance with Christ. The ultimate outcome of your faith is inheritance in the Father's estate.

And we receive all of the rights, benefits, and privileges that come with that, such as security, comfort, love, forgiveness, eternal life, heaven, and support.

And I think I would be remiss this morning to not point out that in verse 6, the word son is plural. It's sons. In verse 7, it becomes singular.

[26 : 55] And I believe it drives home the point. Galatia, the church of Galatia, they were sons of God. They were heirs when they came to faith in Christ.

Way back when. But so are we. Today, in the year 2017. It's personal. It's God's way of saying to us, when you place your faith in my son, Jesus Christ, you become my child.

You are an heir. And so this morning, I want to ask you, have you been adopted into that heavenly family? Have you come to a point in your life where you have repented of your sins and placed your faith in Jesus Christ?

Because there is no other, more important decision than who is Jesus. Who is Jesus? And we all one day will have to stand and give an account to the answer to that very question.

Who is Jesus? And I want to remind us this morning that you can't straddle the line. You're either with Jesus or you're not with Jesus.

[28 : 06] So who is Jesus to you? Secondly, I want to issue a challenge to those of you here this morning that do know Christ. Are you walking with him?

Is he your all in all? Is he the most important thing in your life? Or has the busyness of life kind of distracted you from him?

It's easy to do. My family and I are learning that right now with two children, both in sports. I get it. But despite that, we've got to keep the main thing the main thing.

And we can't allow academics, sports, extracurricular activities to come in between our walk with Christ and our love for our family.

And I begin with myself. I say that speaking to myself. And so this morning, if you're in that boat, let me just encourage you, maybe right where you are during the time of invitation to pray to God and repent.

[29 : 14] Ask for his forgiveness and make the main thing the main thing again. However the Lord has led on your heart, I'll be down here at the front. Love to pray with you.

The altar will be open if you'd like to come up here and pray. But however the Lord has led this morning, you let him have his way. Would you pray with me? Father, we thank you this morning for your word.

We thank you that, Lord, we can come before you this day to worship you in this place. Father, I thank you for this church and just what it means in this community and to my family. So Father, as we close this time, Lord, I pray that your spirit would work.

That he would speak to our hearts and that we would respond. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.