

Read Galatians 4v1-11 – We are God’s Children!

- What are the key images being used in this passage?
- Legally, what does it mean to be an “heir” as a child?
- What are the differences between the way a slave on an estate and the child of an estate owner would relate to the master? (*Think of the differences in conversation together, how time in each other’s presence would be spent, their attitude towards the estate etc*)
- How does this parallel your own relationship with God as his child?
- “Abba” is also the term Jesus used to address God as Father when he prayed in Gethsemane (Mark 14v36). How should such intimate language affect our prayers?

In this section of the letter we see that the Christian life is the life of sons and daughters; it is not the life of slave. Of course we are called to be slaves of God, of Christ and of one another, but this slavery is not bondage but freedom – we belong to God and therefore love to serve our master – it’s not a duty but a delight.

Read Galatians 4v12-20 – Pauls Intense Concern

- In what sense did Paul want the Galatians to become like him?
- What was the difference between how the Galatians had originally received Paul and how they now regarded him? Why had there been this change?
- What was the difference between what Paul wanted for the Galatians and what the false teachers wanted?
- Why do you think Paul refused to give up on the Galatian church? Do we have the same persistence to see other Christians become more like Christ?

In this section of the letter we see Paul appeals to the Galatians. He longed for them to become like him in his Christian faith and life, and to be delivered from the evil influence of the false teachers who sought to quench the joy of salvation by telling people that they still needed to live under the law (which included a lot of man - made rules) which was impossible for even the most devout Jew to follow. Instead Paul tells them Christ has made us free!

Read Galatians 4v21-31 – Freedom!!

- Are there any ways in which we may still live “under the law” – ie. rules and regulations that Christians imagine will make them acceptable to God? Why do these laws have such a persistent appeal?
- What are the differences between the two women mentioned in these verses? And between the two sons?
- How does Paul use the history of Abrahams two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, to illustrate the supremacy of promise over law? (See Genesis 15-17 and 21v1-21)
- What will be the outcome for those who believe God’s promises rather than depend upon the law?

“This can best be illustrated by a story I heard of a man who was converted to Christ whilst serving a prison sentence. On his first Sunday out of prison he went to church and sat at the back. He looked forward and saw the 10 commandments written on the wall. He thought to himself “that is the last thing I want to see, I know my weakness, I know my failure, the last thing I want to do is to sit here and read those laws that only condemn me”. But as he read them – one by one -he realised he was reading them very differently. Previously he had read - “You shall not steal” and it was a command! This time he read “You shall not steal” and it was a promise! ...” Isn’t that wonderful The very law that had only ever condemned him had become a promise that liberated him. This of course is the Gospel!” (Paraphrased from “Christ in You” by Charles Price)