



Children of Promise

Galatians 4:21-31

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Background

The Galatian Church is in a crisis

- Paul had preached the Gospel of Jesus to them and many people began to follow Jesus - and a church was established
- Paul leaves, and the church becomes infiltrated with false teachers Refers to them as....
 - “those who trouble you”
 - “those who unsettle you”
- These teachers are saying that the Galatians need to follow the law and become circumcised in order to follow Jesus
- Paul sees this as an abuse of power by those that are teaching
 - they are creating a system that would see them hold the power of those under their teaching



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The observation is that God was faithful to his promise

Here's the contrast

- Ishmael was born out of human effort
 - Taking things into our own hands
- Isaac was born out of God's promise
 - Putting our faith and trust in God's promise

- Through Isaac God's promise was fulfilled

Let read our passage in Galatians 4:21-30



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Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.

These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written:



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“Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.”

Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.”



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Observations

At a glance this passage can be difficult to understand

1. Paul is only giving an example, not giving an interpretation.
 - Paul is simply using the story to help the Galatians understand that they error.
2. The Galatians are in danger of placing their faith in their own ability.
 - Paul starts by accusing the Galatians they do not know what the law says and that it has no power to save.
3. What Paul is doing in the passage is contrasting freedom and slavery
 - Paul is worried that they are going to put themselves under the slavery of the law.



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Freedom Vs. Slavery

Slave woman	Free woman
Ishmael	Isaac
According to flesh	Through promise
Hagar	Sarah
Slavery	Freedom



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What is Paul getting at?

Recognize that you ARE children of Promise!

- You foolish Galatians...Stop trying to earn your favor with God
- Placing your trust in the law actually diminishes the gospel of Jesus.

Paul doesn't say "become a child of promise"

He says you ARE children of promise

This is an issue of identity for the Galatians



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What is a Child of Promise then?

Children of promise are those who belong to God

- Because you belong to God you are free, saved, sanctified, Justified

Like Isaac was born of Sarah because it was promised by God. You belong to God because He promised it to you by your believing

We try and do things that earn favor with God

- You have been made right and the work that you need to be reconciled is already paid
- We have become a part of Jewish family history



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So I asked myself the question....

“What is this passage directing us to do?”

It's not telling us to “**DO**” but to “**BE**”

Paul finished the passage by saying to the Galatians
“you are children of promise”

- Not, “do this so that you become children of promise.”

“The suggestion to do something is nearly always inappropriate, for persons who come for spiritual direction are troubled over some disorder or dissatisfaction in being, not doing.....The sense of definition provided by clear-cut action provides tremendous satisfaction. But there is no growth in the spirit, no development into maturity.” Eugene Peterson



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So What?

If our identity is a child of promise.....

1. What does that actually look like?

believing John 6:28-29

- To do what God asks of us is to believe
 - This can become another “task”
 - If I try really hard to have more faith then maybe I will be part of God’s family/have an inheritance?
 - Jesus is even the one who gives us faith
- Believe in what the bible says about your **identity** in Jesus.
- Here is a list of the things that I have found.



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I am faithful

I am God's child

I have been justified

I am Christ's friend

I belong to God

I am a member of Christ's Body

I am assured all things work together for good

I have been established, anointed and sealed by God

I am confident that God will perfect the work He has begun in me

I am a citizen of heaven

I am hidden with Christ in God

I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and self-discipline

I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me

I am blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing

I am chosen before the creation of the world

I am holy and blameless

I am adopted as his child



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That's a pretty good life that Christ HAS given to you!

Believing or having faith in these things isn't a behavior that we can correct

- We spend too much time and effort on trying to correct our behavior when we have lost site of our identity

- read more, pray more, etc.

- good things but not if we do it so that earn God's approval

We are doers by nature....we are satisfied when we 'do' something or 'build' something

"We are a group of people addicted to and obsessed with the work of the Kingdom, with little to no idea how to be with the King" Mike Breen



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2. How does a Child of Promise Believe?

Believe like a child

- We all have had times that we understood the contrast between when we were slaves and when we became free.
 - For many of us this would be when we first began to follow Jesus.
- Kids know how to believe but there is something sinful in us where we desire to put the yoke back on
 - We turn back to slavery by choice and lose sight of what was once revealed to us. Spiritual Amnesia
- Galatians 5:1 *“For freedom Christ has set you free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”*



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3. What if we don't be in our Identity?

Symptoms of Spiritual Amnesia

- 1 We begin to believe lies (I'm not)
- 2 When we believe lies we try and "do" stuff
- 3 Our failure in "doing" stuff produces shame (feeling bad for who you are)
- 4 Our shame continues to feed the lies that we already believe about who we are

- Ultimately we enslave ourselves and put on the yoke that Jesus has taken away

A simple knowledge of who God is needs to be accompanied by an understanding of who you are.

- To know God we need to know ourselves

