

**Commentary on Galatians 4, by Chuck Smith 1.28.24**

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**January verse [Luke 24:45 \(NKJV\)](#) And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.**

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Now I say, That an heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father ([Gal 4:1-2](#)).

So, Paul now gives us an illustration of a... Here's a little child. He is born in the Rockefeller family. One day he's going to be heir to the Rockefeller fortunes. But as long as he is in kindergarten, he can't go out and sign checks for a million dollars. Though one day it'll all be his, right now he's a child. He's under the tutors; he's under the trainers, the governors who are teaching him those things that he needs to know to manage the fortune when once it becomes his. Now he's the heir of all things, but he can't really spend it yet until he comes to that appointed time of maturity and all when he's been prepared by the tutors and the teachers to then handle properly this whole vast fortune.

You're an heir of God. Now, as long as we are in a state of development and maturing process, though I am the heir of all of God, I am waiting for the time appointed of the Father when I enter into that inheritance. In the meantime, I'm being trained how to handle it. Relationships.

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art [you are] no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir, an heir of God through Christ ([Gal 4:3-7](#)).

So, the law was more or less a tutor, a governor. But now in the fullness of time, Jesus came, born of Mary. He came under the Jewish law, grew up in a Jewish home, followed the Jewish law. Only, He followed it perfectly. In order that He might redeem those who were under the law. Now, this idea of being under the law is being under the sentence of the law. You see, when you violate the law, then you come under the law. That is, the law has made a demand upon you. That demand must be fulfilled for you to be free.

If you go speeding down Fairview Avenue eighty miles an hour, and the policeman pulls you over, writes you up, you have to go over to Harbor Municipal Court, and they will say, "Your fine is a hundred and fifty dollars." You say, "Well, I would like to see the

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judge, all right?" And they'll give you your day in court. And the judge will say, "You're charged here with going eighty miles an hour in a fifty mile an hour zone. How do you plead, guilty or not guilty?" "Well, Judge, I..." "How do you plead, guilty or not guilty?" "But I... there was..." "How do you plead, guilty or not guilty? Did you go eighty miles?" "Yes, but..." "Hundred dollars." "But Judge." "You want a trial by court or jury?" "Well, I'll take a trial by court." "Well, you're guilty. Hundred dollars."

They're not really interested in the extenuating circumstances. They're only interested in guilt or not guilt. And the sentence is imposed. Now you say, "But Judge, I don't have a hundred dollars." "All right, five days in jail." Now, that's the demand of the law upon you. You're under the law. So the bailiff comes in, he puts the handcuffs on you and takes you off to jail for the next five days. You're under the law. And until you have sat there for five days, the law has the hold over you. Once you have sat there for five days, then you're no longer under the law. Its demands have been fulfilled and you are now set free.

Now, being under the law of Moses is a little more serious, because the penalty there is death. And so, I'm under the sentence of death by the law of Moses. I'm under this law, under this sentence of death, and I cannot be set free until the law has been fulfilled. And so men, up unto the time of Christ, were under the law, under the sentence of the law, under the curse of the law. But in the fullness of time, God sent His Son, born of a woman, under the law, that we who were under the law might receive this glorious adoption of sons.

Now I am a son of God, but not in the same manner as Jesus is a Son of God. Beware of any teaching that would put you on an equal par with Jesus Christ. There are some very dangerous teachings by some of the popular Pentecostal evangelists in which in their books they finally come to the conclusion. Of course, they have books on the authority of the believer and things of this nature, and in some of their books they'll finally write, "So that I am Christ. Thus, I can make demands upon God, because I am Christ." That is extremely dangerous heresy.

I am not a son of God as Jesus is a Son of God. He was the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. God sent His only begotten Son. There's only one begotten Son of God, that is Jesus Christ. I am a son of God, yes. I'm an adopted son of God; God has adopted me into His family. Now I'll take that. I love that. It's great to be a son of God even if by adoption. I was born by the Spirit, born again into the family of God, but yet, it was by adoption that God chose me. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, so that He came to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, which is the Hebrew word for daddy. That beautiful, close, intimate relationship that God wants you to experience with Him, to look to Him as your Daddy, as your Father.

Jesus said, "And when you pray, say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name'" ([Matthew 6:9](#)). That beautiful, close relationship with God. "Wherefore you are

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no more a servant, but a son." As a child under the law, you didn't differ at all from the servants. You couldn't really have the inheritance. The inheritance comes through Jesus Christ. It does not come through the law. The law was the tutor unto the time of Christ. Once Christ is come, the promise fulfilled. Now, by faith we are redeemed from the law that we might be adopted as sons of God, and as the sons of God, now become the heirs of the promises of God and of the covenant that God made with Abraham. "If a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? (Gal 4:8-9)

Now, in the church, we have men who put on robes of different colors and high hats, and wave scepters over the people, shake water on them, and declare that by these things they can bring God's blessings upon your life. That's exactly what Paul is talking about. When you were still heathen, when you were still pagans, "you did service unto them which by nature are not really gods." You were doing your pagan exercises, your pagan rituals. "But now, after you have known God, or rather are known of God, how is it that you're turning back to this ritualistic relationship, to the weak and the beggarly elements, whereunto they desire again to be in bondage?"

Most of the practices of holy days and so forth that we have in the church come from heathen, pagan practices. So, Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years (Gal 4:10).

You have your Lent season. You have your All Saints day. Going back to the weak and the beggarly elements of the past, rather than going forward into this new relationship with God through faith.

I am afraid of you [or I am fearful], lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. Brethren, I beseech [beg] you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all (Gal 4:11-12).

"Now, don't be offended with me," Paul is saying. "I'm not offended with you. Be as I am. I'm not angry, I'm not offended; I love you. But I've got to tell you the truth, and sometimes the truth is painful. So don't be upset with me. Be as I am, for I'm really not upset with you. You've not really injured me. So be as I am, don't be injured by me or feel injury towards me." For Paul said,

Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh [or the weakness of the flesh] I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation [or trial] which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected [me]; but [you] received me as an angel of God, [you received me] even as Christ Jesus (Gal 4:13-14).

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When I came to you, I was weak. I was sick. I had a real problem physically. But yet you openly accepted and received me like an angel of God or even as Jesus Christ Himself.

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? (Gal 4:15)

When they first received the gospel through Paul, oh how happy they were. How joyful, as their lives were transformed by the power of the Spirit. Now these men have come in and brought in these perverse teachings, brought them into a ritualistic relationship. Gone, have gone back to some of the weak and the beggarly elements. Tried to put them under a ritual relationship with God, rather than a living relationship with God. Paul said,

for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me (Gal 4:15).

So, this is no doubt a hint towards what Paul's weakness in his flesh was: an eye problem. Now in those days, they had some oriental diseases affecting the eyes, causing a constant kind of a pink eye condition, the running sort of conjunctivitis of which they had no cure. And so, it would affect the eyesight. It was repulsive to look at, and some believe that this is what Paul had. And yet, Paul says, you know, "You received me; you love me so much that some of you would have been glad to give your eyes, given your eyes to me."

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? (Gal 4:16)

You know, some people make it hard to really be honest and truthful with them, because of the way they react. Some people rebel against the truth. Some people don't want to hear the truth. "I'm comfortable the way I am. Don't bother me with facts, my mind is made up. Now I don't want the truth. Tell me how well I am. Tell me how good I am. Tell me how nice I am. Don't tell me the truth. I don't want to hear the truth." And so, there are those that are bound within a certain system in relating to God. "This is the way my father did it. This is the way my grandparents did it. Don't bother me with the truth. I'm happy here. I'm satisfied here. I don't have to do much. Just sit and watch." And people are disturbed by the truth. Paul said, "Have I become your enemy because I've told you the truth?" Now,

They zealously affect you (Gal 4:17),

And many of these persons are extremely zealous in their presentation.

but not well [it is not good]; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you (Gal 4:17-18).

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So, these guys are there. They zealously affect you, but actually they would exclude you from God for that, that you might affect them. That you might support them and all. So Paul said,

My little children [term of great endearment], of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you (Gal 4:19),

So, Paul's response is travailing prayer. "Oh, my little children, for whom I travail in birth 'til Christ be formed in you."

I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you (Gal 4:20).

Now, writing is, many times, difficult because you don't hear the tonal inflections. And many times, it's the way something was said that causes you to interpret what is being said. And this is the unfortunate part of the scripture, because I think that many times we misinterpret the scriptures, because we read into it a tonal inflection, which may not necessarily be there.

For instance, when God came to Adam in the Garden of Eden after Adam had disobeyed, and God said, "Adam, where art thou?" What was the tone of voice? And I'm certain that many times we think it was the tone of voice of an arresting officer ready to haul you off to jail. "Adam, where art thou?" Yeah, you know. But I really believe that that was, if you heard the tone of voice, the sob of a heartbroken father whose child had just messed up. "Adam, where art thou? Oh, Adam, what have you done?" And I don't hear judgment and thunder ringing in the voice of God; I hear heartbreak in the voice of God.

So many times, I think we imagine God thundering on us in heavy judgment, when in reality, His heart is broken over our failure, and His desire is to restore us. "My little children, for whom I travail until Christ be formed in you. Oh, how I wish I were there to change my tone of voice so you can hear my tone of voice, because I really stand now in doubt of you."

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law (Gal 4:21),

Do you really understand what you're doing? You that want a legal relationship to God, do you really understand what this entails? Do you really know what this means?

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one [was] by a bondmaid, the other [was] by the free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise of God. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants [that God has made]; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar [that is, the flesh]. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is (Gal 4:22-25),

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That is, all of the temple, and the law, and all of the ritual in the relationship to God through the law and through the temple, the Jerusalem which now is,

and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem [the spiritual Jerusalem] which is [from] above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband (Gal 4:25-27).

Now, this is quoting from Isaiah 54, and it is a scripture that relates to Israel when God restores upon Israel the national favor and blessing again. And as they then look back, they will see that God has brought forth many more children from the Gentile nations than from Israel. The weeping, the chagrin that will come to them when they realize that they have rejected God's Messiah. And they see how that from among the Gentiles, God has brought forth these millions to believe. And so, the barren has brought forth more children than she which had a husband, the nation of Israel. And so, those that are of the promise. Those that are of the Spirit contrasted to those that are of the flesh.

Paul uses the allegory of the line of the flesh, Hagar. That was a fleshly expediency by Sarah and Abraham in attempting to help God out. And when Ishmael was about thirteen years old, Abraham was sitting in the tent, and God said, "Abraham, I'm going to give you a son." And Abraham said, "Lord, let Ishmael live before You forever." In other words, "Don't put me on anymore, God, I'm satisfied. I've got Ishmael, you know, given up with Sarah. Let Ishmael." And God said, "No, through Sarah shall thy seed be called." The son of promise. One was the son of the flesh; the other was a son of promise. The two covenants. The law relates to the flesh, but the covenant of promise, that is, of Jesus Christ, relates to the Spirit.

And thus, in our relating to God, we must either relate to God through the law or through the Spirit. Through the works of the law or through the Spirit. But "by the works of the law it is evident no one can be justified" (Galatians 2:16). So, that leaves us, really: a true relationship with God can only be wrought by the Spirit and your faith in Jesus Christ.

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

I've been adopted as a son of man, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and I have become the children of promise.

But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now (Gal 4:29).

And so, Ishmael was vexing Isaac in time to come. Making fun of him, mocking this little kid. And so, Sarah was upset at the way Ishmael was treating Isaac. And Sarah said, "Get rid of that bondwoman; I can't take it anymore." And Abraham was hurt over this, because he loved Ishmael; he was his son. But the Lord spoke to Abraham and said, "Listen to your wife Sarah." And so, Abraham put out the bondwoman and her son.



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Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free (Gal 4:30-31).

The bondwoman referring to the law, to Mount Sinai, could not bring man into the blessings of God. All it could bring man was the curse.

We are not the children of the bondwoman. We don't relate to God through the law. We do not relate to God through our works or through our righteousness. But we relate to God through the promises of God given to us, which we, by faith, believe and accept, and enter in and receive then the blessings of God. Something the law could not do is bring me into the blessings of God, but my faith in Jesus Christ causes me to abound in the blessings of God.

This teaching of Paul to Galatians is important because we all seem to hold onto a concept of reward for good, punishment for bad. And that's life. That's the way we grew up. That's the way we were trained. The enforcement of good behavior by reward, the punishment of bad behavior. That's all I've known all my life. But that is not how I relate to God. And it's important that when I seek to relate to God, that I dismiss this concept by which I was trained. And that I relate to God through faith, believing the promises of God that He loves me and wants to bless me. And believing God to bless me even though I know that I have failed. I know I don't deserve it. I know I'm not worthy. I know my works don't measure up to it. But to receive by grace the blessings of God through the promises. I'm a child of the free woman, a child of promise. And since discovering that, I have never ceased to receive the blessings of God in an ever-increasing measure.

Father, we thank You for this relationship that we have with You through faith in Jesus Christ. We thank You for this new covenant, the covenant of promise based upon Your work that You have promised to do. And because, Lord, it's based upon Your work, it is sure. For Your work is sure. Lord, bless Your people tonight. May they go from here, Lord, blessed in every direction, as you pour forth upon them Your love, Your blessings, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

You know, I wouldn't dare to say these things unless the scripture did. Because it's not really, you know, according to my conceptual thinking. This isn't the way I respond. I respond, you know, in the old ways to people. You're nice to me; I'll be nice to you. Good to me; I'll be good to you. Get nasty with me; I'll get nasty with you. It's hard to handle God and the grace of God. His goodness to me, though I have failed, though I don't deserve it. But because the scripture teaches it, I dare not depart. I dare not declare anything else.

I must declare to you what God has declared to be true of your relationship with Him and of His desired relationship with you. He doesn't want a legal relationship; He wants a loving relationship. He wants you to love Him and to know how much He loves you. And He wants you to come to Him on that basis of love, His love for you. And when you

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learn to come to that loving relationship with God, your life would be blessed, so blessed, because you're not now limiting the blessings to your works of righteousness. You're not keeping back the blessings because of your lack of works of righteousness. But you're being blessed on the basis of God's promise and God's work for you in Jesus Christ, which never ceases.

Father, let this be the turning point of our lives tonight. Impress Your truth upon our hearts in Jesus' name. God bless you.