

Galatians 4:1-7

Imagine yourself a slave to a hard task-master.

1. There is no way to accomplish the work he demands nor measure up to the standard he has for you
2. You always fall short of his expectations
3. But there is no possible way he will ever allow you to rest, much less ever set you free.

One day the son of a neighboring task-master comes to visit. You have heard of him that...

1. He is kind, full of mercy, full of grace, gentle, and full of love.
2. Every one of His slaves, He sets free!
3. He not only sets them free, but He brings them into His Father's household, to make them part of the family...to make them heirs!!!
4. He even dresses Himself in order to serve them and at times has been known to wash their feet

You are trapped and miserable...weighed down by all of the tasks you must accomplish today, with no hope of completing any one of them, or satisfying the demands of your hard, task-master.

1. You see a transaction take place out of your window between your master and the son of the kind task master down the road.
2. Then your master walks away and the son comes, knocks on your door, takes you by the hand to take you with him, to set you free...to make you his brother...to make you an heir of his Father's estate.

In a moment everything has changed! Can you imagine a greater gift?! This is what Christmas is really all about.

1. Not just a baby being born in a manger in Bethlehem, but the purchase of an unworthy slave
2. The necessary work of bringing humanity out from under the slavery of sin and the law and placing them under grace
3. We see it very clearly here in Galatians 4.

Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. 3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

I. We have all been enslaved to a hard master v1-3

Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. 3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.

1. Before Christ we were under guardians and managers
 - a. Gal 3:23-24 *Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith*
 - b. The Greek word pictures a slave appointed to serve as a child's protector.

- c. From age six until late adolescence, the child was under constant care and supervision.
- d. This slave was part babysitter and part chaperone.
- e. Ancient drawings usually depict him holding a rod.
- f. He provided protection, punishment and served as a tutor.
- g. God used the law like a tutor to hedge us in from total rebellion, to discipline us, and drive us to Him.

2. Before Christ, we were enslaved to, what Paul calls, the elementary principles.

3. What are they?

a. Galatians 4:9-10 *But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.*

b. Colossians 2:8-23

c. Hebrews 10:1-13

4. Before Christ we were under the law and enslaved to the elementary principles

5. This is the position of Ishmael v21-31

21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. 23 But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. 24 This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. 25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. 27 For it is written, "REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND." 28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. 30 But what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

- a. Born of a slave
- b. According to the flesh

We are all, before Christ, Ishmael...the child of Hagar...under the law: enslaved to a hard master.

II. We have been redeemed by a good master

4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

1. Tell the story of Christmas...the time came, He was sent forth to be born to Mary as a Jew, under the law...so that He could redeem us and make it possible for us to be adopted!
2. We can be heirs because we have been redeemed from slavery by Christ.

Philippians 2:6-11

although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

He did not come into existence in Bethlehem 2000 years ago.

1. He has existed for all eternity!
2. John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*

He existed in the form of God, equal with God!

1. Colossians 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*
2. Hebrews 1:3 *He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.*
3. But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the Law.

7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Redeeming us from our bondage was no cake walk: Jesus Died a Hero by Bryan Elliff

There is a very old bit of graffiti scrawled onto a plaster wall in Rome. It's a crude sketch of a naked man hanging on a stick-figure cross. The man has the head of a donkey. To the left stands another man who looks up at the crucifixion with his hand raised. In case we misinterpret the scene, the graffiti "artist" has been kind enough to etch in a caption in Greek. It reads: "Alexamenos worships [his] god." Apparently, the man with the donkey's head is Jesus and Alexamenos is a Christian. This 3rd century work of "art" is meant to be a mockery.

1. In the Roman world, crucifixion was the kind of death reserved for slaves and criminals. It was intentionally brutal and degrading.
2. The public exposure, cruelty, nakedness, and lack of burial all were an announcement: "this is a worthless person."
3. So it's no wonder that the message of the cross was stupidity to the Romans.

What amazed Paul is not just that Jesus died, but that it was "even death on a cross." That's because it was a humiliating death. It wasn't heroic or inspiring to them, the kind of act that people would talk about with respect or make into movies with emotional soundtracks.

No, Jesus chose to be associated with something uncomfortable, even revolting and shameful. He knew that people would scoff at it and think it was stupid. He even knew that one day he would be depicted naked with the head of a donkey. And to think, he gave up his status as God for that.

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1. Isaiah 45:23 *I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.*

2. We know that as we work to bring the gospel of the kingdom to the nations, that knees from every tongue and tribe and nation will freely and gladly bow.

3. People from every nation, tongue, and tribe will freely and gladly confess Jesus as their Lord.

4. Revelation 7:9-10 *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

We are all, at some point, Ishmael...the child of Hagar...under the law: enslaved to a hard master, but we have been redeemed by a good master! But there is more.

III. We are adopted as Sons by the Master

6 *Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"*
7 *Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.*

1. You can be an heir!

2. What is an heir?

- a. An heir is one who inherits the estate from his father
- b. So, as heirs, we inherit the kingdom of God by faith

3. This was the position of Isaac

21 *Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?* 22 *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.* 23 *But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.* 24 *This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.* 25 *Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.* 26 *But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.* 27 *For it is written, "REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND."* 28 *And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.* 29 *But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.* 30 *But what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN."* 31 *So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman*

- a. Born of a free woman
- b. According to promise

We are in one of two positions this morning

1. We can be in the position of slave...a slave to a hard task master
 - a. There is no way to measure up to the standard he has for you
 - b. You always fall short of his expectations
 - c. But there is no possible way he will ever set you free.
 - d. His name is Mr. Law.
2. Or we can be in the position of heir to a new Master who cares for you, loves you, and adopts you into His family: Mr. Grace.
3. Which of these 2 positions is most appealing? How can we be made heirs? By grace through faith in the redeeming work of Christ on the cross.

Have you been brought from slavery to sonship? Repent and Believe