

“Sons of God”
Galatians 3:26 – 4:7
(Preached at Trinity, February 3, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has been setting forth a carefully crafted response to the error of the Judaizers who were teaching that works of the Law must be added to faith in order for a person to be saved. In Paul's response he defends justification by faith alone as well as putting forth the relationship of the Law to the Gospel?
2. The Gospel demands justification by faith alone and Paul was willing to die upon this truth. But this did not mean Paul was diminishing the place of the Law. Paul always maintained a high view of the Law
Romans 7:12 KJV - "Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."
1 Timothy 1:8 NAU - " But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,"
 - A. In **Verse 21** Paul declares that the Law is not contrary to the promises of God as if there was some flaw in the Law. If it were possible for men to keep it salvation would surely come from it. But fallen man cannot keep the Law. It condemns us.
 - B. Why then the Law?
 - a. Because it provokes sin and declares all men all the more guilty
 - b. Because it makes sin all the more sinful. It serves as a spotless light that shows us the dirtiness of our heart.
 - c. It makes our desperate condition all the more desperate.
 - C. The Law condemned us and shut us up under the wrath of God until Christ came.
3. In **Verses 23-25** Paul describes the transforming nature of the New Covenant setting up the familiar “then/now” construction:
 - A. Before faith we were kept in custody under the Law. The picture is that of a prison. We were shut in with no escape.
It is like we are imprisoned by our sin. We desperately need to be delivered.
Galatians 3:22 NAU - "But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."
Galatians 3:23 NAU - "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed."
The word for “Custody” means – confined, under guard
 - B. **Galatians 3:25 NAU** - "But now that faith has come"
 1. “Faith” here refers to the fullness of God's promise fulfilled in Christ; the promise received and trusted and rested upon.
 2. It implies the powerful work of the Holy Spirit enabling us to embrace Christ by faith. This was impossible under the Law.
Galatians 3:2 NAU - "did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

- C. Obviously it doesn't mean that there was no faith before Christ because Paul has already used the faith of Abraham as an example:
Galatians 3:6-7 NAU - "Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ⁷ Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."
4. The coming of the Gospel has changed everything. The pedagogue remained in authority over his master's child until the child came of age.
 Those who embrace Christ by faith apart from works of the Law have come of age. They are no longer under the pedagogue.
 Now through faith the people of God receive the riches of God's blessings—the blessings of the New Covenant.
5. In the final verses of **Chapter 3** and continuing into **Chapter 4** Paul describes some of these blessings. He begins with the blessing of sonship.
Galatians 3:26 NAU - "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."
Galatians 4:6 NAU - "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
6. It describes the intensity of relationship promised in the New Covenant
Jeremiah 31:33 NAU - "I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
7. Why is it that the Law no longer serves as a pedagogue? Because we are sons who have come of age.
- A. The pedagogue was in an unusual situation. He was a slave but was given authority over the son of his master. The son had no greater authority than the slave even though he was the heir of the master.
 When the son came of age the pedagogue no longer had authority
Galatians 4:1 NAU - "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,"
- B. Paul makes three statements about these sons
Verse 26 - "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."
 1. You are all sons of God
 2. You are all sons of God through faith
 3. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus
- I. You are all sons of God
- A. This is a universal blessing for every partaker of the New Covenant
Jeremiah 31:34 NAU - "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD"
 1. Paul declares this blessing to all - universally
 "For you are all sons . . ." – emphatic: πάντες
 "All" – All who have trusted in Christ
 2. This speaks of the universal sonship of Christians – Jew, Gentile, male, female, bond free. All distinctions have been removed
 3. Jews and Gentiles have been united as one people
- B. Few recognize the significance of this sonship.
 1. Jesus alone is the eternal Son of God. He is one and equal with the Father. He is beloved of the Father and well-pleasing to the Father
Matthew 3:17 NAU - "and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.""

2. The redeemed have been made partakers of this relationship through adoption.
Galatians 4:4-5 NAU - "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."
3. The infinite eternal God has brought sinful human beings into a relationship with Himself.
1 John 3:1 NAU - "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."
4. We are born into the family of God—not by physical birth or physical lineage. We are brought into the family of God through a rebirth—through regeneration. This is fully a work of God’s Holy Spirit.
John 1:11-13 KJV - "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. ¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: ¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."
5. As sons of God we enjoy God’s unconditional love
1 John 3:1 – “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God”
 - a. God loves us with an infinite love.
 It is an unfailing love
Romans 8:38-39 – “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 2. God’s love for us is beyond comprehension
6. We also enjoy relationship with God’s family – the other children of God
 1. When God saves us He adds us to His household of faith, the body of the redeemed from every age. We are united to Christ and united to others united to Him.
 2. We are also added to a local body of the redeemed—the local church. Being added to the church is a recognition that you bear the characteristics of being a part of this family.
 3. Church discipline is the church declaring that a person does not bear the characteristics of being a son of God. In fact it is described as being delivered over to Satan, their true father.
John 8:44 NAU - "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

II. You are all sons of God through faith

A. This has been at the heart of Paul's argument. We are saved through faith alone.
Galatians 2:16 NAU - "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus"

Galatians 3:7 NAU - "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."

** More importantly, the sons of God.

B. This sonship is available to all who believe upon Christ—to all who receive Him
John 1:11-12 KJV - "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. ¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:"

1. ἐξουσία – the authority or legal right – it says much about the concept of adoption. An unrelated child becomes a legal child with all the rights and privileges of sonship.

2. This privilege must be received. This is Paul's emphasis in this letter – we are saved by faith alone

This blessing of sonship cannot be earned, it cannot be purchased. It can only be received.

Galatians 3:7 NAU - "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."

And only the sons of Abraham can be the children of God

3. To receive Christ means to receive all that pertains to Him. We receive Him as our high Mediator, our Prophet, Priest, and King

a. We receive Him as Prophet confessing our sinful ignorance and desiring to be taught of Him.

b. We receive Him as Priest confessing our great sinfulness and need of a Savior. We confess the excellence of the cross.

c. We receive Him as King, our Lord, our Master, our Ruler

4. The offer of the Gospel is an invitation to Sonship and it is made to all men – all have the responsibility of receiving it through faith and repentance.

III. This is made possible through Christ alone—not through the works of the Law

A. Jesus alone is our hope of redemption

Acts 4:12 NAU - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

1. The Gospel is a message about God's redemption through Christ.

Galatians 4:4-5 NAU - "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."

2. It is the finished, accomplished death of Jesus upon the cross that purchased our adoption through justification.

3. Too often Christ is left out of the Gospel. An infinite amount of other things are added. Churches become clouded with many programs and activities and Jesus gets pushed to the outside. Where is Jesus in our church? In your life?
- B. Christ alone has bridged the infinite separation between us and God.
1. We have been united to God through Christ alone. He is now called our God and we are now called His people. But even more stirring God has become our Father. Through Christ alone.
Galatians 4:6 NAU - "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!""
 2. The Law no longer condemns us. We have been translated from children of wrath to children of God.
Ephesians 2:19 NAU - "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,"

Conclusion:

1. There are infinite blessings granted to those who receive the promise of God in Christ Jesus. God has received us as His own dear children.
2. This blessings cannot be earned. There is nothing we can do to obtain it. It must simply be received.
3. This is the nature of saving faith. It is simply humbling ourselves and casting ourselves at the feet of Christ. "I desire You O Lord about all else."