

## 2094 - SONS of GOD, NOT SLAVES - Gal 4:7

PRELIMS. There is a world of a difference between living in a house as a **servant/slave** and living as an **son/heir!** Far too many good Xns are living their Xn lives as if they were **slaves** to God, and **not sons** of God. They conceive God as a **hard Master** rather than a **loving Father**. Paul's problem with the Galatians here, is that too many of them were living in the **fear** of God instead of in the **love** of God.

It may be **because** we too have **not** had much teaching on the wonderful doctrine of **adoption** (Confession has but **one** paragraph!), that we emphasis **justification/sanctification** so much, that we fail to present God as a **loving** heavenly **Father**. Many perceive God as a **punitive judge** with themselves constantly 'in the dock', accusing themselves of some misdemeanour, that they **fail to recognise** God as a Father **delighting** over His children. Some see themselves 'locked-up' in a Courtroom chastening themselves for their failures, that they just cannot **enjoy** the **freedom** and **liberty** of God's dear children. Paul is trying correct that problem here! **Thus [5:1]!**

The Galatians were **legalists** and were ruled by 'oughts' and 'musts'. I ought to have done this, and I should have done that. Which may have been true, but it **dominated** their whole lives. Everything was a **duty** that must be preformed and 'I cannot rest until I have done it'. Religion was full of **duties** and became more of a **habit** that they **appointed** for themselves. Religion was a **discipline** that they **felt** ought to be **practiced**. And because they saw God as a Judge, more than as a Father, they felt extremely **guilty** when they did not perform one of these 'duties' like circumcision. Although they became Xns through faith in X, all the former rituals of the Jews became **fundamentals** which must still be practiced. They were slaves to their own 'rules', yet God accepted their faith in Christ!

Many Xns today are like this. Many Xns need **more standards** than they have and fall into the category of **presumptuous believers** who have **no obligation** to praise and thank God. Mankind, especially when it comes to religion, **tends** to be **legalistic** and **ritualistic**. You can see that in **children**. In fact dogs, cats, animals love **order** and **habit**, regarding their feeding and walkies and so on. But there is

such a thing as **feeling** guilty when innocent! Of course, you can also **be** guilty and **not** feel guilty - thus **feelings are dangerous** guides to truth and reality! Satan, as you know, operates on the **minds** of people. He is a Master at making God's people feel guilty when they are not. He often does so by **reminding** them of things they have **not done!** 'You should have read another chapter at your quiet time this morning'. 'You should have prayed longer today' So Xns need to realise that God is **not a slave driver**, but a loving Father.

We must not **fear** God in a **superstitious** way - waiting for some 'judgment' to happen to us because we did not do something as well as we could have done it. Remember, in all our failures - it is **sin**, not weakness, that is wrong. The **Ten Commandments** are the **important** things that God wants us always to keep - keep them and we will be blessed. **Focus on keeping them** and you will do well! No lying, stealing, adultery, envying, coveting, etc

This bondage **prevents** us from being **positive** about ourselves and about our **evangelicalism**. Paul had to write to Timothy to **fan into flame the gift of God which is in you...for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control** [2Tim 1:7]. Tim was **neglecting** a gift because of his **negative** views of God. He probably felt he wasn't good enough, he couldn't match Paul's preaching.

The **image** we have of God makes such a difference to our outlook on life! Jesus said *if the Son sets you free you will be **free indeed*** [John 8:36]. What do **you** think Jesus meant by being 'free indeed'? Did He mean we were always to have a **list of duties** that we must perform each day? Or do you think He meant that we had a freedom to do what we **could not do** before? Friends, when X sets us free, we are free **TO worship, praise, exalt, thank** the Lord Jesus Christ - which we could not do before - because we were not '**set free**' from the bondage we were born into as sons/daughters of Adam! But once we are brought into the Family of God, as we have it in [v6], *God has sent the **Spirit of His Son** into our hearts* - there is a special *crying* from the heart '*Abba, Father*'! Each child of God has something of the 'spirit of God' in him that connects Him to God, just as a natural child has some of the **genes** of his parents in him! So, the sons/daughters of God are **adopted** into God's Family.

Our Shorter Catechism tells us that the preface to the Lord's Prayer (which is 'Our Father which is in heaven') teaches us to **draw near** to God with all holy reverence and **confidence**, as **children to a Father**, able and **ready to help us**! I want to **emphasise** 'as children to a father'. \*Now I am very much aware, that **nowadays** the term 'father' can have **terrible connotations**! For many children the word 'father' fills them with **dread**. It means abuse, kill-joy, quarrelling, arguments, fightings, tensions!

For others there is no father-figure at all! But the term father **ought** to be a **warm, caring, loving** person who takes **responsibility** for the whole home. **That** is the way the word 'father' is used in the Bible/ Catechism. I understand that many know absolutely nothing of that type of father and that they have no idea what a father is meant to be!

A father should **provide** for his wife and family - **all their needs**. That is probably his number one priority. Even **before his own needs**! That what X did! Love your wives *as Christ loved the church* Paul said a very **solemn** thing to Timothy! *if anyone does not provide for his relatives, especially for the members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever* [1Tim 5:8]. God provides for all His creatures. There **IS** food in the world - its the **distribution/greed/wastage** of the people that has caused a shortage!

A father must **protect** his wife/family! **Support** any **weakness**! Help them thru it! Children should **run** to their father. *The Lord is a strong tower and the righteous run into it and are safe!* [Pro 18:10]. God said to Abram *I am your shield and your reward shall be very great*

Adoption means you are **brought in** to a family from **outside**! You were not born into that family - but you were brought into it. It doesn't matter where you came from - you are **now** in this new family and you are a **part of it**! You **belong** to this family! See what Paul says about the Ephs: *remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ* [E2:12]

Now, **what** brought you into this family. What **motivating** factor?

Nothing else but the **good pleasure** of God. It is **all** of **grace**! Same as in natural adoption - the **will, good-will** of the parents! There was **nothing special** about **you/I** that compelled God to choose us! When we go to look for a dog/cat - we often say 'Oh, that a lovely cuddly pup' or whatever. **Not so** with God re you/I! We were chosen **before** we were born! Thus: ***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ...even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world according to the purpose of His will*** [Eph 1:3] Yes, a mystery, but clearly revealed in Scripture!

Unlike natural adoption, there is **no jelling period** to see how things will work out! When God chooses us, that's it. There is no turning back by God. He chose us because there was an **eternal love** there! Each member in the family are **equal**. All have equal rights. Your **skin colour** makes no difference. Your **appearance** makes no difference. Your **accent**! Paul to **Gentile Ephesians** *if children, then heirs - heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ* [Rom 8:17]

Because you **belong** to and are part of the family of God, you are entitled to an **inheritance** - you benefit from anything and everything the parents have! *In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will* [Eph 1:11]. There is **no fear** of your inheritance being squandered away in Government taxes or to Old Folk's Homes! The inheritance is **incorruptible/undefiled**!

\***How** do you get **access** into God's family? Story: Boy turned away from seeing Abraham Lincoln! Met a youth at the gates of White House. 'Ill get you through!! Hi Todd... Hi Dad! He got thru his son [Sermon978]! You can **only** get **access** to God thru **Jesus X!** **through Him** we both **have access**...to the **Father** [Eph 2:18]

\***How do you know** if you if you are adopted? By the **intimacy** you have with God like Lincoln's son! [v6] **because** *you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'* You have cry in your heart to your heavenly Father. You can't explain things but you get comfort by just going to God as a **child**! Can you **speak** with God **intimately**. Commit to Him your secrets? Do you **enjoy** **His fellowship**! Do you **feel safe** in **confiding** in Him?