

## Chapter 4

### v. 1-3

#### Sons and Heirs

- Paul continues on from chapter 3 with the narrative about being Abraham's offspring.
- As part of the Abrahamic Covenant we are part of the family of God.
- He clarifies that even as an heir, a child is no different than a slave.
- He has no practical ownership of the estate even though he is the rightful heir.
- There are managers and guardians that take care of the estate until he is able and of age.
- Paul tells us that we are no different, that before Christ came we were slaves to the elementary principles of the world.

#### Elementary principles of the world:

- Earth, Wind, Water, and Fire.
- In ancient times these elements were often worshiped.
- Paul may be thinking of the sacred calendar of the law which was determined by the heavenly bodies. Legalism subjected life to the elements of the world.
- The law acted as a guardian would to an heir that was a minor.

### v. 3-7

#### Adoption as sons

- God sends Jesus to fulfill the law and redeem those under it.
- Although Jesus was without sin He was still born under the law.
- He was obligated as one born under the law to fulfill the commands of the law.
- He did that and then died so that His death would free us from the curse of the law.
- Paul then tells us that His people are no longer minor heirs but now adults who've been adopted into the family of God.
- We are joint heirs with Christ to the kingdom of God the Father. (Romans 8:17)

- Because of this adoption, God has sent the spirit of His Son into our hearts so much so that we now can call Him *Abba*, which means, Father.
- This new spirit is that of His Son. We now should mimic the character of His Son Jesus.
- As Jesus trusted the Father, and was obedient to Him, so we too are to be obedient and trusting.
- We are no longer under the care of a guardian, the law, we are now under the fatherly care of God Himself.

#### Abba, Father

- We have been given the right to call God “Father”.
- He is no longer simply God He is our loving Father.
- He occupies both roles.
- Adoption is a very personal thing and sometimes we tend to see adopted children as “less than”.
- This couldn't be further from the truth, especially within the household of God.
- We are not tagalongs that God felt sorry for.
- He has given us the inheritance of Christ. He has put a royal robe on us, a crown on our head, and a signet ring on our finger.
- We are not the poor Cinderella type that lives in the basement, we get our own room in the palace.

## Small Group Questions

1) What relationship did the law have to God's people?

- It acted as a guardian or a manager. The people of God were still people of God but they were considered children who were not ready to run the estate.

2) Through Jesus what relationship do we have to God the Father?

- We have been adopted into the family of God, not only as heirs, but as sons and daughters. The wording Paul used is very important. Adoption in the Roman Empire was permanent. They could not be disowned as could a natural child. The adoption into God's family is one of permanence not to be undone.