

Slide 1

I Am My Father's Child

Galatians 4:1-7

Introduction

1. The adoption of a child is very special both in the life of the new parents and the child.
2. It is special because the parents choose that child from a host of children needing a home to love and parent for the rest of their lives.
3. In September 1992, Becky and I adopted our children Donnie, Juanita and Brandon.
4. It had been more than a year since we had first learned of them and decided we wanted to adopt them.
5. In order to finalize the adoption we were required to appear before a judge:
 - a. He spoke to our children and told them that they were about to become our children, if they so desired.
 - b. He made sure that we both understood not only would they now have a new name, they would be our legal heirs.
 - c. We were to love them and care for them as if they had been born into our own home.
6. Needless to say, the papers were signed!
7. A number of years after we came to Waverly, our children gave us a tile with these words on it:

**Having a place to go is home,
Having someone to love is family,
Having both is a blessing.**
8. Just prior to our text this morning, Paul writes in this letter, "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise"

(Galatians 3:29, NASB95).

9. It is in our text that Paul helps us understand what it means to be adopted by God.

Slide 2

I. Coming of Age

A. The Heir Is No Different From the Slave

“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, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.” (Galatians 4:1–2, NASB95)

1. He begins with an illustration of a young child who is the heir of a great estate.
2. However, because he is a minor, “he is no different from a slave” (v. 1, NIV84).
3. He is subject to “guardians and managers” (ESV) “until the time set by his father” (v. 2).
4. In Paul’s day, Roman law stipulated a child was under “guardians” until the age of 14 — he would remain under “managers” until the age of 25.
5. Only then could he exercise complete, independent control over his estate.

Slide 3

B. We Too Are Like That Child

“So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.” (Galatians 4:3, NASB95)

1. In a spiritual sense, prior to our coming to Jesus Christ, we were like those children — we “were held in bondage under the elemental things (basic principles, NIV84) of the world” (NASB95).

2. Another way to put this is that we were spiritual slaves to the basic principles of the society in which we live.
3. Whether those principles are the moral laws such as those we find in the Old Testament or the civil laws which govern nations the world over, those laws are limited in what they can do.
4. The purpose of all law is to restrain us from evil and constrain us to do good, but it cannot deliver us from sin.
5. Law can only accuse us of wrong, convict us of that wrong, prescribe a punishment and have it carried out.
6. It can reveal sin in our lives and cause us to fear death.
7. However, it gives us nothing that is living, healthy, divine or heavenly.
8. It speaks only to this present world and shows us the evils that are in the world.
9. To see beyond this world, we need something more, we need someone who can make us "of age" — that someone is Christ.

Slide 4

II. The Coming Of The Son

A. He Came To Redeem Us

"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law . . ." (*Galatians 4:4-5, NASB95*)

1. There is a point in history in which God sent His Son into our world.
2. Paul calls it "the fullness of time".
 - a. It was a time when the Roman Empire controlled most of the known world and *pax Romana*, the peace of Rome prevailed.
 - b. It was a time when roads and ships allowed travel throughout the empire.
 - c. It was a time when Greek was the language of commerce used

throughout the empire.

3. There are two more things which Paul tells us about the entrance of God's Son into this world:
 - a. He was "born of a woman"
 - 1) He entered this world just as each of us have, through a mother.
 - 2) Not only was He fully God, he was fully human — he became one of us.
 - b. He was "born under the Law"
 - 1) He was born into the Jewish nation under the same law that God had given through Moses almost 1,500 years earlier.
 - 2) As He Himself said, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17, NASB95).
4. Jesus came for a purpose, "so that He might redeem those who were under the Law" (v. 5a).
 - a. To "redeem" meant to release a slave from his or her owner by paying that slave's full price.
 - b. Earlier, in Galatians 3:13, Paul said that Jesus "redeemed us from the curse of the law by become a curse for us" through His death upon the cross.
 - 1) He paid our full price to the law by completely fulfilling all of its demands on us.
 - 2) Through His own death He is able to free us from the law's curse.
5. Our slate has been wiped clean and on it Jesus has written "Paid In Full".

Slide 5

B. He Came That We Might Have A New Status

"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a

woman, born under the Law, so that . . . we might receive the adoption as sons.”
(Galatians 4:4–5, NASB95)

1. In the Greek and Roman cultures of Paul's day, a wealthy man who was childless could adopt one of his servants.
2. At the moment of adoption, the former slave became a son and heir, with all the financial and legal privileges which came with sonship.
3. This is what Jesus has given us.
4. Not only has He removed from us the curse of the law — a standard which none of us could keep — He has given to us the blessings of a son of God.
5. As an adopted child of God, we have a father who . . .
 - a. promises never to leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).
 - b. “according to the riches of His glory” is able to strengthen us “with power through His Spirit in [our] inner man” (Ephesians 3:16).
 - c. Will one day raise us from the dead with the same power He used to raise His own Son (1 Corinthians 6:14).

Slide 6

III. The Coming Of The Spirit

A. He Makes Real Your New Status

“Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”” (Galatians 4:6, NASB95)

1. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to each of us who are Christians because we are now His sons and daughters.
2. In Romans 8:15, Paul wrote that “you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15, NASB95).
3. He then adds, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children

of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

(Romans 8:16–17, NASB95)

4. This is the same address which Jesus used in the Garden of Gethsemane when He called out to His Father, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will” (Mark 14:36, NASB95).
5. “Abba” is an Aramaic word used by children when addressing their fathers.
6. It is similar to our English word “Daddy” in that it indicates intimacy and trust in the relationship.

Slide 7

B. He Confirms Your Inheritance

“Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.” (Galatians 4:7, NASB95)

1. We have an inheritance reserved in heaven for us which, as the apostle Peter tells us, is “imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away” (1 Peter 1:4).
2. In Ephesians 1:3, Paul wrote that “God,” the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”
3. One chapter later, beginning in Ephesians 2:4, Paul tells us that “even when we were dead in our transgressions” God “made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4,5,6, NASB95).
4. If you are a Christian, Paul tells us that from a spiritual perspective God has already raised you up and seated you with His Son in the heavenly realms.
5. Where is our Lord at present? At His Father’s right hand!

6. What more could we ask for?

Conclusion

Slide 8

1. In 1938, a man by the name of Adger M. Pace wrote the lyrics to a hymn which he named, "*I Want To Be Ready To Meet Him.*" (No. 604).
2. Notice these words from the third stanza.

**There is one thing I can boast of, salvation from the fall,
I'm an heir to wealth in glory, my Father owns it all;
That is why I'm shouting happy and go at His command,
For I want to be ready to meet Him in the glory land.**

3. There is one question which remains for us this morning. How do we become sons and daughters of God?

Slide 9

4. Four verses before the beginning of our text this morning, Paul gives us the answer:

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Galatians 3:26–27, NASB95)

5. Is God your Father this morning? If not, He can be.
6. Are you ready to meet Him on the last day? If not, you can be.