

19. The Book of Galatians 3:26-29 (Topical)

Liberty From Law-Part 18

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(6-2-24)

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We have been studying the Book of Galatians here at Calvary on Sunday mornings going through the book topically based on its main theme.

The main theme of Galatians is **liberty**—the liberty (or freedom) that is ours in Christ.

In our study this morning, we find ourselves in the second main division of the book—“**Liberty from Law.**”

Galatians 3:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Here Paul uses an illustration that was familiar to all his readers—that of the **child guardian**.

As mentioned last time, in many wealthy Roman and Greek households back then well-educated slaves were put in charge of the master's children as their guardians. They would watch over them and take them to and from school. They would teach them various skills, life lessons (honesty, morality, the value of hard work)—and sometimes they would even discipline them.

This is what Paul means by **tutor** (Galatians 3:24)—the Greek is ‘paidogogos’ which literally means, “*a child conductor.*”

The purpose of the Law was to take us by the hand (like a tutor) and ‘*conduct*’ or ‘*guide*’ us to Jesus by teaching us that we could never keep the Law for righteousness. (Romans 3:20)

**Once the Law does its job and shows us our sin,
our inability to keep the Law for righteousness,
and drives us to Christ for His righteousness
—the purpose of the Law in our lives has been fulfilled!**

Galatians 3:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

“**...after faith has come**”—**after the New Covenant came into being**—the Law was no longer needed as a system by which people could approach God and have fellowship with Him.

The New Covenant was not built on keeping external laws and animal sacrifices—it was built on the finished work of Jesus Christ and entered into when a person simply believes on Jesus for righteousness and salvation.

REFLECTION: What does “the finished work of Jesus Christ mean to you?

In verse 26 Paul calls all Christians (even the women) “sons of God”—but he used the term “Son of God” twice before in this letter—both times as a proper title for Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:15–16; 2:20).

In all, Paul referred to Jesus as the “Son of God” seventeen times in his letters.

Now of course, as Christians, we understand that Jesus as the Son of God is much different from each of us being called ‘a son of God.’ That is because, **Jesus is uniquely and exclusively the Son of God**—the only Person Who Alone is Almighty God in human form, equal with the Father from all eternity, the Second Person of the Trinity.

John begins his gospel by introducing to us the true Jesus—

John 1:1–3, 14 (NKJV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made...¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus as the One and only true Son of God was—“begotten of the Father.”

This is a very important statement in Christian theology because—it completely refutes what is known as the “**Arian Heresy.**”

Arias (256-336 AD) taught that Jesus was a *created* being—that He was greater than a mere mortal man but less than Almighty God. (This is the heresy the JW’s have embraced)

Arianism gave rise to the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD—which led to the creation of the **famous Nicene Creed** which in part says—

*“We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made...”*

So, Jesus is the **only begotten** Son of God—He is unique among all other ‘sons of God’ in that He is the only virgin born, God in human form Son of God.

All believers in Him are sons by adoption.

REFLECTION: Why is it important to understand and refute the Arian Heresy?

God gave the Mosaic Covenant (Old Covenant) temporarily to be a **tutor** until the time when Jesus would come to earth and institute the New Covenant—

Galatians 3:19, 24-25 (NKJV)

¹⁹ What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made...

²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

One author paraphrases verse 25—*“Now that we have entered into full adult sonship, we no longer need a baby-sitter.”*

Galatians 3:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

When Paul uses the phrase **“sons of God”** the main point he is making is that—the true children of Abraham are those who believe in Jesus—these are really the children of God (by adoption).

Romans 9:6–8 (NLT)

⁶ ...not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God’s people! ⁷ Being descendants of Abraham doesn’t make them truly Abraham’s children. For the Scriptures say, “Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted,” though Abraham had other children, too. ⁸ This means that Abraham’s physical descendants are not necessarily children of God. Only the children of the promise are considered to be Abraham’s children.

J. Vernon McGee—

“Paul is going to show in the remainder of this chapter, and in the first part of Chapter 4, some of the benefits that come to us by trusting Christ that we could never receive under law. The Law never could give a believer the nature of a son of God. Christ can do that. Only faith in Christ can make us sons of God.

An individual Israelite under the Law in the Old Testament was never a son, only a servant. God called the nation “Israel my son” (see Exodus 4:22), but the individual in that corporate nation was never called a son. He was called a servant of Jehovah. For example, Moses was on very intimate terms with God; yet God said of him,

“Moses my servant is dead” (see Joshua 1:2).

My friend, even if you kept the Law, which you could not do, your righteousness would still be inferior to the righteousness of God. Sonship requires *His* righteousness, you see. The New Testament definitely tells us, *“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”* (John 1:12). We are given the power (Greek *exousian*, meaning “the authority, the right”) to become the sons of God by doing no more nor less than simply trusting in Him.”

Galatians 3:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ...

- The **baptism** that Paul refers to in Galatians 3:27 is not water baptism but a *‘dry baptism.’*
- The word **‘baptize’** comes as a transliteration of the Greek word, ‘baptizo’ which means to *‘immerse.’*
- The word was used of ships that had sunk and were *‘baptized’* into the sea—and also of a piece of cloth that was immersed into a vat of dye and was now *‘baptized’* into the dye.
- The word is used 74 times in the New Testament and every time the idea is immersion—the question is into what?

Well, we have to look at the context of each passage to determine that—because the word is used to speak of different kinds of baptisms.

1. The baptism of suffering (Matthew 20:23)
2. The baptism of distress or of being overwhelmed (Luke 12:50)
3. The baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5, 8)
4. The baptism of judgment (Matthew 3:11-12)
5. **The baptism of salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13)**

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NKJV)

¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...

If you look at the context of this verse, you will see that salvation is in view—so this is speaking of the baptism of salvation. The baptism of salvation is a *“dry”* baptism where a person who receives Jesus as their Savior is instantly *‘immersed’* (baptized) into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

The phrase **‘put on Christ’** refers to a *‘change of garment’*—the believer has laid aside the filthy garment of self-righteousness based in religion (the Law—Isaiah 64:6) and, by faith has put on the pure white robe of Christ’s righteousness (see Colossians 3:8–15).

One commentator—

*“This union with Him means being **clothed with Christ**. In Roman society when a youth came of age, he was given a special toga which admitted him to the full rights of the family and state and indicated he was a grown-up son. So, the Galatian believers had laid aside the old garments of the Law and had put on Christ’s robe of righteousness which grants full acceptance before God. Who would want to don again the old clothing?”*

We are now “clothed” with Christ (hidden in Him)—the One who perfectly kept the Law and fulfilled it which means that because I’m “in Jesus”—the Law has been perfectly fulfilled in my life also.

REFLECTION: How might you explain the “Baptism of Salvation”?

Jesus introduced this teaching the night before His crucifixion in the upper room—

John 14:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ **At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**

Here in John 14:20, Jesus introduces one of the greatest truths in the Bible—a truth that forms the foundation for much of Paul’s writings—the doctrine of the believer being “**in Christ.**”

When you put your faith in Jesus Christ you were taken by the Holy Spirit and placed ‘in Christ.’ In other words, you were placed into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13a), which is what it means to be saved and a member of His Church!

The Church is the Body of Christ—Jesus Himself being the Head of the Body—in that regard the Church is a Person if you will—it is the Person of Jesus Christ. As His Body we are a living extension of Jesus Christ—you can’t speak of the Church apart from Jesus—they are one.

As the Body of Christ, it is our responsibility to manifest Jesus to this world.

When Jesus ascended back to heaven His ministry on the earth didn’t end—He continues it from heaven, as the Head of the Body, directing His Body on earth (the Church) thru the ‘*central nervous system*’ of the Holy Spirit you might say—using us to continue the work He began 2000 years ago!

John 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

Acts 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began both to do and teach...*

Being a Christian is not simply being outwardly identified with Christ by going to church— but being *part* of Christ!

Our being one with Christ is one of the deepest mysteries of the Christian faith—one we will not fully understand until we meet Him face-to-face in heaven.

REFLECTION: Personally, what does it mean to you to be “in Christ”?

It’s such an incredible truth that Peter tells us in his first epistle that angels desire to “*look into it!*” Or in other words, God’s angels desire to understand how God (Jesus, thru the Holy Spirit) could indwell His people in the Church age!

This doctrine (teaching) is unique to the Christian faith—no one ever says that they’re “*in Buddha*”, or that they’re “*in Mohammed*” or “*in Confucius*”—only Christians can say that we are “*in Christ*”!

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul the apostle elaborates on this concept of the Church being “in Christ” (members of the Body of Christ) by describing the Church as an “*organism*”. **The Church is not an organization—it is an organism.**

>>> The big difference between an *organism* and an *organization* is that—one has life, and the other does not!

One pastor put it well when he said—

“A corpse is organized—it has all of the limbs in the right place, the bone structure is intact, all the organs are in the right spot and connected to the right things—everything is there but it’s not alive.

At this point it’s an organization but it has ceased being an organism.

The dictionary defines an organization as a “structured system” but it defines an organism as a “living system.”

The Church is not a dead organization it’s a living organism—it’s living because Jesus, Who is alive, is its Head and because the very ‘life breath’ of God, the Holy Spirit (pnuema-breath) fills its members.”

We are all living members of the Body of Christ, knit together by the Holy Spirit and given various gifts and ministries so that the Church, the Body of Christ, might live and grow and serve the Lord effectively in unity (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:11-16).

>>> When the human body doesn’t respond to the impulses of the brain, the body is handicapped and incapable of doing any work—the same is true with the Body of Christ.

Galatians 3:26–28 (NKJV)

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Don't misunderstand what Paul is saying here—he's saying that once we are saved, we are all equal in God's eyes—He is no respecter of persons.

There are no racial, gender or class distinctions in His kingdom—however, that doesn't mean that there are no longer any distinctions or differences here on earth.

One author put it this way—

*"This doesn't mean that there are no differences. Paul knew that there was still a difference between **Jew and Greek**, and his evangelistic approach might differ to each group. The **slave** still had a daily obligation to obey his **master**, though they might be equal in Jesus. There are still different roles for **male and female** in the home and in the church, though they are equal in standing before God. There are differences in role and in function, but none in standing before God through faith in Jesus. 'When we say that Christ has abolished these distinctions, we mean not that they do not exist, but that they no longer create any barriers to fellowship'". (Stott)*

Galatians 3:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The Galatians were **deceived** into thinking that they could become Abraham's seed (children) by keeping the Law.

The Judaizers **taught** the Gentiles that they had to keep the Law and become children of Abraham (Jews) first—and then they could believe in Jesus and become children of God (Christians).

Paul destroys that argument by showing that Jesus is the Seed of Abraham (3:16), the promised Son (Messiah)—and therefore all believers in Christ are one with Jesus and seeds (children) of Abraham as well. Let me say it again—**when sinners believe on Jesus, they become one with Him—thus they become Abraham's seed and, in Christ, they inherit all of God's blessings.**

Romans 4:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

When Paul says that Abraham is '**the father**' of believing Gentiles—he isn't saying that he is literally and physically the father of Gentile believers.

It's simply Paul's way of saying that Gentile believers are the spiritual children of Abraham because his faith, in a sense—has given birth to their faith.

Abraham didn't give birth to Jews and Gentiles as his *physical* children (that would be their first birth through Adam)—but rather **his faith was used by God to give birth to unbelieving Jews and Gentiles who became his *spiritual* children by their faith and members of the family of God** (which spoke of their second birth—i.e., '*born-again in the Spirit*').

Romans 4:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that

righteousness might be imputed to them also,¹² **and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.**

God's purpose was that Abraham would be the father of a new nation (a new creation nation) consisting of all who believe and are thereby justified by faith—this included both the uncircumcised (Gentiles) and the circumcised (Jews).

But because the Jews believed that circumcision saved them, Paul directs most of his comments to them by telling them that outward rituals like circumcision *won't* save them—**they must 'walk in the footsteps' of the faith that Abraham had in his heart—**

Romans 2:28–29 (NKJV)

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; ²⁹ but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is not* from men but from God.

One pastor had this to say—

“Obviously, then, the rite of circumcision, which many Jews rely on for salvation, contributes in no way to one’s status before God. It gives them no special standing before Him because they must be declared righteous on the basis of faith in God. Just like the rite of water baptism doesn’t save those living under the New Covenant. It also is merely a sign of the new birth—don’t put your faith in a ritual.”

Galatians 3:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ **And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Romans 4:13 (NKJV)

¹³ For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was not* to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

This whole section revolves around the promise that God made to Abraham—it is the key to understanding the passage.

REFLECTION: Why is “faith” so important to understanding the heart of Abraham?

Hold on to that, we’ll come back next week and pick it up in Galatians 4!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

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