

21. The Book of Galatians 4:5-9 (Topical)

Liberty From Law-Part 20

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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.

The book divides itself into 3 main areas of liberty that Paul brings up in this epistle—

I. **Liberty from Lies**—verses 1:6-10

II. **Liberty from Law**—verses 1:11-4:31

III. **Liberty for Life**—verses 5:1-6:15

In our study this morning, we find ourselves in the second main division of the book—“**Liberty from Law**” — which is really liberty from *religion and legalism* as a way of being made righteous in God’s eyes.

II. **Liberty from Law**

H. **Sons and Heirs**—verses 3:26—4:7

Galatians 4:1–5 (NKJV)

¹ Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, ² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ **to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

‘Redeem’ is the same word Paul used earlier (Gal. 3:13)—and means *“to set free by paying a price.”*

A man could purchase a slave in any Roman city back then (there were about 60 million slaves in the empire), either to keep the slave for himself or to set him free.

Jesus redeemed us on Calvary’s Cross with His own blood—by paying the price necessary to set us free from slavery to the Law that we might have freedom in Christ to relate to God through His grace.

And so, for anyone (Jew or Gentile) to place themselves back under the Law is to return to the slavery Jesus died to set us free from and basically to *“trample the Son of God underfoot and count the blood He shed for us a common thing, insulting the Spirit of grace.”* (Heb. 10:29)

The word ‘adoption’ comes from two Greek words for — “position” and “son”.

So, **adoption** means “to take the position as a son”—or in other words, one who is of full age and ready to benefit from his father’s wealth.

“...that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (v.5)

Jewish women didn’t inherit their father’s land only the sons (because when the daughters married, they lived on their husband’s land that they inherited from their fathers).

>>>So now you understand why Paul called even Christian women ‘sons’ and not *daughters*—it was because they will also inherit the “**land of heaven**” someday (there will be no ‘second-class’ citizens in heaven).

Galatians 4:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ **And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”**

The word “**abba**” means “*daddy*” or “*papa*”—a term of endearment and intimacy.

The fact that we are ‘adults’ spiritually should not keep us from relating to our Heavenly Father as little children.

When I got saved, I just knew something had happened—something had changed inside. Suddenly my **relationship with God went from ‘formal and dead’ (religion) to ‘intimate and alive’ (relationship)!**

Something else to understand—once you’ve been adopted by God into His family through Jesus—God is no longer your Judge, He’s now your Father.

A Father that has rules, which if broken will bring chastening (discipline)—but no longer a Judge that upholds laws that if broken will bring punishment and condemnation in hell.

Galatians 4:5–7 (NKJV)

⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷ **Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

The believer is no longer a slave living under the Law as their master—now he or she is a child of God. Since Jesus, as God’s Son, is the heir of all God’s riches, the Christian is an heir of God through Christ—all that God has is ours by faith.

Romans 8:15–17 (NLT)

¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

One author put it well—

“A slave child is not the son of the master. He must prove his worthiness each day of his life through obedience and hard work, to earn the right to remain a part of the household. If he doesn’t measure up he is cast out or sold to another.

The heir is a son of the master through birth and as such doesn't have to prove or earn the right to remain a member of the household for the house and everything in it belongs to him.

That is the difference between law and grace, between work and faith—it is the difference between a slave trying to earn, each day, the right to stay a member of God's family or being born into it by faith and therefore an heir forever through God's grace."

Galatians 4:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

REFLECTION: How might you describe your relationship with Jesus: Formal & Dead or Intimate & Alive?

Prior to their conversion to Jesus the Galatians, in their ignorance of the one true and living God—were in bondage to false gods such as Zeus and Hermes (cf. Acts 14:11-13)—but after they received the gospel a great change took place, and they came to **'know'** God.

The Greek word Paul used for them coming to **'know God'** is a form of *ginosko*—which literally means, "to know intimately and on a personal level."

This is the difference between knowing God through *religion* (superficial head-knowledge)—and then knowing Him intimately and personally through a *relationship* with Jesus. **This is what being 'born-again' means.**

But then Paul quickly adds—"But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God..."

Paul makes an important point when he says **'or rather are known by God'**—it is really more important that God knows us (that we have accepted Jesus as our Savior and now we have a deep, intimate, personal, and living relationship with Him) than it is that we know God (or actually *'know of God'* or *'know about God'*).

Remember the terrible words of judgment that Jesus said many churchgoers who didn't have a true relationship with God would hear Him say to them on the Day of Judgment—

"I never knew you, depart from Me...into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels."

REFLECTION: Which is more important: Knowing God or God knowing you? Why?

This is such an important truth—I'd like to spend the rest of our time this morning looking at it in Matthew 7.

Matthew 7:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction [religion based on human works], and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

We have already pointed out when we studied Matthew 7 that **the narrow gate is Jesus and the cross** (i.e., 'the gospel') (John 14:6) **So only the narrow gate leads to heaven—and notice Jesus said, "only a few find it."**

>>>There are roughly **a billion professing Christians on planet earth** who all think they're going to heaven—that's not a little, that's a lot!

But listen to Jesus, He said—"**not many but few**" would make it into heaven—the "*many*" He said will wind up in hell!

➤ The question is - "**Why do so many get deceived who are looking for and seeking after God?**"

The answer to that is because standing in front of the narrow gate blocking the entrance to it are false prophets acting like spiritual traffic cops doing everything in their power to wave people through the wrong gate and down the wrong way!

Jesus knew this better than anyone and so after He admonishes people to enter through the narrow gate, He quickly adds a warning—

Matthew 7:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

In fact Matthew 7 verses 15-27 are built around two very important warnings - "**Beware of false prophets**" (v.15-20) and "**Beware of false professions**" (verses 21-27). For the remainder of our time this morning I want to focus on the danger of *false professions*—**false professions that are rooted in self-deception.**

In verses 21-23 Jesus presents the principle, and in verses 24-27 He gives a parable to illustrate the principle—this morning we'll just look at the principle of false professions.

Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

He is basically saying:

- **Make sure you're not deceiving yourself.**
- **Are you really saved?**
- **Are you really born-again?**
- **Do you really know Me (or are really known by Me)?**
- **Are you really a member of God's Kingdom?"**

REFLECTION: This is a “personal” – answer the 5 questions/comments noted above & below:

Are you deceiving yourself? _____

Are you really saved? _____

Are you really born-again? _____

Do you really know Me (or are really known by Me)? _____

Are you really a member of God’s Kingdom? _____

The church is flooded today with “**counterfeit Christians**” - what do I mean? These are people who have gone to church, a Christian concert or a crusade, heard the gospel went forward when the altar call was given and prayed a prayer to receive Jesus. Yet didn’t realize what was involved in making this decision and therefore didn’t really turn their lives over to Him as Savior and Master. (Luis Palau crusade)

In these verses Jesus makes one of the most shocking, sobering statements you’ll find anywhere in the Bible—in fact, it’s so shocking that if it hadn’t come from the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself, we would never have believed it!

In these verses Jesus makes it very clear that it’s not that we know Him (from going to church) or even how much we know about Him—the real issue **does He know us?**

How do we know He knows us (that we’re born-again and truly saved)—Jesus tells us that it isn’t what we know about Him or what we say about Him—but **how we live for Him that demonstrates whether or not we’re true members of the Kingdom of God.**

Titus 1:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him...

Remember Jesus isn’t talking here (Matthew 7:21-23) about the irreligious or the quasi-religious—He’s talking about the **very religious!**

These aren’t the atheists, the agnostics, the skeptics and the secularists—no these are those who are the churchgoers, those who profess to know God but who are living lives of disobedience to His laws (commandments).

They might be very religious—but as Jesus said, they are also very lost.

They took the wrong road—a way that seemed right but Jesus wants them to know it’s a road that leads to hell and not to heaven.

➤ *How could this have happened to them? How does it happen to anyone?*

Many people have been misled because of **‘false prophets’ (teachers, pastors, T.V. evangelists etc.)**—there are many who go to hell because they sat under the teaching of false teachers who fed them a diet of false doctrine and have been deceived.

But many others go to hell who sat under the teaching of the truth yet have never made a real commitment to Jesus Christ—these have deceived themselves into believing they are Christians.

I'm convinced that **churches across America are jammed full of people who are not saved and don't know it**—but who think that because they **believe the right facts about Jesus Christ** that proves they are saved and on their way to heaven.

Maybe some right here in our church who sit under the teaching of God's Word from week to week—you believe what you hear and call Jesus Lord, but yet you aren't actually saved.

In a Gallup poll I saw, it said that **52% of Americans claim to be born again Christians**. Now when I hear statistics like that, I know there must be some kind of problem with the way people understand what it means to be a born-again Christian.

>>> I say that because—I sure don't believe that 52% of the people in my neighborhood are saved!

One well known pastor gave this sobering assessment of many who profess to be Christians—

“Never were there so many millions of nominal Christians on earth as there are today, and never was there such a small percentage of real ones... We seriously doubt whether there has ever been a time in the history of this Christian era when there were such multitudes of deceived souls within the churches, who verily believe that all is well with their souls when in fact the wrath of God abideth on them.”

Again, listen to what Jesus is saying—there are many people in churches that think they're saved but are not—this is the ultimate form of deception—**self-deception**! The incredible thing to consider is the *description* Jesus gives of these people—

Matthew 7:21 (NKJV)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

The first thing we see about these people is that **they're orthodox in their faith**—in other words, they believe Jesus is Lord (a word used here to speak of deity).

Again, these people were not atheists, agnostics or antagonists of the faith—they believed the right things and said the right things about Jesus, and were even involved in ministry on the earth for His name—

Matthew 7:22 (NKJV)

²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

The word “wonders” is the same Greek word often used of Jesus' healing miracles. This troubles a lot of people. What is going on here and how could these people do these things and not be from God?

There are three possibilities:

1. They were **lying** or just thought they had done these things. (*TV evangelists*)
2. They did these things through the power of the **devil**. (*Psychic healers*)
3. God could simply have been using them **in spite of themselves**. (*Judas Iscariot*)

So, *first* of all, these people were orthodox in that they believed Jesus to be Lord. *Second*, they were involved in ministry. *Third*, they seem genuinely surprised (shocked) that they won't be entering into heaven—

REFLECTION: Has witnessing or hearing about Godly “Wonders” from false prophets ever swayed you for or against any particular “religion”?

Matthew 7:23 (NKJV)

²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

The reason they're so shocked is because they had based their salvation on what they *did* for Jesus by going to church and serving Him in ministry (no doubt including the group or denomination they belonged to)—and **yet Jesus says to them on the Day of Judgment, “Depart from Me, I never knew you.”**

➤ *How could this be? Why would the Lord say this to these sincere and hardworking churchgoers?*

Well, He tells them (and us) why—their “faith” was not *saving* faith—how do we know that?

Jesus tells us—

Matthew 7:21, 23 (NKJV)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven...²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

REFLECTION: What's the difference between “faith” and “saving faith”?

Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"

The issue that Jesus is addressing here is **OBEDIENCE** or more precisely—the lack of it in the lives of so many professing to know The Lord. **Understand, the Lord isn't looking for perfect obedience (1 John 1:8)—but the sincere practice of obedience on a daily basis.**

Please don't misunderstand—when Jesus said, 'a tree is known by its fruit', He wasn't saying the fruit (obedience to Him) is what makes you a Christian—but rather He is saying that obedience is the fruit that proves you are a Christian!

I'm not an arborist or a dendrologist—I couldn't tell you an oak tree from an apple tree in the dead of winter—but if we wait until Spring, I'd have no problem telling you which trees are apple trees—the fruit hanging on the branches will testify to that!

Apples don't make the tree an apple tree, they only prove that it is one—just like good works don't make a person a Christian, they only prove that they are one!

Spurgeon—

"We are convinced that a man is saved by faith alone, but we are also just as convinced that the faith that saves a man is never really alone."

When you're born-again you receive a new nature—a new heart that loves God and desires to obey Him.

This obedience is one of the main evidences that the faith in our hearts is genuine saving faith—or to put it in the words of Paul—they prove that we are **'known by God!'** (Galatians 4:9)

Galatians 4:9–11 (NKJV)

⁹ But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰ You observe days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹ I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

REFLECTION: Does your "faithful obedience" produce "fruit" that would be recognized by other believers? By Non-believers? By Jesus?

We'll look at this next time!

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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