

Title: Live as Children of the Promise

Passage: Galatians 4:21-5:1

Introduction

2 Peter 3:15-16

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

Background - Big Picture

Galatians - overview

Ch 1-2: Defense of Paul's apostleship, Address Judaizers (belief of legalism - argued justification by self-works)

Ch 3-4: Review of the Gospel (law cannot save you; salvation only by faith in Christ alone)

Quote: "we are all recovering Pharisees" (former belief that one can make oneself pleasing and acceptable to God so there is peace)

- good works is not done to appease God but rather out of thankfulness of what God has done.

Overview of Passage

I. Historical situation (v.21-23)

II. Allegorical interpretation (V.24-27)

III. Personal application (v.28-31; 5:1)

I. Historical situation (v.21-23)

Galatians 4:21-23

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.

- Passage points to even earlier to Abraham

- Compare: the Law was later given in Exodus 20 (Moses)

- Pride of Jews was based on being sons of Abraham

Matthew 3:7-10 (John's rebuke of Jewish pride)

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

John 8:39-41 (Jesus' rebuke of Jews)

They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did."

They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God."

Genesis 12:2 (God gives Abraham a promise - covenant)

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

Genesis 16:2 (Abraham/Sarai thought to have children through Hagar)

And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

- Abraham acted in faith, but it was faith in himself to fulfill the promise.

Genesis 17:19 (God's fulfillment through Isaac)

God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.

II. Allegorical interpretation (v.24-27)

Galatians 4:24-26

Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband."

- allegory: story in which specific persons stand for or symbolize deeper spiritual truths
- Ex: Pilgrim's Progress (persons titled Christian, Hopeful; geographical places of Hill of Difficulty)
- Note: sons of Abraham were actual (not fictional)

Two Ways to Live: Law & Faith

- Allegory: We are either a) sons of Ismael, or b) sons of Isaac

Under the Law:

- covenant: old
- mother: Hagar - slave
- faith: by flesh
- mountain: Mt. Sinai
- City: present Jerusalem
- Inheritance: Disconnected

By Faith

- covenant: new (see Jeremiah 31)
- mother: Sarah - free
- faith: by promise and spirit
- Mountain: Mt. Zion
- City: Jerusalem of above (see Revelation 21)
- Inheritance: Heirs of promise

Galatians 4:27

For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!

- references quote in Isaiah 54 (context: Israel was in captivity (ie "barren"))
- God's promise: though "barren" - rejoice! Because God will make a way when there appears to be no way.
- Galatians: they are challenged and put down ("you don't deserve God's grace")
- Biblical response: through the Gospel, you *will bear* eternal fruit regardless of whatever is in your background and past (ie barren)
- God looks to the humble

Matthew 5:3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

III. Personal application (v.28-31; 5:1)

Galatians 4:28 - 5:1

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman

shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

A. We are children of freedom

- if you believe in Jesus Christ, God has made you an heir!

- anyone can belong to God regardless of your weakness, your past, your brokenness.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- clarification: not freedom to sin but replaced desire to honor God everyday

Romans 6:6-7

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.

B. We should expect persecution

- the world does not accept the Gospel and cannot accept that salvation is only by faith.

Genesis 21:8-9

And the child [Isaac] grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian [Ismael], whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing.

2 Timothy 3:12-13

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Psalms 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Other verses shared during service:

Isaiah 58:6-8

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry

and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Psalms 121:1-5

I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved;

he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.