

Galatians 4:1-7 | Tom Grass

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 March 2023

Preacher: Tom Grass

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Good morning. Thank you, Luke, for filling in for David. That's my son, Luke, if you don't know him.

Appreciate that a lot. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for your word. Thank you for the truths we'll hear today about our eternal salvation is secure because it's based on Jesus Christ and his finished work and that he is an heir of eternal life and we're co-heirs with him.

Thank you for that truth. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. I thought, you know, I could jump right into this message this morning about grace, being a child of God and co-heirs with Christ.

And then I thought, well, that's fantastic. But then I thought about what if someone here today doesn't know Jesus as their Savior?

And I don't know everybody's heart, right? And I don't know who's listening. We do put this out on YouTube. So I thought today I would start with that and I just kind of wasn't planning on sharing this, but I feel like it's really important.

[1:34] So 1 Corinthians chapter 15. I'm just going to read the verses about the gospel and then one other verse out of 2 Corinthians just to lay a foundation that if you are in Christ Jesus, the message today applies to you.

And if you're not in Christ Jesus, you need to be. I mean, it makes no sense if you're not a believer. So this morning, in your own hearts, wherever you're at, just think about it.

But here in 1 Corinthians 15, and Paul says, and I'm going to be reading out of King James just because that's the Bible I brought with me. Chapter 15, verse 3. That is the basics.

Basics of the gospel. The Bible teaches that all has sin and falls short of the glory of God. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

So all of us, at one time, were lost. Either we are now or we were in the past.

[3:07] But at one point, you understood the truth that Jesus Christ died on the cross as your substitute for your sins. You deserve to go to hell.

I deserve to go to hell. The wrath of God is on us. Until you accept the offer, if you will, or receive Jesus. However you want to word it.

You could also say that God sends forth the spirit of your heart where we cry out, Abba, Father. But there is a quickening that happens. We are dead in our trespasses and sins.

And we are made alive by God. And when you are made alive by God, you are a child of God. You are secure. You are a believer. You are translated out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

Right? You are under wrath. You are not under wrath. You are under condemnation. You are of a place in heaven. And you are secure. One of my, the verse I liked when I was a young believer.

[4:10] And I still like it. 2 Corinthians 5.21. It really sums it up for me in my mind. For he made him who knew no sin to become sin for us.

That we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And it's not a universal us. Us. It's a personal us. It's when you individually receive what Christ did on your behalf.

You are a believer and you're set apart for God. Forever. So when we get to Galatians chapter 3 today. Chapter 4 verses 1 to 7 is my passage.

But I'd like to back up and go back to verse 23 of the previous chapter. And I'll read those verses. This is Galatians 3.23 to 4.7.

And three points today as we start is grace contradicts the principle that you get what you deserve. Or in Galatians Paul calls it the elemental principles of the world.

[5:15] The second thing is I am a child of God. And the third thing is I am co-heir with Christ. Okay? Those are the three points that will come out in the message today. Verse 23 of chapter 3.

Now before faith came we were held captive under the law. Imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then the law was our guardian until Christ came. In order that we might be justified by faith.

But now that faith has come we are no longer under a guardian. For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For as many as you were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ then you are Abraham's offspring.

Heirs according to promise. Chapter 4. Verse 1. I mean that the heir as long as he is a child is no different from a slave.

[6:16] Though he is owner of everything. But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also when we were children were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

But when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of a woman born under the law. To redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive the adoption as sons.

And because you are sons God has sent the spirit of a son into our hearts. Crying Abba Father or Daddy.

So you are no longer a slave but a son. And if a son then an heir through God. The word child in this passage just means a minor.

The child had no right to the estate back in the Roman time. There was Jews and Romans all had these rituals to bring a child out of childhood into adulthood.

[7:25] Or into the ability to inherit what the father had for them. Or the family had for them if there was such a thing. Or maybe in royalty. There would be you're in line or succession to take over your father's things.

Possessions. Could be a kingdom maybe right. But when a child was a minor he was no different than a slave. He had no rights. And no right to the inheritance of the family as a child.

In fact Paul says that the child was under guardians and managers until the time set forth by his father. So the father would decide when this child would be eligible if you would for the inheritance.

In verse 3 of chapter 4 Paul says in the same way we also when we were children were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. Paul is using an illustration of the child as those who were before we became Christians.

Before we became believers. You were under the elementary principles of the world. We were in bondage like a slave. This phrase elementary principles of the world in the Greek is just one word.

[8:47] So you will find it translated differently in various translations of our Bibles that we have in English. So like the NIV says elementary spiritual forces of the world.

ESV says elementary principles of the world. The King James says elements of the world. Holman Christian Standard says elemental forces of the world.

Or New American Standard elemental things of the world. Some people when they talk about this phrase or try to express it will say it's like the ABCs of life.

Cause and effect. So because this happens, that happens. Or you get what you deserve, right? Or we might use the phrase karma. You know. You'll say something will happen in karma.

Or if someone's treating you badly, you know. What do people usually say? Like if you work in service and you're getting someone is coming at you as a customer, you know.

[9:50] And they, boy, you think, oh, he's going to get his, you know. Or someone mistreats you in the workplace. You think, well, just wait. He's going to get what's coming to him, right? That's karma. You get what you deserve.

And we think about that like, well, if my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds, God will accept me in heaven, right? I mean, that's a common thing.

Well, I'm not as bad as so-and-so, right? And of course, people would, like if you said, Jeffrey Dahmer, you know, that murderer was, became a believer.

And in prison. And then people would say, well, that's not fair. He didn't get what he deserves. Now he can have eternal life. And he lived that life that was so awful. And now he has the right to go into heaven?

Well, that's not right. Okay, that's the elementary principles of the world. Does that make sense? You know, if you're speeding really fast in front of a police car, and you go right on by him, 20 miles an hour pass, and the cop pulls you over, gives you a ticket, you would say, you got what you deserve, right?

[11:00] That's what the intent of this phrase is. If you turn to Colossians chapter 2 in your Bibles, we can see the same thought in chapter 2, verses 20 to 23.

You can still hear pages turning, Phil. Do you like that? He's not listening. Wake him up. No, I'm just kidding. So, Colossians chapter 2. If with Christ you died to the elementary spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations?

Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch. What is Paul saying there in Colossians?

Does it flow with that elementary principles of the world? You know, have you ever played this game with yourself? You ever say, if I don't do this thing, then I will be right with God, you know?

[12:27] Or if I can continue to not do this, or if I continue to do this, you'll put a yoke on yourself, right? You put some expectation on yourself and somehow think that that gains you favor or acceptance with God.

Do you ever do that in your Christian walk? I mean, seriously, yes? Yeah, amen, right? We've all done it. And at the same time, you think when you do fail in sin, that somehow you've broken your relationship with God forever, you know?

I mean, that would be almost like a natural thought. If I continue in this way, certainly God will no longer accept me. That's what the human mind thinks, right?

That's the elementary principles of the world. It's hard, because that's how we're wired. That is how you're made. That's how your brain thinks.

You know, if you work this week, you expect on Friday to get paid, or two weeks, or if you're in commission, you sell something, you expect to get your commission, right? That's cause and effect.

[13:43] But why is the believer who is free in Christ, why do you submit yourself again to bondage? Fill in the blank. Fill in the blank. You know?

Don't involve yourself in fill in the blank. Or, I have to do something, fill in the blank, to maintain or keep an acceptance before God. Now, I know what you're thinking.

You're thinking, yeah, but that means I can do whatever I want. That means I have no accountability before God, or before my other believer or brother. But it's almost like reverse psychology, right?

In response to what God's done for us, we should want to do what's right before God. That's freedom in Christ. It's liberty. Me saying these words is really hard to say and to believe, because I don't think like that.

I don't experience, my walk's not like that. You know? So, anyway. If you would continue with me in chapter 3 of Colossians, now verse 1 to 3, if you have been raised with Christ, seek those things that are above, with Christ to see at the right hand of God.

[15:00] Set your minds on things above, not on things of the earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ and God. So, here we get to the point where grace contradicts the principle, you get what you deserve.

If you would turn to Psalm 103, in Psalm 103, we have the opposite of cause and effect, where David, even under the law, understood this concept of grace, which is really remarkable if you think about it, because there's these systems of worship and sacrifices and obedience to the law, and yet David has grace in his heart.

Psalm 103, verse 10 to 12 says, God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. Amen?

Right? I'll read that again. God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. Wow, what if he did, right? We wouldn't be in this room.

For as high as the heavens above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him. So far as east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

[16:22] Our standing before God is not dependent on our works. Right? Our continual, ongoing, day-to-day, future standing before God is not based on our works.

It has nothing to do with us, but everything to do with Jesus and what he's done for us. It's based on grace and not works.

Our standing before God is based on grace, not works. Works, yeah. Remember that tomorrow. Remember that in a week.

Remember that in ten years, right? Talking to myself. Right? It's a hard concept.

It goes against everything you feel and believe in your head or in your intellect, doesn't it? It's contrary to everything you do every day. If I go to work today and get through this, this, and that, I can leave and feel satisfied with what I've done.

[17:24] That's cause and effect, right? Grace says you're accepted in the beloved regardless of performance. Doesn't matter if you're lost in the first round.

You're still loved. You know? In Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 through 9, I think we could look at this whole passage, this familiar passage, but I think we'll just kind of hit two verses here.

Verse 5. If you act like you've never heard this before, alright? Listen with an ear that's never heard this verse before.

Even when you were dead in our trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. Verse 8. For by grace you have been saved through faith.

It's not of your own doing, it's a gift of God. Not a result of works that no one should boast. So our salvation was not based on our cause and effect, right?

[18:31] It wasn't based on our righteousness. Nothing we did to earn the salvation that God gave us. Do you believe this? Do you believe you're saved by grace and kept by grace unconditionally?

Intellectually, I know it's true. But I also put conditional clauses in my walk with God. I'm sure you do too. Salvation is based on if salvation is not based on grace, what would you think religion would look like?

Does that make sense? Saying another way, what is religion? In most cases, it's a system of works to gain approval before God, right?

That's what religion is. And I think I may have mentioned this, but you know, sometimes people think, well, God has this balance in heaven, this just weight, these balances, and he puts your good works on this side, my bad works on this side, and if the scale tilts up on the good works side, you're in.

You know, well, we would all think we're in, right? Because no one's that bad. But that's not what God did. All through time, God made the perfect way for mankind to be saved.

[20:04] God never intended us to bring our own righteousness. It would be flawed. And Galatians 4, verses 4 to 7, which is our passage today, it says, but when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

And because you're a son, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you're no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, you're an heir through God.

One commentary said about this verse, the fullness of time was come. It's the time which God in his infinite wisdom counted best, in which all his counsels were filled up, in the time which his Spirit by the prophets had specified, in the time to which he intended the Mosaic institutions to extend, and beyond which they should be of no avail.

The Bible teaches us that God sent his Son, born of a woman, and it speaks of the virgin birth. Paul kind of alludes to it. And he was called the Son of God.

He was made under the law. He was in subjection to it, that in him all its designs might be fulfilled, and by his death the whole law might be abolished.

[21:30] The law was abolished when Christ died on the cross. Why did Jesus come in the flesh? To redeem us. To redeem mankind. Because Jesus

is God, he has the power and resources to redeem us.

Because Jesus is man, he has the right and the ability to redeem us. He came to purchase us out of the slave market from our bondage to sin and the elements of the world.

Right? The believer has an intimate relationship with God. Abba, Father, it's like a child who would say, Daddy, we are bought out of the slave market and made an heir of God with all the privileges of sonship.

The scripture speaks of us being sons, correct? And here are some verses on being a son of God. John 1, 12.

But as many as received him, to them gave you right to become the children of God, even to those who believe on his name. Romans 8, 14, and 15 says, For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

[22:46] For you do not receive a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear, but you receive the spirit of sonship by which you cry out, Abba, Father. 1 John 3, 1 says, See what great love the Father has for us?

That we should be called the children of God. So we've spoke on, or I've spoke on, Grace contradicts the principle of what you get what you deserve.

Spoke on, I'm a child of God. And I touched on, we're an heir of Christ, right? We've touched on it. I'm going to get heavy on you here with Charles Spurgeon. You know, when you read Charles, I don't know if you ever read Charles Spurgeon, but you almost feel like you need a dictionary next to you, or you feel like you flunked English 101 and English 102.

You know, like, did I even have Comp 1 in college? I don't think so, because I can't even read Charles Spurgeon. But I'm going to try. So he gives this great argument of being joint heirs with Christ.

And it's words that I can't put together, so I'm going to read his. Okay? And actually, if you search this online, you go to YouTube and you type in joint heirs with Christ, Charles Spurgeon, there's a 45-minute sermon that somebody read.

[24:08] Because this sermon is about 20 pages. I'm not reading it all. You would get lost in it, and so would I. But it's really good. And it's amazing what you can find online right now, right?

You know, lately when I go to, one of the times I do speak are like this time. You know, you can type in Galatians 4, 1 to 7, and preachers will come up.

You know, I like this guy. It's called Calvary Chapel in Ontario, Washington, Washington State. I like that guy. He lays the scriptures out real plain where I can grab them, you know.

But somebody read this whole thing of Spurgeon. And so here we go. Join heirs with Christ. And he was jumping off of Romans 8, 17. Join heirs with Christ.

He begins thus. You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption where you cry, Abba, Father. This is a fact which he takes for granted because he has perceived it in the hearts of believers.

[25:12] We do cry, Abba, Father. From this he infers that if God has given us the spirit, whereby we call him Father, then we are his children, which is plain, fair, and clear reasoning.

Then he adds, if children, then heirs. Though this does not hold true in all families because all children are not heirs, frequently the firstborn may take all the estate.

But with God, so long as they are children, they have equal rights. If children, then heirs. He goes on to say heirs of God. So if you cry out, Abba, Father, and you're his son, you're an heir of Christ. That's what he's saying there. Okay? For if they are heirs, they inherit their father's property. Right? In the natural world, if you're an heir, you inherit your father's property.

God is their father. They are therefore God's heirs. Well, but God has another son, one who is the firstborn of every creature. Here, he's referring to Jesus Christ, right?

[26:19] Therefore, if we be heirs, as Christ Jesus is the heir of all things, we are joint heirs with Christ. I think you'll see that the links in the chain, like links in the chain, these different truths draw each other on the spirit of adoption, proves the fact of adoption.

By the act of adoption, we are children. If children, then heirs. If heirs, heirs of God. But since there is another heir, we must therefore be joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

That was my own big sentence with a lot of punctuations, which I could not. Spurgeon says, happy is he who can follow the apostle step by step and say, yes, I have this morning the spirit of a son. I know that my heart loves God, and I look to him as my father, with trust, with confidence, and with love. Then I am surely his son. Because I have the spirit of a son, then I am his heir.

I am the heir of God, and thus my faith lays hold upon the words of this glorious text. I am joint heirs with Christ. How do you feel this morning?

[27:37] Do you feel like you are a child of God this morning when you walked in? Did you feel like you are a co-heir with Christ? Was that your mindset when you walked in this morning?

How about this past week? How about Wednesday? Tuesday? What day were you living like the devil that you are a child of God? You are mine. It doesn't mean you are actually doing something. I was there. Right? I live in the world. I work a job. I have bills to pay. You know? I go in tomorrow. Face whatever tomorrow is. And I don't act like that child of God sometimes. But does that change me being a co-heir with Christ?

Why? Hmm? Grace. So now let's look at, Spurgeon goes on, the terms of the will.

[28:47] You know what wills are? Our trust. My mom and dad set up a trust after the passing of my mom that is being, the trust is no longer in effect for my mom.

We still have one in place for my one sister. But there is some money left so that trust is being taken care of or a will. Right? I don't know why this is hard to read but here we go.

It means, first of all, that our right to the divine heritage stands or falls with Christ's right to the same inheritance. Christ is the one who is inheriting something.

Okay? Right? Does that make sense? We are co-heirs. If he be truly in an heir, so are we. If he be not, neither are we. Our two interests are intertwined and made one.

We have neither any of us, we have neither of us any heirship apart from the other. We are joint heirs. Christ jointly with us, ourselves jointly with Christ.

[30:02] So then it follows that if there be any flaw in the will, that it be not valid, if it be not rightly signed, sealed, and delivered, then it is no more valid for Christ than it is for us.

You get the point? This will is done, but if there's something invalid, it invalidates Christ. And that's an interesting concept, right?

Right? If there be some points in the covenant of grace, where wisdom has been deficient, and therefore by heir it may miscarry, or by lack of legal right may prove null and void, it is as surely null towards Christ as towards ourselves, for he is jointly concerned therein.

It's crazy. If according to the law we are only heirs presumptive, whose rights may be superseded, then our great joint heir, so far as he is co-heir with us, is superseded also.

He is excluded from the will or the rights if we're excluded. If it be possible that some decree in heaven's high court it should be certified and determined that the inheritance is not rightly ours because one part of the covenant was left in a precarious state, so that it became void and of no effect, then thine inheritance, O king of kings, has failed thee the very day when it has failed us.

[31:33] That would be cause and effect, right? If we are disqualified for our inheritance, so is Christ because we are co-heirs with Christ.

What a concept. I trust you will lay hold upon that thought. If Christ as God's heir has a perfect right to what his Father has bestowed upon him, even so have we for our rights coexist.

If our title be true and just, so is his. And if his rights of heritage be true and just, so are ours. O blessed thought for the believer. Here's quite a phrase, this next sentence.

I'll read it slow. Jesus must lose the reward of his agonies before we can lose the fruits of them.

Wow. Jesus must lose the reward of his agonies before we can lose the fruits of them. Jesus the meteor must lose the glory which his finished work has procured for him ere one of his co-heirs can miss it.

[33:06] He must come down from that glory which he now inhabiteth and cease to be honored as the lamb that was slain and hath redeemed us unto God by his blood. If any one of his people shall be deprived of that glory and be cast into hell the will if valid for all for one is valid for all.

That's crazy isn't it? Are you a believer here today? Today? I see nods you're a believer that's cool if you fail in your walk with God you know some of us know a man who this may apply to and may be really fresh in our minds after this past week and yet the testimony was that he was a believer but his life we would question but if he was a believer his security was in what Christ did and not what he did after some point in his life.

Were any of you in your Christian walk ever accused of not being a believer? I doubt seriously if he's even saved. Have you ever said those words about somebody? If he's a believer there's no way blah blah blah how could that man fall from grace?

How could that guy in this ministry do that? Well because within us still there's that elementary principles of the world at work the flesh continues to be corrupted as you grow older it doesn't go away till we die but it's not based on our works it's not based on cause and effect.

Okay I'll read one last thing from Spurgeon and that would pretty much wrap it up here for us if the musicians want to come up that'd be great.

[35:21] Spurgeon writes you must enter your suit against capital H head if you would attack the members for verily the action at law which can be pleaded against the member of the body must be pleaded against the head itself for no court can allow a distinction between the body and the head in an action at law if it be possible that the malice and the craft of hell could invent some scheme by which the covenant could be put out of court and the promise of grace could be made to fail then Christ fails with his people and the heir of all things loses his inheritance as soon as one single one of the other heirs shall have his right to inheritance disapproved.

Our rights are joint rights and must either be jointly acknowledged or jointly denied. We are joint heirs with Christ. So just I've already summarized this twice just to be a third time points today grace contradicts the principle of cause and effect or you get what you deserve or the elementary principles of the world I'm a child of God not a minor child but one that has full rights as a son I'm an heir of God God himself is my portion and reward and I am a co-heir with Christ so thanks Lord for your word thank you for someone like Spurgeon who could write great truths and help explain this to us and help us to walk in a manner worthy of our calling and not put unnecessary yokes upon ourselves and not condemn ourselves but to enjoy sonship and enjoy being co-heirs with you in Jesus name