



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Galatians 4: 1 - 7

Galatians

“From Slaves to Sons”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our scripture reading this morning is in Galatians chapter 4. We’re going to look at verses 1 through 7.

Paul is continuing his explanation of the law. And he writes “Now I say as long as the heir is a child it 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. So also we while we were children were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of 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 that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba! Father! Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son and if a son then an heir through God.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for this time together. It’s a great privilege to be able to gather together as your people and should be for all of us a great blessing. This is an opportunity to be with the saints and opportunity for us to read the scriptures, your holy word together and then enter into prayer as we’re doing at this moment. And that truly is a great privilege. We are able to speak to the God of the universe and we’re able to do that because as Paul has reminded us and as he instructs us in this text through faith in Christ we become sons of God. We have all of the rights and the privileges that are attached with the family of God.

We are clothed in the righteousness of your son the Lord Jesus Christ and that gives us access to you and gives us the legal right to come freely and boldly to you, in

fact to move throughout your household as a child or a son in a home would. So we thank you father for that. It's certainly not anything that we have in our own strength or through our own works or doings. As Paul says, it is through you. It is through God that we have this great privilege. It's all of grace.

So father we thank you that as sons we can pray. We can pray individually and we can do that collectively as a body, as a church as we're doing at this moment. And then we are able to lift up our voices to heaven and pray for ourselves and pray for others. We certainly need our prayers. We need to be constantly praying for our material and spiritual needs and we need to be doing that for others. And so father we do pray for ourselves at this time that you'd bless us spiritually, that you would open our hearts to receive the teaching that the spirit of God would have us to learn. And we pray for his ministry that he'll open our hearts and he'll apply these things, that he'll illuminate the page of scripture so that we understand what Paul has said and what it means for us and how we are to therefore live in light of the great truths that are set forth here.

And we pray father though for our material needs as well. We pray that you would bless individuals who need our prayers and our various needs within the congregation that have not been made known but you know them. You know them all better than we know our own needs. But we pray for those who are sick that you would give them healing. We pray for those that have had surgery and our recovering that you'd give them a speedy and complete recovery. We pray for those that are grieving and that you'd lift the grief and that you'd fill hearts with joy.

We do thank you father that as we're told in our texts we are sons and heirs. We have an inheritance. We have a great blessing that awaits us. Our inheritance is eternal and part of that inheritance is that there will be a great reunion, that those who have been lost to us, we will be reunited with at some point and we will be with forever, never to be separated again. We'll be united with mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters. We'll be reunited with friends. We'll be united with people we've heard of and never met. We'll meet the apostles and the prophets and saints that we've never heard of but what a glorious future that is father. We thank you for it.

Thank you for what we have in your son and pray that you'd comfort and encourage those who grieve with that and those who are in difficulty and the present. Look to the future and know that whatever difficulties we have in this life are

transient, they pass away but what’s coming is eternal and permanent. We pray that you’d encourage the discouraged with your promises and may we be blessed today from the text that we will read and study. So we look to you to bless father. We pray your blessings upon us. We pray that we would have a time of learning and worship together and we pray this in Christ name. Amen.

[Message] One of the memories I have from my youth and I don’t have all of those memories still. Some of them have faded but one that I do have is the great anticipation that I had of getting my driver’s license because getting a driver’s license and having use of a car meant freedom. I can remember seeing older teenagers driving their cars off into the horizon and thinking someday I’ll have that great freedom. In fact I remember my first drive after getting my driver’s license. I was thinking about that just a little while ago. I was very cautious, very careful. I went and picked up my girlfriend and we went up to watch a baseball game and I put a dent in the car.

But really a whole new world opened up. It was almost like coming of age, almost like becoming a man. When that happens, when it happened for me the bicycle was not nearly as important as it had been. The driver’s license marked a new age in life. So it’s hard to imagine that after getting it anyone at least in my time would have thrown the driver’s license away and gone back to riding a bicycle or being car pooled by mom. That is the equivalent or at least similar to what people do spiritually when they choose to live under the law.

Legalism leads people back into a second childhood. That is what the Galatians were doing when Paul wrote to them. It is the reason he called them foolish in chapter 3. Having believed in Jesus Christ they had obtained great privileges and blessings. A new world opened up. In chapter 3 Paul described believer as sons of God. They have all of the rights and the privileges of a son in God’s family. Oftentimes though people don’t understand that and rather than live in the freedom that faith in Christ gives they turn to the law for God’s blessings.

The law doesn’t give those blessings. The law doesn’t give life and liberty. Just the opposite. It does not open up life. It restricts it. And to show that Paul described the function of the law in different ways. The law is like a jailer who shuts up people to their sin so that they will see their failure, despair of their own efforts and will look to the liberator who will free them from their prison. The law is like a

tutor in a Roman household who was often a slave as you remember and was appointed to look after the child of the house and manage his life and do so until that child became a young man, came of age. When that happened the slave's control over him ceased. The boy legally became a man, legally became a son and was free from the rules and the restrictions that had governed his life under that slave guardian.

Paul explained all of that in chapter 3 in order to show the Galatians that by putting themselves under the law they were not moving forward spiritually. Just the opposite, they were moving backward. By returning to the law they were returning to a kind of second childhood which is not a real childhood. We can act like children but we can never again really be children. The age of the law was the age of childhood for God's people. That age has passed. It served its purpose and is over. The Christian cannot go back to that. Paul proved that in chapter 3 but he's not finished.

In chapter 4 versus 1 through 7 he elaborates further on this by contrasting life under the law with life in Christ. It is the difference between being a slave and being free. Again Paul finds his illustration for the law in the Roman household by comparing it to guardians and managers who took care of a child and his property. The picture Paul gives us here is of a child who is the heir of a great estate. His life though was very restricted, like that of the child under the tutor. The guardians and the managers supervised his affairs until he reached maturity. They controlled his property and finances so that during his childhood he wasn't free to make his own choices or use his wealth as he wanted.

The result is Paul says even though the child is the heir, even though he is owner of everything still while he is a child he does not differ at all from a slave. He is not free to make decisions. He was under the control of others and he had to follow the rules and the regulations that they made. He was the heir by law but not in practice. He was like a slave but only temporarily until Paul says the date set by the father. Then when he reached a certain age, it was the age that the father had predetermined and put in his will, had stipulated that at a certain date at the age of such and such, 21 or 22 junior becomes a man and inherits all of the estate, inherits his wealth. Then at that day, the day that the father has set the guardians control ended. The child assumed authority and was no longer a slave.

That is similar to the way the law functioned for God’s people as Paul states in verse 3. “So also we,” he writes, “while we were children were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.” That’s what the law was, the elemental things, the basic things. It is an expression that means things placed side by side in a row. It was used of soldiers in rank. It was used of the letters of the alphabet in a row, like the ABCs and then because the learning of the ABCs, the learning of the alphabet is the first lesson in a literary education the expression came to me the rudiments, the first principles, the basics.

It’s used in that way in Hebrews 5:12 of the elementary principles of the oracles of God. They are the basics of God’s word, the ABCs of God’s truth. That’s how the author of Hebrews speaks of the elemental things in Hebrews 5. Here it is the elemental things of the world, not the oracles of God but the elemental things of the world meaning the basic religious principles that men in this lost world lived by before Christ. They are the basic laws men possessed, rules of morality, the ten commandments and even the principles gentiles possessed by virtue of man’s conscience and innate sense of right and wrong.

Because we are created in the image of God we have a sense of ought. Even though the image of God has been terribly marred and is shattered and in pieces nevertheless we still have this sense of right and wrong. You see that universally. Long before the law of Moses was given there were legal codes. In fact the first generation shortly after the fall had a sense of right and wrong because God approaches Cain about the sin that’s crouching at the door. Cain knew very well that it was wrong to murder. How did he know that? Because he had an innate sense of right and wrong by virtue of being in the image of God.

Now the law of Moses defined these rules more precisely but men have always had basic rules which are true but which they have wrongly used in order to achieve salvation, seeking to follow this sense of right and wrong and be obedient to these statutes and rules in an attempt to gain acceptance with God and yet always they have failed. So for Israel under the law of Moses or the Galatians Christians in their previous pagan days. Life under the basic rules of right and wrong is described by Paul as bondage and it’s called bondage because while these rules could hem a person in, fence a person’s life about there was no getting out of it. There was no escaping one’s guilt. It didn’t give freedom, gave bondage.

So for them, for these Galatians to come out of paganism, leave those elemental principles that they had been under then and then put themselves under the law of Moses was to go back to the elementary principles and go back to slavery. It was like a young man who had been freed from the guardians and the managers in his life and the tutor in his life and then after enjoying that great moment of freedom with all of its great responsibilities and privileges then gives it all up and again submits to the control of these men. The elemental things, the law of Moses, that's principally what Paul is speaking of here, they have their importance. They have their place. We need to know them just as a person must know his ABCs if he's going to learn to read, but they are the basics.

You haven't arrived when you've learned the ABCs. We are to move on beyond them. Going back to them after coming to Christ is like a person who learns to read and let's say this person learns to speed read. That's another memory I have from my youth. Did you ever take any speed reading courses? I think I took three of them and I never learned to speed read. In fact I am a slow reader still. But this person in our illustration he learned to speed read. In fact he could speed read English and German and French and Greek and Latin.

He's marvelously equipped to read and so he comes into one of the great libraries of the world at Oxford or some of the great universities here or great library in New York City or even the Dallas Public Library and sits down and he's surrounded by all of the great literature of the world, Homer, Virgil, Dante and Chaucer and Shakespeare and Dickens, all of those authors that you love to read, Tom Clancy, Sports Illustrated. But anyway he's surrounded by all of this great literature. He sits down and what's he do? He has to recite the ABCs rather than pulling off one of these great tomes from the shelf.

He doesn't get it. He's missed the point. He hasn't moved on and it is the same way with those who have put themselves under the law. The law had a function just like the ABCs had a function in our learning and just as they are not the goal of our education but a means to it, a means to reading and a means to gaining great understanding of the great literature of the world and what it possesses. So to the law was only a means to an end. The end, the goal, is Christ. The law was given to lead us to him and so its function was temporary. Just like the guardians and managers had a function in a Roman boy's life but only for a limited time until the date set by

the father. So to God set a date for the laws function, for the law’s control and for its end.

In verse 4 Paul refers to that date as “the fullness of the times when the period of bondage would end and Christ would come.” And God had not only predetermined the date for that but he had also providentially prepared the world for it both spiritually and logistically. By the first century there was great expectation for the coming of the messiah among the Jewish people and in the Roman world there was great dissatisfaction among the gentiles. The old religions were dying; the myths and the Gods had lost their hold on the people. The old philosophies were empty and powerless and moral conditions universally were low.

So men’s hearts had been prepared for the Lord’s coming but the world had also been prepared politically and materially for his coming and for the spread of the gospel. It was the age of the Pax Romana, the peace of Rome that extended over the whole known world and produced a time of political and economic stability and prosperity. Wherever the Roman legions went they built roads that connected all of the major cities and regions of the empire and of course all of the roads ultimately led to Rome, the capital of the world. Because of the earlier conquests of Alexander the Great the world had been Hellenized.

Greek culture had been spread and with that most importantly the Greek language. People all over the world were speaking Greek. So travel was possible on Roman roads and communication was easy with a common language. In fact Greek was a language particularly suited to the teaching of the New Testament. It is an exact language. No accident that philosophy originated among the Greeks and the language that was so suited for that kind of thinking and expression and it’s particularly suited for expressing theological thought. Also due to the Babylonian captivity as well as economic growth.

Jews had settled abroad and established synagogues throughout the world. These provided places for Christian missionaries to reach both Jews and Greeks with the gospel and establish churches with the new converts. Roman laws protected the rights of Roman citizens allowing churches to grow and Roman soldiers protected the peace allowing the gospel to spread. Christ’s birth at Bethlehem then was not an accident. It was not a coincidental convergence of all of these events and movements. It happened in the fullness of the time, at God’s appointed time.

He is sovereign over the ages. He has designed and he directs history and when the world had been prepared, the appointed time had come, he sent forth his son born of a woman, born under the law. Now that is a carefully worded statement that is full of meaning. Paul did not say “in the fullness of time Christ was born” but sent forth. Literally sent out and the idea was that he was sent out from God and sent out on a mission. It is a statement that indicates Christ’s preexistence but what is particularly important is he sent forth his son. Not he sent forth a profit. He’d done that. Not that he sent forth an angel. He’d done that too. But here, sent forth a son.

Now he was already a son when the father sent him suggesting that he is eternally God’s son. Now that’s suggested here but that’s the explicit teaching at other texts of scripture such as Isaiah 9:6. The idea that God has a son, an eternal son, is a difficult proposition for the Jewish people to accept but it shouldn’t be. Their prophets spoke of a divine son being given. In Isaiah 9:6 the great promise of a son which is a theme throughout those chapters of Isaiah. And he says of this son that he would be given and his name would be mighty God. Well it’s the clear teaching of the New Testament in John 1: 1 -2 we read “In the beginning was the Word” meaning at the beginning of all things created, at the beginning of time and space, at the first millisecond of these things coming into being, the Word was.

Go back to the very first moment and John is saying the Word already was and eternally was. It goes on to say that he was with God and he was God. There are many other texts of scripture that teach this great truth, this fundamental truth, basic doctrine that Jesus Christ is deity, that he is the eternal son of God, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:2, many others. He left the heavenly glory that he enjoyed with the father for all eternity to go on the father’s mission and he did that by being born of a woman, becoming a man, becoming one of us through the mysterious conception in the womb of the virgin, the Lord assumed a human nature which he derived from Mary. So he became the unique God man. John simply says “and the word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

He became a genuine man. John makes that very clear in the wording that he uses but Paul’s emphasis here is on that as well. He’s emphasizing the Lord’s true humanity through a miraculous conception the Lord obtained his human nature but his birth was not a supernatural birth. It was a natural birth. He entered the world as all men do, of a woman, a Jewish woman, into the Jewish nation and so he was born

under the Jewish law and he submitted to it. He kept the law perfectly and in so doing proved that he is sinless and qualified to carry out his mission.

It was a mission of salvation and it is described in verse 5 with two goals. First to redeem and second to adopt, “that he might redeem” Paul says, “those who were under the law.” And notice they were under the law. Those who have been redeemed are no longer under the law. They’ve been redeemed from out of it but they were, past tense, under the law. Now Paul uses this word redeemed. It’s a very important word, used it earlier in chapter 3 in verse 13 where he said that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. And that’s the idea here.

We have all broken God’s law. All of us, universally that is the case. Whether Jew or gentile we have all sinned against the elemental things of the world. Whether it’s the law of Moses and that’s primarily what Paul has in mind here. We’ve broken that law but even those without the law of Moses, the gentiles to whom the law was not given, they had conscience. They violated that. Whatever law one lived under, whatever sense of right and wrong one had everyone has violated that. All men have violated the principles of right and wrong and they’ve proved themselves to be sinners. As a result all men stand condemned, under a curse, the curse of the law. But Christ came to redeem us from that which means he came to set us free by paying a price.

The word Paul used here is an intensive form of this word. It means something like to buy out of. But the idea is freeing by means of paying a price, the price of money. That’s often how it was used. That was the idea of redemption. It was a commercial term used of buying a slave. Slave markets were common in Roman cities. There were something like 60 million slaves in the empire. So it was very common for a person to go into a slave market and buy a slave either for himself or in order to set one free. Christ came to buy us out of the slave market of sin and set us free. That was the only way that we could obtain freedom.

As Paul pointed out back in chapter 2 in verse 21 if there had been any other way for us to obtain our freedom, if we could obtain that freedom by keeping the law, if that had been possible, if we could have freed ourselves then Christ died needlessly and Christ did not die needlessly, therefore the evidence of the cross is this is the only way that people could be freed, the only way of salvation. We could not save ourselves. We could not save ourselves because we were slaves to sin. We were like

slaves on an auction block, completely unable to free ourselves. We were like those slaves with shackles and chains on them and guards around them. There was no way that they could get away and no way we could evade or escape the captivity that sin held us in or escape the law’s curse.

But Christ redeemed us. He bought our freedom by buying us out of slavery and for himself. Bringing us out of the main of darkness as Paul describes it in Colossians chapter 1 and bringing us into his kingdom of light and setting us free. And again he did that by dying for us. That was the price that he paid for our freedom. “He became a curse for us,” Paul said in chapter 3 in verse 13. “He suffered the penalty of the law so that we would escape it.” Now that is an immeasurable blessing to be set free from a life of slavery to sin and slavery to death, a dismal degrading and dark existence, to be freed from a curse. That is a blessing.

In fact if that is all Christ did that would be enough to earn our eternal infinite praise. We’re not slaves any longer. We are free men and women. But that is not all that he did. He redeemed us. He bought us out of slavery and adopted us that we might receive the adoption of sons. God sent his son into the slave market of the world to set us free and he sent him into the orphanage of the world to adopt us as his sons. Adoption was not a Jewish institution. It was a Greek and a Roman practice in which a wealthy childless man would take into his family a slave boy who by adoption ceased being a slave and became a son and heir.

Lew Wallace drew on that custom for his book *Ben-Hur*. You know the story I’m sure, Ben-Hur, a Jewish prince suffered a series of misfortunes. He was arrested and sent to the Roman galleys. He spent years chained to an oar. His future was dismal, one of bondage, hard labor and death. That’s what he had to look forward to. Then in a great sea battle his fortunes changed. His ship was sunk and he escaped and saved the life of the admiral of the Roman fleet. In gratitude the admiral adopted him as his son and Judah Ben-Hur rises again to a position of wealth and power and authority.

It gives something of a picture of what Paul is describing here. Through Christ’s rescue of us we were elevated from slaves to sons. Through this adoption of us we were given a new status. We were raised to that of princes from that of slaves. We sing about this in Charles Wesley’s great hymn *Can it Be That I Should Gain*.
“Long my imprisoned spirit lay/ fast bound in sin and nature’s night/ Thine eye

diffused a quickening ray/ I woke, the dungeon flamed with light/ My chains fell off,
my heart was free/ I rose, went forth and followed thee.”

That’s what we’ve done as believers in Jesus Christ. We have followed not simply as freed men but as sons and daughters of God who as our father has given us all of the rights and the privileges of his family. Like a Roman boy who reached manhood and took off the toga praetexta, the garment of youth, and he put on the toga virilis, the garment of manhood. He was then accepted as a man and took his place at the family councils enjoying his freedom and privileges and undertaking all the responsibilities of family life. That’s what every believer in Jesus Christ has experienced.

Through faith in his we have been delivered from bondage, made sons of God. Whether you’re male or you’re a female you are a son of God. The daughters in the Roman household didn’t have the privileges that the son had. The son had legal privileges that were great. Men and women in Christ had the privileges of son in the family of God. We’ve entered in to those privileges and those blessings in Christ. That’s our position and our spiritual status. It’s the greatest standing that a creature can have in the universe to be a son of God. It’s greater than the position that the angels have. From the greatest to the least of them they are greatly privileged but that privilege cannot compare to the privilege of being a son in God’s family.

Great privilege but how do we know that we have it? We read about it but how do we know that it’s ours? Well first of all we know that we have it because God’s word said it. Chapter 3 verse 26, for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. That is the external witness to our status as son ship. Those who have believed and all who have believed regardless of your status in this world, rather you’re rich or poor, slave or free, male or female, Jew or gentile, great sinner or not such a great sinner. We’re all that, great sinners. Regardless of your status if you have believed in Jesus Christ you are a son of God without exception.

And we can rest confidently in our salvation and in our son ship based upon the witness of scripture. It is true. It is reliable. And we know that it is true of us because God’s inherent word says it and we can believe it and reckon it to be so. His word is true. But there is a second witness and a witness that’s every bit as important as that and that is an internal witness and that is the witness of the Holy Spirit. God

sent him on a mission into our hearts where he bears witness to our adoption and son ship.

That’s what Paul says in verse 6. “Because you are sons God has sent forth the spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba! Father” It is because we are sons that he has come. Now that’s an important point to note. I think important particularly in the day in which we live. We don’t need to have some second blessing in order to receive the Holy Spirit. We don’t need to strive for some experience or speaking in tongues or being baptized or circumcised in order to have the spirit. Son ship is all that is required and we have that through faith alone.

At the moment of faith the believer in Jesus Christ is sealed with the Holy Spirit. That’s what Paul says in Ephesians 1:13. We don’t wait for that. It happens at that moment and it’s permanent and it’s eternal. And the spirit begins his ministry of confirming our son ship by crying Abba! Father! Now Paul calls the Holy Spirit the spirit of his son because he proceeds from the son as well as from the father and is sent by both the father and the son and the spirit has a particular ministry and it’s in regard to Christ. He testifies of Christ. He has that ministry throughout the world to confirm the truth about Christ in the hearts of men, to bring conviction of that truth and to confirm in the hearts of believers that we are believers and we belong to God.

So in verses 5 and 6 Paul brings together the three distinct yet identical persons of the trinity to show that salvation is the work of all three. It is the work of God, the triune God. God the father sent God the son into the world to die for us and God the father and God the son sent God the Holy Spirit to live in us and he lives in our hearts permanently. That is an amazing thought that God actually lives in us, guiding us, protecting us, and specifically here in our text crying out within us to give us assurance of our salvation.

Paul develops this ministry of the spirit in Romans 8: 14 – 16. “He continually leads us through this life,” Paul says, “And he bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. He does that by coming into our hearts with the cry Abba! Father!” In Romans 8: 15 Paul describes us as the ones who cry Abba but we do that as a result of the Holy Spirit giving us the assurance that we are God’s sons and daughters. He enables us to cry. Our cry is based on his cry. This word Abba is a term of affection. It is the Aramaic word for father and scholars have pointed out that it’s a term of

affection that has the sense of our word papa or daddy. So it's a very personal way of addressing God.

But it also has a significant connection with Christ because this was the same expression that he used in the Garden of Gethsemane recording in Mark 14: 36. He addressed his heavenly father, his Abba during the greatest crisis of his life when as a man he needed his father most and leaned on his hardest. He called him Abba. And what Paul is saying here is that the Holy Spirit gives us the assurance that we have the same closeness to God that Jesus had. He is our Abba too. What a privilege and a blessing that is.

No servant could ever say father to his master. He may have had a very fine master and a kind master. There were some of those in the ancient world. But still the slave would never address the master as father, never call him Abba. But we are sons and we're not slaves and we have a close, intimate relationship with God almighty. We call him Abba, understanding that we should draw near to him with the same confidence and affection that Christ did. We cannot be closer to God the father than that. We are intimate with him.

So do you think that the law could add anything to our relationship with God that Christ has not obtained for us through his death and that faith has not obtained through its act? Of course not. Through faith you are a son or a daughter of God and that should produce gratitude in us. The Judaizers told the Galatians that they weren't complete, there was still separation between them and God, that they would become complete Christians and better Christians by submitting to the law but the law can never bring us into son ship. It can only keep us slaves. And the law could never produce obedience, not full obedience, not obedience from the heart. That's the result of love.

And knowing what God has given to us in his son should produce love and obedience in us and the Holy Spirit enables us to obey. He not only gives us the assurance of our salvation, he gives us love and the desire to obey and the ability to walk obediently. Paul will develop that at length in chapter 5 but that's what we have in Christ. Now in verse 7 Paul concludes with a summary of what he has said.

“Therefore,” he writes, “you are no longer a slave but a son and if a son then an heir through God.”

An historical shift has occurred. There has been a change in the ages. The fullness of the times has come. The rule of the law ended and believers in Christ are now sons of God. As F.F. Bruce wrote “we have freedom and the power to use it responsibly.” That is our present situation. But our future is even greater. Because we are sons of God we are also heirs of God. What can we say about that? Very little with the time that we have left but even if we had hours and days to talk about it we can only begin to scratch the surface of what our inheritance is and then we would never fully understand it even at that. We know it involves absolute purity and unlimited joy and happiness.

In 1 Peter 1:4 we read of an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. It is permanent. It is pure. It is eternal and it awaits us. It's money in the bank and better than that. Nothing can harm it. Nothing can touch it. It's there for us. But that glory that we can speak of and that Peter describes is beyond description in 1 Corinthians 2: 9 Paul said “I hath not seen nor heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

We can't even imagine how glorious is it but it is there for us. The law didn't gain that for us and it can't add to what we have. What we have is ours because of Christ. It is all of grace. It is all ours as Paul says through God. So all the glory goes to him. All our confidence then should be in him, not in ourselves, not in the things we do but in him. He began the good work in us and the promises that he will bring it to its glorious conclusion. It's foolish then to go back to the law and to childhood but Paul is saying more here than that.

He's not saying it's foolish to do that. He's saying it's impossible to do that. It's impossible to go back to the law because it's finished. That age is over. It's done. Life under the law was proper at one time. It was for Israel. The law was given to the Jews, not to the gentiles and it was given to prepare that nation for a particular period of time, for the coming of Christ. Christ has come and brought spiritual maturity and freedom. He's also given us the ability through the Holy Spirit to live responsibly and obediently in that freedom. So may God give us an appreciation of what we have in Christ and a desire to live it out. We are free men and women. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you that you sent your son to die for us. We thank you that as a result of that death our chains have fallen off. We've been made sons through faith alone and we follow him. May we follow him well and wisely. And we pray these things in his name. Amen.