



Lesson 8 – From Slaves to Heirs

This lesson title is obviously based on the Memory Text from Galatians 4:7,

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

What does it mean that we are no longer slaves?

Slaves to what?

Slaves to our sinful behaviors/addictions/bad acts? Or slaves to our sinful nature, our condition of heart and mind?

And what are we heirs to? What do we inherit?

We will try to get some clarity and answer some of those questions as we go through this week’s lesson.

SATURDAY

Young Martin Luther’s experience of being a slave –

“by seeking to obtain pardon for sin and peace through his own works. He led a most rigorous life, endeavoring by fasting, vigils, and scourgings to subdue the evils of his nature, but even this monastic life brought no relief. He shrank from no sacrifice by which he might attain such a purity of heart that would enable him to stand approved before God. He called himself a “pious monk who strictly followed the rules of his order, and yet, found no peace within them...if ever a monk could obtain heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it.”

But this strategy didn’t work for him...and it still doesn’t work...for anyone.

Does mindset ring true with anyone else here?

I remember growing up...even if we paid lip service to “salvation by faith”, there was always the underlying emphasis on obeying the rules and our behavioral performance; the works had to at least look good from the outside. That sounds a bit like slavery...and it felt a bit like slavery to me.

Apparently, the Galatians were experiencing similar struggles and Paul talks about it in Chapter 3 verses 1-5:



“Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified, and as the only Remedy for our sin-infected minds! 2 I would like to know just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit of love and truth, and experience his healing power, by practicing rituals and observing rules, or was it by understanding and believing the truth that you heard? 3 Are you really so foolish that you think that after experiencing the healing power of the Spirit, which came by trust alone, you can now complete the healing process by your own effort—without the Spirit? 4 Have you really gone so far in the treatment course for nothing? And it will be for nothing if you persist in trying to heal yourselves! 5 Is it because you observe a set of rules that God enlightens your minds with his Spirit and miraculously transforms your characters, or is it because you have been won to trust by the evidence Jesus revealed?”

The Galatians also thought that practicing rituals and observing a set of rules and relying on their own efforts could complete their healing or transform their characters. For Luther, only when he began to understand the truth about salvation in Christ, did he ever start to have any kind of spiritual freedom and hope for his own soul. And based on what I understand now, although his protestations advanced truth from where he started, there was still more truth to be discovered (and there still is! and there will always be more truth to uncover – throughout eternity!), because they still held to the view that God’s law is imposed. God’s true character of love, along with the knowledge that His laws are natural design laws, and the fact that he does not govern his universe in the same way humans - (thank God!) – these are some of THE most freeing and liberating concepts I have learned in this class. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Here is our Memory Text from the Remedy paraphrase,

“Rejoice! You are no longer childlike, needing the supervision of a slave, but are adult children, wise and mature; and as mature children—heirs with Christ of all that is promised!”

What is promised? What have we been told about our inheritance?

- Eternal life
- Kingdom of heaven – the kingdom prepared for us since the creation of the world
- The (new) earth

SUNDAY

Our Condition in Christ

The quarterly asks us – keeping Gal 3:25 in mind, how does Gal 3:26 help us understand what our relationship to the law is, now that we have been “redeemed” by Jesus? Would someone please read Gal 3:25-27 for us?



“Now that trust in God has been restored—and we are set right in heart, mind, and character, and again practice God’s methods—we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God. 26 Through the Remedy established by Jesus Christ you are all loyal children of God, 27 for all of you who have immersed your minds and hearts into the truth of God as revealed by Christ have had your characters changed, and—like a new set of clothing—replaced with the character of Christ.”

The quarterly compares a master’s son being under a pedagogue while he was a minor - did anyone else have to look have to look up “pedagogue” or was that just me?

Google defines it as: a teacher, especially a strict or pedantic one...and “pedagogy” is a thing...who knew? Anyway, the quarterly is comparing a minor child under a pedagogue to an immature Christian or unbeliever... and then says that their relationship with the law is *changed* because they are now adult “sons” of God.

Does our relationship with the law change as we mature? Which law...and how?

If our parents have a “law” that we brush our teeth, does our relationship with that law change as we grow up and mature? Why is that?

What is the significance of Paul using the word *sons* instead of the more generic term *children* in this passage?

In that time and culture, the family inheritance was passed on to the male offspring. The phrase “sons of God” also had special meaning and was the specific designation of Israel in the Old Testament, and Paul wanted to highlight that, in Christ, the Gentiles (everyone - all nations, kindred, tongues, and peoples) now enjoy the same special relationship with God that had previously been somewhat exclusive to Israel.

What is it about baptism that makes it such a significant event?

- Is it that the right words were said?
- Is it the depth of the water? Size of the tank?
- Dunked or sprinkled?
- Which denomination?
- Whether the baptizee has accepted and agreed to the appropriate creed or doctrines or fundamental beliefs?

I have a couple of texts that speak to why baptism is a significant event.



Gal 3:27-29 “27 for all of you who **have immersed your minds and hearts into the truth of God as revealed by Christ have had your characters changed**, and—like a new set of clothing—replaced with the character of Christ. 28 Your station on earth is irrelevant: it doesn't matter whether you are Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female—for you are all one in character, method, principle and motive through all that Christ has done. 29 If you are Christlike in heart and mind, then you are one of Abraham's descendants and an heir to all the promises of God.”

Romans 6:3-5 “ 3 Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed into union with Christ Jesus were immersed into selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? 4 We symbolically demonstrate that we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that—just as Jesus rose from the dead, displaying the life-giving glory of the Father—we too may live a new life, displaying God's glorious character. 5 If we have joined him in dying to self, we will absolutely join him in his resurrection and in new life!”

1 Peter 3:21-22 “21 The flood is symbolic of baptism: Just as those who responded to the Spirit in Noah's day and went through the water—safely in the ark—to a new life, those who follow the Spirit go through baptism to a new life in Christ today. This doesn't wash away dirt from the body, but it symbolizes the Spirit's cleansing of the conscience from fear and selfishness. You are healed by the life of Jesus Christ who rose from the dead 22 and is in heaven at God's right hand, directing the Spirit to take his perfect character and reproduce it in you. All heavenly intelligences recognize him as worthy and sovereign, and he is directing all the agencies of heaven for your healing.”

So what is it that makes baptism such a significant event?

There is a Frank J. Matera quote in the 3rd paragraph that says:

“Paul views baptism as the moment when Christ, like a garment, envelops the believer. Although he does not employ the term, Paul is describing the righteousness which is conferred (bestowed/granted/given/imparted) upon believers.”

What do you think about that...what is Paul really describing here?

Is this simply a legal transaction, a declaration of something that's actually not true?

Or does this garment envelop the believer...is this righteousness conferred upon believers...because an actual change has taken place, because a heart that was at enmity toward God has been transformed to a heart that trusts God and has been...set right!

One of the founders of our church describes this covering garment or robe like this:



“Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul...This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us...Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God “was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.” Sin is defined to be “the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. [which law? what are the requirements of the law?] By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.”

Pink box: “Dwell on the thought that what is true of Christ is also true of us. How should this amazing truth affect every aspect of our existence?”

MONDAY

Enslaved to Elementary Principles

So in the first part of Galatians chapter 4, Paul elaborates on the metaphor of a young heir who is a master of his father’s estate by title, but as a minor he is required to be under the supervision of guardians and managers until he reaches maturity and “is little more than a slave in practice.” The quarterly asks how this story should help clarify what the role of the law should be in our lives now that we are in Christ?

We just talked about this a bit in terms of the tooth brushing law. We know that God’s laws do not change, but as we grow up and mature, does the role of God’s law in our lives change? How?

When we come to realize God’s law is not like man’s law, it is not a list of imposed rules, that God’s laws are the protocols upon which reality works and upon which life is constructed to operate, and that deviations are destructive to the deviant...then we come to an understanding of the underlying principles behind the laws, we are in agreement with them, and we become an active participant in God’s purposes. I think the role of the law - particularly the written/moral law - in our lives should continue to be a diagnostic instrument to highlight aspects of our character that still need healing. And when we fully understand the natural laws we have highlighted in this class, we can use them to predict the future. Has anyone here been able to do that? Gravity? Plastic bag/respiration? Exertion? Liberty?

OK, back to Paul’s child heir metaphor in Gal. 4:1-7 –



“I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the [**elementary principles**] of the world. 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”

What are these “elementary principles” of the world that enslave us as children?

Paul’s relates humanity’s status prior to the coming of Christ to the “minor” in the above text, who owns everything but is in effect no different than a slave. There is some theological dispute, but most agree that Paul is equating this phrase “elementary principles” to the rudimentary principles and practices of religious life...and how these symbolic ceremonies and rituals and practices have repeatedly become a stumbling block for God’s people - the Israelites, the Jews in Christ’s day, then with the Galatians, and how about with many religious folks today?

Reading these same verses in the Remedy shed some light for me:

1 What I am trying to explain to you is that as long as the heir remains immature, they are really no different from a slave, because they need someone to supervise their behavior, make their decisions, and guide their actions—even though they own the entire estate. 2 They don’t have self-governance, so they need the guardians and trustees to protect them from their immature self until such time as they can handle their own affairs. 3 Likewise, when we were childlike in character and immature in our thinking, we had no self-control and were slaves to selfish impulses. 4 But when the time was right, God intervened and sent his Son—born of a sin-infected human mother, as a real human baby, with a humanity weakened by the law of sin and death— 5 in order to purify, cleanse and purge humanity from the infection of selfishness and fear. He did this in order to heal and restore those diagnosed as “terminal” by the written law, so that we might receive all the blessings of sons and daughters of God. 6 Because we are children of God, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to restore Christlikeness of character so that we genuinely call out to God, "Daddy, Father!" 7 Rejoice! You are no longer childlike, needing the supervision of a slave, but are adult children, wise and mature; and as mature children—heirs with Christ of all that is promised!



So these ceremonial laws and practices were only symbols - mere shadows of what was to come - they were always meant to point to Christ, and never intended to take his place. Paul is pointing out how immature it was for the Galatians to go back now and try to regulate their lives around these rules and rituals instead of around Christ - when they were able to experience the real thing! He wanted them to grow and progress from drinking milk to eating solid food like mature Christians who are acquainted with the ways of righteousness(Heb 5:11).

[Optional] Pink box question: Can it be argued that the more you grow and mature spiritually, the more childlike your faith will be?

TUESDAY

God Sent Forth His Son

Galatians 4:4 says:

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

Have you ever thought about why that time was just the right time?
What was going on in the world that made it just the right time?

From a historical and cultural perspective, that time frame was known as the *Pax Romana*, or the Roman Peace - a 200-year period of relative stability and peace all across the Roman empire. Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean world brought peace, a common language, favorable means of travel, and a common culture that helped to facilitate the rapid spread of the gospel in the early Christian church.

Is there any doubt that the God of the universe, the God of infinite wisdom, would choose the exact right, perfect time to intervene in human history with the promised Messiah?

What does it mean when the text says Jesus was “born under law”?

The text says it points not only to his Jewish heritage, but also to the fact that he bore our condemnation...what does that mean? The law of sin and death, he was born with our condition - a selfish, carnal nature.

The 2nd paragraph in Monday's lesson equates God sending forth his son with God taking the initiative in our salvation...and it certainly was the most significant, tangible evidence of God taking



the initiative in our salvation, but it certainly was not His first time or the initial initiative taken on our behalf. When did he *first* take the initiative in our salvation? According to Isaiah, Matthew, Luke, Acts, Hebrews, and Revelation...He is the lamb slain from the foundations of the world. Adam and Eve get the promise of a redeemer immediately after eating the fruit in Eden...then basically the entire Old Testament is a series of examples of God taking the initiative in our salvation, and intervening over and over to keep open the avenue for the Messiah to come.

The last paragraph on Tuesday's lesson was interesting to me...I almost felt like the author was experiencing an internal struggle between some healing model/design law concepts and some penal substitution/imposed law concepts. "It was necessary for Christ to assume our humanity because we could not save ourselves"...100% true.

"By uniting His divine nature with our fallen human nature, Christ legally qualified to be our Substitute, Savior, and High Priest"

Did he really need ***legal*** qualifications?

"As the second Adam, He came to reclaim all that the first Adam had lost by his disobedience" (Rom. 5:12-21)"

I might would reword the last phrase to 'by his distrust, by the damage he did to his heart, mind and character'... rather than by his disobedience, because the implied focus is on behavior alone. "By His obedience He perfectly fulfilled the law's demands, thus redeeming Adam's tragic failure."

What are the law's demands and how did he perfectly fulfill it?

One of this class' favorite quotes from the Desire of Ages:

"The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character" [*Why?? Why does the law of respiration require that we breathe? Because that is how life was designed to operate!*] "and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and *developed* a perfect character." [*What is maybe the only thing God cannot create? Character! It must be wrought out, developed, refined, and perfected through the exercise of your free will...so although Christ was created sinless, he had to mature and develop his perfect character.*]

"These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this,



Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can 'be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

Back to the quarterly:

“And by His death on the cross, He met the justice of the law, which required the death of the sinner, thus gaining the right to redeem all who come to Him in true faith and surrender.”

Does the “justice of the law” require the death of the sinner?

What does the “justice of the law” require?

The just thing, the right thing to do under the law of love...is to heal and restore the sinner back to his original design!

WEDNESDAY

The Privileges of Adoption

Wednesday's lesson starts out by digging into Paul's statement that Christ has “redeemed” or bought back or ransomed those who were “under the law”. It correctly defines “ransom” as the price paid to secure the freedom of a hostage or a slave. It also correctly asks the question, “from what do we need to be freed?” and does quite a good job at answering that question, but still reveals some imposed law/penal views. So what do we need to be redeemed or ransomed from - what is holding us captive?

1. Satan's lies about God we have believed that keep us from knowing and trusting God, and
2. Our sinful, selfish nature.

What then is the price necessary to free us?

The truth that will destroy the lies and free our minds to trust, and a new perfect nature/character, and Jesus provides both and both could only be achieved by His sinless life, selfless death and resurrection!

This is what Christ came to do - to reveal the father and His character - to make him known - in order to win us back to trust...and to develop a perfect character in his humanity, which he offers as a free gift to all who are willing to receive it.

To whom was this price paid...the judge?



An angry God?

No...To us! *We* are the ones who needed the truth and we are the ones who needed a new nature!

The quarterly points out that Paul's use of the word adoption is unique - he is the only New Testament author to use it, and it talks about this word being more vivid and descriptive of Christ accomplished for us, than even the word salvation.

Has anyone here experienced adoption - either by being adopted or by adopting a child? Hopefully that's not too personal a question. I am genuinely in awe of folks who foster and adopt in this world, and I believe it is such a beautiful representation of how we are all grafted into the family of God. Apparently, adoption was a well-known legal procedure at that time in the Greco-Roman world, and several roman emperors during Paul's life used adoption as their means of choosing a successor when they had no legal heir. There are many real rights and privileges guaranteed through adoption – and from those I know who have participated in adoption, there is literally no difference in how an adopted versus a naturally born child is loved and accepted as part of the family. So, if we broken folks can manage to achieve that here on an earthly level...how much better to is the experience of divine adoption as children of God and co-heirs with Christ.

This is a great quote from Friday's lesson talking about our adoption:

“In the council of heaven, provision was made that men, though transgressors, should not perish in their disobedience, but, through faith in Christ as their substitute and surety, might become the elect of God predestined unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only-begotten Son to pay man's ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus.”

The box at the bottom of Wednesday's lesson talks about Paul's use of the word Abba - the intimate term children call their daddys - and asks if you enjoy that kind of intimate closeness to God in your own life? If not, what's the problem? What typically keeps folks from experiencing this type of an intimate, close relationship with God?

Thursday

Why Turn Back to Slavery?



Gal 4:8-11 from the Remedy:

“In the past, before you knew God as revealed by Jesus, your minds were held in the bondage of fear and superstition by gods of your own darkened imaginations. 9 But now that you have come to know God as revealed by Jesus (or, more importantly, now that Christlike character has been developing within you, and you are known as God's children), how could you possibly return to the dark, powerless, destructive beliefs and practices of your former lives? Do you wish to have your minds destroyed and be enslaved by superstition and ignorance all over again? 10 You are actually observing ceremonial holidays as if somehow such observances could heal the mind, remove selfishness and guilt, or restore the character to Christlikeness. 11 I can hardly believe it! I am beginning to wonder whether all my time with you has been wasted.”

The 2nd paragraph of Thursday's lesson is interesting, and I picked up on some defensiveness about whether sabbath observance might be included in Paul's list of ceremonial practices and holidays.

"Many have interpreted Paul's reference to "days and months and seasons and years" as an objection not merely against ceremonial laws but against the Sabbath, as well. Such an interpretation, however, goes beyond the evidence. Does it?

For starters, if Paul really wanted to single out the Sabbath and other specific Jewish practices, it is clear that he easily could have identified them by name. Second, Paul makes it clear that whatever it is the Galatians are doing, it has led them from freedom in Christ to bondage.

“If observance of the seventh-day Sabbath subjects a man to bondage, it must be that the Creator Himself entered into bondage when He observed the world's first Sabbath!” — The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 967.

Also, why would Jesus not only have kept the Sabbath but taught others how to keep it, if its proper observance were in any way depriving people of the freedom that they have in Him?

Were there folks in Israel who were “keeping the Sabbath” but were still kept in bondage?

Isa 1 says:

“Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your



appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me. I am weary of bearing them.”

Were there folks in Christ’s day who were “keeping the Sabbath” and were still in bondage?

They wanted to stone Christ for the way he kept the sabbath, because he broke all their rules...and they did eventually kill the Lord of the Sabbath but wanted his body down off the cross so they could “keep the Sabbath.”

Are there folks today who are “keeping the Sabbath” in ways that are leading them from freedom in Christ toward bondage?