

May 29, 2011
The Bridge Bible Fellowship
Pastor Paul S. Brown
Galatians 4:1-11

“The Most Amazing Before & After, Part Two: Don’t Go Back!”

- I. Grace Alone through Faith Alone in the Finished Work of Jesus Christ Alone **Defended** (1:1-2:21)
- II. Grace Alone Through Faith Alone in the Finished Work of Jesus Christ Alone **Explained** (3:1-4:31)
 - A. Holy Spirit is Given by Faith, Not by Works (3:1-5)
 - B. Abraham Was Justified by Faith, Not by Works (3:6-9)
 - C. Justification is by Faith, Not by the Law (3:10-4:11)
 - 1. Christ Redeems Us from the Curse of the Law (3:10-14)
 - 2. Abrahamic Covenant is Not Voided by the Law (3:15-18)
 - 3. Law Given to Drive us to Faith (3:19-22)
 - 4. **Believers are Free from the Law (3:23-4:11)**
 - a. **Before** – v. 23-24
 - b. **Now** – v. 25-29 (New Freedom, Identity, Relationship, Standing, & Promise)

The Blessings of Sonship. As a born-again believer who, by God’s grace, has trusted in Jesus Christ alone for salvation: You are a child of God (Jn 1:12); You are a joint heir with Christ (1 Pet. 3:7; Rom. 8:17); You are a sinner now saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9); You are a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17); You are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13); You are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14); You are Christ’s friend (Jn. 15:15); You are an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20); You are a temple of God’s Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19); You are a member of Christ’s Body (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30); You are reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-19); You are a saint (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2; etc.); You are God’s handiwork (Eph. 2:10); You are a fellow citizen of heaven (Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20-21); You are righteous and holy in Christ (Eph. 4:24); You are a son of light (1 Thess. 5:5); You are a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19); You are a member of a chosen race of believers (1 Pet. 2:9-10); You are God’s own possession (1 Pet. 2:9-10); You are an alien and a stranger to this world (1 Pet. 2:11); You are an enemy of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8); You are an adopted son of God (Eph. 1:5); You have been justified and completely forgiven (Rom 5:1; Col. 1:14); You have died to the power of sin’s rule over your life (Rom 6:1-6); You are free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8:1); You have been given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16); You belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19-20); You have been sealed by God in Christ (2 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13-14); You have been made righteous (1 Cor. 5:21); You have died and your life is hidden in Christ (Col. 3:3); You have been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20); You have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3); You were chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4; Col. 3:2); You have been made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13); You have been raised up and seated with Christ in heaven (Eph. 2:6); You are a partaker of God’s divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4); You have been made complete (Col. 2:10); You are firmly rooted and now being built up in Christ (Col. 2:7); You have been delivered from the domain of darkness (Col. 1:13); You have been transferred to the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Col. 1:13); You have Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27); You have a hope laid up for you in heaven (Col. 1:5)

c. Before (4:1-3)

d. Now (4:4-7)

e. Don’t Go Back!!! (4:8-11)

Discussion Questions:

1. In this section of Galatians Paul uses a “before & after” approach to instruct the readers as to why they should not go back to religion but should go forward in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Take some time to think about what your life was like before you came to saving faith in Jesus Christ. How different is it now? Share as many things as you can as to the differences.
2. Read through the list of “The Blessings of Sonship” and look up some of the verses. How many of those things are yours because you earned or deserved them? If you didn’t earn or deserve them then how did you get them? At what price? If all of this is true then why would someone want to go back to trying to earn things from God? What is the root problem that makes us want to earn or deserve God’s blessings?
3. Read Gal. 4:1-3. What is Paul’s point in comparing a child-heir to a slave? How does this relate to what life was like under the Law? What are the “elemental things of the world” that held us in bondage? What does a child have to do to be able to enjoy & use the inheritance?
4. Read Gal. 4:4-7. Why does Paul mention “the fullness of time”? How does that relate to what he just said about a child-heir? Why does he now use the image of “adoption”? What was our condition prior to being adopted into God’s family? Why does he say that we were “redeemed”? Redeemed from what? Why was this essential for us to be adopted?
5. What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a true believer (v. 6)? How significant is it for former slaves to be able to call their Master “Abba! Father!”? If you are trying to “earn” your salvation can you have that kind of assurance?
6. Read Gal. 4:8-11. After all of the comparisons of “before and after” in the preceding verses what is Paul’s point here? What is the enslavement he is talking about in v. 9-10? Note that he calls those things “weak and worthless.” Do most religious people think that their devotion to religious rules and regulations is weak and worthless? What are some religious practices of people today that Paul would categorize as “weak and worthless”?
7. What is Paul’s grave concern in v. 11? In what sense could he have labored over them in vain? Does this mean that they could have lost their salvation? If not, then what does it mean?
8. How sure are you that you are saved? How confident are you that you are a child of God and heir of God’s promises? If you are trusting in Jesus Christ ALONE for your salvation you can be 100% sure because His work was perfect! Are there any areas of “old-time religion” that are creeping back into your life? What will you do this week to guard your heart from trusting in anything other than Jesus for your salvation?
9. Who do you know that doesn’t yet understand that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ alone? Prayerfully go to them and explain the Gospel this week.