

## GALATIANS 3:26–4:7 – Sons & Heirs

**GOSPEL GRAMMAR:** The INDICATIVE of GRACE must precede the IMPERATIVE of HUMAN RESPONSE.

Joyce Meyer's Message: Only when you really know WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST, once you realise Jesus DID IT so you don't have to continually DO IT, once you understand God's love is FREELY GIVEN not EARNED, then GROWTH becomes possible, CHANGE becomes possible, FRUIT-BEARING becomes possible.

→ *What are the dangers of getting your 'Gospel Grammar' the wrong way round? What changes when you get it the right way round?*

### 3 Parts to Paul's Revelation of our New Identity

#### 1. In Christ, we BELONG (3:26-29)

v27: Clothing is not just about fashion, but IDENTITY & BELONGING ... WHO you are & WHOSE you are ... And we have PUT ON CHRIST (Isa 64:6, 61:10).

v28: Identity is not determined by NATIONALITY, STATUS or GENDER, but by your ADOPTION into God's family through Christ ... In Christ, everyone BELONGS, everyone is VALUABLE, everyone EQUALLY LOVED

→ *What does it mean to say you have 'put on Christ?' What are those particular garments & what did they replace?*

→ *Do you feel you belong as a Christian? Do you feel you belong in your church family? Upon what is that belonging based? Similarly, where does your sense of value or worth come from? What does Paul have to say about that here?*

#### 2. In Christ, we are no longer SLAVES, but HEIRS (4:1-3)

As a CHILD you are really no better off than a SLAVE ... but that's simply NO LONGER the case.

→ *Why was a child no better off than a slave? What changed for a Roman child when they came of age? Would that have been different for a boy as opposed to a girl?*

- You are no longer a CHILD who needs BABYSITTING.
- You are no longer a SLAVE obligated to a MASTER.
- You are no longer a LABOURER who needs to EARN acceptance, blessing & favour.

→ *How did the Law function in each of a), b) & c)?*

Now you are FREE ... You are a SON ... You are an HEIR.

→ *"Sadly, many Christians continue to act, think & speak the same way they did pre-conversion / before they met Christ." Why do you think that is the case? How could it / should it change? What does it mean to be a son & heir?*

#### 3. In Christ, we are SONS of God crying ABBA FATHER (4:4-7)

In the Greco-Roman world, a childless man could ADOPT one of his SLAVES. At the moment of adoption, they ceased to be a SLAVE & instead received all the privileges of SONSHIP.

This is a remarkable picture of what Jesus has done for us: We have been REDEEMED = BOUGHT out of SLAVERY ... & instead given the FULL RIGHTS of SONSHIP.

Tim Keller: "If we don't let Paul call Christian women 'SONS of God,' we miss how RADICAL & WONDERFUL a claim it is."

→ *Women, how do you feel about being called 'sons' of God? Men, how do you feel about being the 'bride of Christ?'*

→ *What were the 'full rights / benefits' of sonship in the ancient world? What are they in the Christian world?*

#### THE PRODIGAL SON (Luke 15:11-32)

The Prodigal Son went back to his father expecting & indeed deserving the position of HIRED SERVANT.

But, much to his surprise, his father took mercy, came running, embraced him & lavished on him the FULL BENEFITS of SONSHIP, as demonstrated by the provision of 3 things:

- A ROBE representing his IDENTITY as a member of the royal family.
- A RING representing his AUTHORITY as the king's own son.
- SANDALS rep. LIBERTY: Slaves went BAREFOOT; sons wore SHOES

The Older Brother missed the point: Even though he was a SON, he was allowing himself to live bound up in LEGALISM, meaning he was living functionally as a SLAVE.

The Danger: The FOOLISH Galatians might do the same.

For us, don't get SEDUCED into the same MINDSET, behaving like a CHILD, living like a SLAVE, trying to earn it like a LABOURER, when like the Prodigal Son, you wear the Father's ROBE, RING & SANDALS.

→ *What does wearing the Father's robe, ring & sandals mean to you? What could / should it mean to you? What might change if you were more aware you did?*

→ *What is the difference between a labourer & an inheritor? Which are you? In which do you generally function in your Christian life?*

→ *"So much comes down to identity: how you see yourself. Actually, the entire outworking of your Christian life will depend on how you answer this question. Mistake your identity & it will confuse your motives, shift your goals & paralyse your growth. The flip: When you truly understand your identity in Christ, everything slots into place. When you realise he has given you His robe, ring, sandals, your view of yourself & indeed everything else changes utterly." Discuss!*