

“Heirs of God” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Christmas 1

December 28, 2025

I. **Galatians 4:4-7** – previously read

II. **We are very good at underestimating what we have in Christ.**

- a. Part of our human nature is not recognizing or apprehending the good that already belongs to us as we believe in Jesus.
- b. We were discussing material blessings in our Iron Men group yesterday, and most of us can get pretty detailed about the ways God cares for our bodies – from the air we breathe to the medical help we receive.
- c. However, it's easy to forget the amazing ways that God cares for us in the material world... but even more so when it comes to our spiritual blessings.
 - i. You see, the spiritual blessings are harder to define, and oftentimes, we just can't explain or recognize what God has done in Christ.
 - ii. We might be able to express that our sins are forgiven in Jesus through His birth, death, and resurrection, but do you know that that means for your eternity?
 - iii. God doesn't say that He is just giving us a gift... He is making us an heir... as the Bible says, “So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.” (v 7)
 - iv. Yet, a lot of Christians walk around like they are just tenants... renting forever... but never owning... when God calls us the rightful heirs of His kingdom.
- d. Maybe you heard about the tourist who hit a \$230,000 jackpot on a slot machine in Las Vegas?
 - i. Except, he was playing a slot machine that malfunctioned, so even though he hit the jack pot, it never informed him... supposedly there was a communication error between the slot machine and the casino personnel... and once the employees figured out what was going on, he was long gone and they had no idea how to find him.
 - ii. They finally figured out who he was after going through hours of camera footage, interviewing witnesses, and researching purchase records.... and I guess they tracked him down in Arizona after he checked out and went home... but he never knew that he won anything because of the mix up.¹
 - iii. Just imagine... you might feel like you are broke, but the truth is \$230,000 is all yours.... and the problem was not that the money didn't exist... it was that this guy didn't know it was his.
- e. Paul says something similar about our life in Christ.
 - i. We possess an inheritance that is far greater than any wealth on earth, but we live as though we are unaware... or not trusting... it belongs to us.

- ii. And the warning from Paul is that when heirs forget who they are, they begin to live like slaves.

III. **When we don't recognize our inheritance, it leads to bondage...**

- a. ...It leads us to seek sin or the Law as substitutes.
- b. When the inheritance of God is not clear... or we aren't reminded of who we are in Him... the present world starts to fill the vacuum.
 - i. It's unfortunate, but as sinful humans, whatever we cannot see by faith... we try to grab onto with our hands.
 - ii. And this is where slavery and bondage come into our lives... not through chains, but through desire.
- c. In the next chapter, Paul lists the sins of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), which happen when people look for life outside of God's promise:
 - i. Misused bodies (sexual immorality, impurity, orgies)
 - ii. Misplaced worship (idolatry, sorcery)
 - iii. Broken relationships (enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger)
 - iv. Disordered desires (drunkenness)
- d. Don't misunderstand, because these are not simply "bad behaviors"...
 - i. They are false inheritances... or how we try to get things from the world like meaning... and joy... and an identity... and control.
- e. Now Paul goes even further by saying that you might think you have a solution to all this slavery to sin – the Law!
 - i. In other words, just obey God's commands in the Ten Commandments... and maybe even a step further... to the Old Testament laws about what to eat or how to stay clean.
 - ii. But this is just another way that we try to control the situation, as we try to be a good person and maybe that will put us back in good standing with God.
 - iii. The Law cannot save you from your sin... and if you try to do everything right for God it is also a form of slavery.
- f. When we sin, our instinct is either to keep on doing it... or to try to fix it by being perfect for God as a "good person".... But Paul's warning is that the Law cannot rescue us from the slavery sin has already created.
 - i. You see, the problem with these solutions is they are all about us and our work... rather than our Savior, Jesus.

IV. **"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son..."** (v 4)

- a. Almost as if you were watching an hourglass, when the bottom half was filled, the time was ready for Jesus to come forth.
 - i. Now, Paul does not say, "When humanity finally figured it out and followed the Law perfectly..."
He says: "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." (vv 4-5)

- b. First of all, God sends... it is 100% all God who does the work of seeking us out and sending us a Savior who can fix our sin... and our desire to work our way to God on our own.
 - i. The fact that God sends, or we have a sending God, means that He is always seeking us out through the sending of His Son, of the Holy Spirit, and of all those who believe who are sharing Jesus...
- c. Secondly, it says Jesus was born of a woman... or He is a human being.
 - i. As I said on Christmas morning, Jesus is divine and true God, but also a human being who came to be one of us.
 - ii. His name, Immanuel, is “God with us” – which means our Savior knows what it’s like to be in our shoes.
- d. Third, it says born under the law, which means Jesus was the one Person who was required to follow the law perfectly.
 - i. None of us could ever bear that burden, but Jesus was able to do it for our sake... in order to be the perfect sacrifice on the cross.
- e. Fourth, it says Jesus came to redeem... which is the beautiful picture of Christ buying us back from our sin that separates us from God, as He dies on the cross to pay for it.
- f. Fifth, we see that all of this was to give us adoption as sons (or the primary inheritors).
 - i. This does not mean that we are just released from the penalty of our sins... it means we have a new status in God’s eyes! We are His children and heirs.
- g. All these blessings come to those who believe in Jesus as their Savior – believing that the perfect Son of God came into our world in the flesh to rescue us from our slavery to sin – and He paid for all of it on the cross.
 - i. The Christmas story is really summed up in this very small part of the Bible – as we no longer have to look for an inheritance in the world... we recognize and know that we are heirs of God.

V. **The Good News of Jesus Christ** does not just change our behavior... it changes our identity.

- a. Sometimes people who have freedom begin to neglect and forget this gift.
- b. We don’t become indifferent or neglect this gift of freedom... instead we move toward the love of God the Father as we now belong.... we have a true sense of belonging with our Abba, our Dad.
 - i. We don’t behave our way into being an heir, we are called one by God Himself in our Baptism and through faith.
 - ii. And just like the Vegas jackpot winner did nothing to earn his prize, he simply had to be told the truth, that it was his already.
- c. When we live as heirs, we are no longer desperate to prove ourselves or afraid of losing everything.
- d. We are free... to love, to forgive, to serve, and to live for our Father... because our future is already secure in Christ.

- e. In Christ, we are not slaves trying to earn a future... we are heirs learning to live like it.

¹ Amanda Jackson, "A slot machine in Las Vegas malfunctioned and didn't tell a tourist he won," CNN (2-7-22)