

Set Free to Live Free
From Performance to Belonging 4 of 7
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Rich Sherwood
July 19, 2026

Sermon Teaching

Big Idea: The gospel doesn't just free us—it makes us family.

4 What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. ² The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces^[a] of the world. ⁴ But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.^[b] ⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba,^[c] Father.” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. **Galatians 4:1-7 (NIV)**

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Paul’s Concern for the Galatians

⁸ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces^[d]? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? ¹⁰ You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹ I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. ¹² I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. ¹³ As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, ¹⁴ and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵ Where, then, is your blessing of me now? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? ¹⁷ Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them. ¹⁸ It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you. ¹⁹ My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you! **Galatians 4:8-20 (NIV)**

Notes: _____

Hagar and Sarah

²¹ Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³ His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. ²⁴ These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written:
“Be glad, barren woman,
 you who never bore a child;
shout for joy and cry aloud,
 you who were never in labor;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
 than of her who has a husband.”^[e]
²⁸ Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. ³⁰ But what does Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.”^[f] ³¹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. **Galatians 4:21-31 (NIV)**

Notes: _____

NEXT RIGHT STEPS

- ☐ **Examine the spiritual influences in your life**
- ☐ **Decide what you will do with your spiritual freedom**
- ☐ **Follow Jesus in Believer’s Baptism**



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Talk It Over

Big Idea: The gospel doesn't just free us—it makes us family.

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Take a few moments to reconnect and share a highlight from your week.

Icebreaker: What is one thing that made you feel like you belonged when you were growing up—a family tradition, a team, a church, or a group of friends?

Transition: Everyone longs to belong. Galatians 4 reminds us that through Jesus, we are not merely forgiven—we are welcomed into God's family.

Read the Passage Together: Galatians 4:1-31

If children are present, invite different family members to read a few verses.

Family Questions (Kids & Parents)

1. Who makes us part of God's family?

Parent Help: Jesus makes us part of God's family when we trust Him.

Key Verse: Galatians 4:4-5

2. What do we call God because we belong to Him?

Parent Help: Paul says we can call Him "Abba, Father," which means we can know God as our loving Heavenly Father.

Key Verse: Galatians 4:6

3. Do we have to earn God's love?

Parent Help: No. God loves us because we belong to Him through Jesus. We obey because we love Him, not to make Him love us.

Family Application: Share one reason you're thankful to be part of God's family.

Teen & Adult Discussion

4. What stood out most to you from Sunday's message?

5. Paul says God sent His Son so that we might receive adoption to sonship (Galatians 4:4-7). What does adoption tell us about God's heart toward us?

Supporting Verses: John 1:12, Ephesians 1:4-5, Romans 8:15-17

6. Why do you think so many Christians struggle to fully believe they belong in God's family?

7. Have you ever found yourself living like a "spiritual employee" rather than a beloved son or daughter? What did that look like in your life?

8. Paul warns the Galatians not to return to slavery. (Galatians 4:8-11)

What are some ways Christians today can drift back into performance-based living?

Examples: Trying to earn God's approval Comparing ourselves to others
Feeling guilty when we fall short Believing God loves us more when we perform well

9. Paul contrasts slavery and promise through the stories of Hagar and Sarah. (Galatians 4:21-31)

What is the difference between living from God's promise and living from human effort?

10. In what area of your life do you need to move from performance to belonging?

Examples: Parenting Marriage Career
Ministry Spiritual growth Personal failures

What would trusting God's love look like in that area?

Personal Reflection

Take a few moments quietly before God. Ask yourself:

- Am I trying to earn God's approval?
- Do I truly believe I am His child?
- Am I living from acceptance or striving for acceptance?

Write down one truth from Galatians 4 that you need to remember this week.

Living It Out This Week - Choose one:

- ☐ Read Galatians 4 each day this week.
- ☐ Memorize Galatians 4:6-7.
- ☐ Begin each morning thanking God that you are His child.
- ☐ Replace one negative thought about yourself with a truth from Scripture.
- ☐ Encourage someone who may be struggling with feelings of failure or rejection.

Pray for: A deeper understanding of God's love Families in your church
Confidence in your identity in Christ People who feel far from God
Freedom from performance-based living

Closing Prayer: "Father, thank You for sending Jesus so that we could become Your children. Help us stop striving to earn what You have already given us through Christ. Teach us to live as beloved sons and daughters who know they belong in Your family. In Jesus' name, Amen."