



## Scotts Hill Baptist Church

LIVING IN FREEDOM • MY TWO SONS • GALATIANS 4:21-31 •

### MAIN POINT

Freedom comes when Christ captivates our heart and transforms us into His likeness through the study of His Word.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Do you ever feel like you have to perform to get people to approve of you or love you? In what kinds of situations are you most likely to feel that way (i.e., parenting, work, friendships, etc.)?**

**Does that need for performance-approval ever bleed over into your relationship with God? If so, what does that indicate about the way you view God's love?**

**What in your current life or your past might contribute to the belief that you have to perform in order for God to love you?**

A firm belief in God's unchanging love is essential for us to move forward spiritually. Until we truly believe God loves us, apart from our performance, our spiritual lives will be stagnant. We'll constantly try to prove ourselves to God. Fortunately, the gospel helps us see that we are free from this lie because of what Jesus has done on our behalf. True freedom comes when Christ captivates our heart and transforms us into His likeness by grace, not our works.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 4:21-31.

**What Old Testament story did Paul use to make his point?**

**Who are the “sons of the slave”? Who are the “sons of the free woman”? Why did Paul make his point by talking about the mothers and not the father?**

**What was the result of being a child of the free woman? What was the inheritance that Paul was talking about?**

Paul referenced the story of Hagar and Sarah, pointing out that while the sons had the same father, they had different mothers. Judaizers, just like Christians, came from the Jewish faith. However the Judaizers, the children of the bond woman, lived under the oppression of the law. Paul wanted the Galatians to realize they were the children of the promise and the children of the Spirit. They were free from the persecution of their brothers and able to inherit the blessings of God.

**What false teachings today compliment us? What false teachings today make false promises?**

**What goals are the lies we are frequently subjected to trying to accomplish? How does understanding the gospel protect us?**

Things today haven't changed all that much from Paul's time, the most prevalent lie that is alive and well in the false teaching around us today is the idea that you can save yourself. The gospel, however, teaches us that we ourselves are the problem. Our only hope, therefore, is to look Christ and the salvation He provides.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How does seeing yourself as an heir of God's promise reshape the way you face opposition, hardship, or rejection? What practical step can you take to reinforce this identity when doubts arise?**

**Where are you most tempted to compare your faith journey to others or measure spirituality by external rules? How can you intentionally rest in your identity as a child of promise instead?**

**What does it look like for our group to live as the “free people” Paul describes?**

## PRAYER

God, show us to walk in Your grace; help us to trust in Your Word; give us great zeal for Your purpose.

## COMMENTARY

### | GALATIANS 4:21-31

4:21. The “law” does not refer specifically to the law of Moses, but to the Books of the Law—the Pentateuch (i.e., Genesis–Deuteronomy). Paul’s logic was that even the law itself would dispute the view of the false teachers.

4:22-23. Genesis records the births of these two sons—Ishmael, born to Hagar, a slave, and Isaac, born to Sarah, a free woman. Ishmael was born “according to... the flesh,” because Sarah and Abraham used Hagar to have a son by their own ingenuity, not through patient trust in God’s promise (Gen 16). Isaac was born as God promised (Gen. 15:4; 17:16-17; 21:1-3) after many years of waiting by Abraham and Sarah.

4:24-26. Paul declared that he was using these things as illustrations in an elaborate allegory. On one side of the comparison of covenants is (a) Mount Sinai, where the law of Moses was given, (b) Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, and (c) the present Jerusalem, from which the false teachers had come to Syrian Antioch (2:11-13) and Galatia. This side of the comparison represents spiritual slavery through the law. On the other side of the comparison is the Jerusalem above, a Jewish hope that will be fully realized only in the new heavens and new earth (Rev 21:2,9–22:5). Interestingly, Sarah is not referred to as the mother at this point, but “the Jerusalem above” is.

4:27. The quote from Isaiah 54:1 in this verse deals with the fact that the children born after the exile were more fortunate and greater in number than those righteously judged for breaking the law. The implication is that those who still rely on the law are being replaced by the church and its law-free gospel.

4:28-30. Paul assumed that those in the Galatian churches would return to his view and show themselves to be children of promise (i.e., Abraham’s seed through faith in Christ; 3:29). But, as Ishmael persecuted Isaac in Gen. 21:9-10, it is to be expected that the

Judaizers will persecute true Christians. Paul was confident that eventually his opponents would be exiled from among God's people, while his own view would receive the inheritance.

4:31. Paul placed himself and the Galatians on the side of Isaac and his descendants, the Jews, while his opponents are children of the slave, making them non-Jews.