

# Freed and Formed

Galatians 4:1-20

## Summary

In this sermon, we heard Paul's pastoral heart to see Christ formed in the Galatian believers. He wrote this letter to call the church back to the true gospel, because through this gospel, we are set free and we are formed to be who we were meant to be – restored image-bearers that fill the earth with His glory.

## Sermon Outline

### I. Christ is Formed in Us as We Are Freed by the Son (Galatians 4:1-5)

Paul explains that a young heir is practically no different from a slave because the child must submit to household guardians and managers until the date set by his father. Similarly, both Jews and Gentiles were equally enslaved to the "elementary principles of the world," trapped in spiritual bondage whether through pagan idolatry or the Old Covenant system. Every person is born into a corrosive, destructive slavery to sin (John 8:34-36). After generations of waiting for a deliverer, God enacted His perfect plan to deliver us. God sent His Son on a rescue mission to set us free. Jesus ransomed us from bondage by living righteously under the law and giving His life on the cross. We must look to the Son to set us free and trust Him to change us.

### II. Christ is Formed in Us as We Are Fathered by God (Galatians 4:5-7)

Jesus redeems us so that we receive full adoption as sons. In the first-century Roman world, adult sons received the inheritance and legal rights. By calling everyone "sons," Paul radically declares that every man and woman in Christ holds the exact same status and receives the full inheritance. God sends the Spirit into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!" which connotes deep intimacy and nearness. Just as a father's voice physically stabilizes a premature baby in the NICU, the voice of our Heavenly Father calms our fears and reassures us of our safety. Instead of living like fearful orphans, God invites us to trust Him as our Good Father. Letting God father us shapes us into the image of His Son.

### III. Christ is Formed in Us as We Are Led by the Spirit (Galatians 4:6)

Trying to live a righteous life in our own strength is like trying to drive a car with no gas. We possess the engine and the wheels, but we lack the fuel required to do good. Christ fills the gas tank of our souls by sending His Spirit to live within us and empower us (Ezekiel 36). The Old Covenant utilized 613 laws to govern external behavior, but the New Covenant utilizes the indwelling Spirit to guide us in every situation. The Spirit produces righteous thinking and living from the inside out. We must actively listen to the Spirit, seek His guidance before making decisions, and immediately respond to His conviction with repentance.

#### **IV. Christ is Formed in Us as We Are Dependent on Grace (Galatians 4:8-11)**

Man-made religions all boil down to the same thing: get to God/heaven/paradise through doing more good than bad. They are merit-based religions. But the gospel teaches the opposite: God graciously pursues us and brings us into a relationship with Him. Turning to the Law for righteousness is like turning back to idol worship because both are enslaving systems of human merit. External rule-keeping fails to produce righteousness. The grace of God alone possesses the power to change us and make us like Christ. We obey God out of delight as a response to His grace, working from His approval rather than for His approval and in doing so, Christ is formed in us.

#### **V. Christ is Formed in Us as We Are Shaped by Truth (Galatians 4:12-20)**

Paul initially preached the gospel to the Galatians during a season of bodily illness, and they received him with immense love. Now, they treat him like an enemy because he tells them the truth. False teachers seek to build a following of fans, but true leaders desire to see Christ formed in the church through the truth. The truth sets us free and shapes us into the image of Jesus. We must immerse ourselves in God's Word and commit to a Christian community where we speak the truth to one another.

Jesus is *the* Image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15), and as we behold Him, we are transformed to reflect His glory to the world (2 Corinthians 3:18), thus fulfilling our purpose on earth.