

## **Children of the Free**

Galatians 4:21-31

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Galatians chapter number 4. And I'd like us to look together at verse number 21 to verse number 31. This is, in many ways, Paul's last argument before he moves into the practical, more applicable part of the epistle. We're going to consider verse 21 to 31 this morning. The Word of God reads, "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondwoman, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the free woman through promise. Which things are symbolic. For these are two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar; for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, 'Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband.' Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise. But as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what does the Scripture say? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.' So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free."

Let us pray. Father, we come to You asking that the Spirit, who gives life and freedom, would come to us now to loosen the chains of our bondage, set us free, and to help us understand the glorious liberty of the children of God that has been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ for us. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but according to the Spirit. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Paul has made his pastoral appeals and has cautioned the Galatians against zeal that had been influencing them, the zeal of the Judaizers. And at the end of verse number 20, Paul tells us that he's concerned about them. He knows that they are veering away from the gospel that he proclaimed to

them, and he was concerned about their soul's salvation. He was concerned that they might be ending up damned with the Judaizers and the message that they had proclaimed to them. And Paul, being concerned about such, says in verse number 20, "I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I have doubts about you." Paul's desire was to be with them. He knew that communication via letter can only do so much. He would have to wait perhaps months to hear of a response and how they've responded to this, but he knew that if he could be with them, he could adjust his tone, which is very hard to read in a letter, as you know, but he would adjust his approach to them and be able to reason with them, work with them, cry with them, plead with them, and all these things with them. They are not so easily communicated by a letter. Paul was concerned about them, deeply concerned, and he shows that pastoral nature and heart by wanting to be with them to help resolve the issues and the problems that they were facing.

But Paul here makes a kind of a final appeal to them, and it's an appeal to the law. In verse number 21, he says, "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?" And so, Paul says, "I'm essentially showing you here that what I am teaching is not contrary to the law; in fact, you who desire to be under the law and are masters of the law and are going back to the law, let me actually tell you what the law says about what you're doing."

And so, Paul uses the word "law" in a way here that we are not so familiar with. He uses the word "law" twice in this passage. "You who desire to be under the law," desire to be under the law's commands, under its bondage, under its covenant. "Do you not hear the law?" And then he tells us a story in Genesis. Now, is Genesis the law? Well, it is the law in regards to the fact that it is part of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, which is called the law. In fact, the Scriptures are often called the law. And so, what Paul is trying to help them understand here is that what he is teaching is not contrary to the law. In fact, Paul has referenced the law multiple times in chapter 3. He has referred to Abraham; he has referred to even specific texts within the actual commandments themselves: "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree," and other things like that. He has shown through the law its purpose and shown how it makes and shows us all to be sinful. He's been quoting it, using it, and his entire point is to show that the law itself teaches you that you cannot be saved by the law.

Paul is saying to these people that my teaching is not some new, novel teaching that has just arisen, but rather it is the logical and biblical unfolding of God's redemptive plan that has come to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and now we understand that the law was all pointing to this moment in history. And so, what Paul basically says to them, "Okay,

so you desire to be under the law, come on, let's see what the law says." You're saying, "Come and see," basically, who's really blind to the law. They would be arguing that Paul has no idea what the law says, he's botching it and destroying it and undermining it, and he's saying, "Okay, let's come and see really what the law says about the law. Who's really blind? Who's the ones that have eyes and see not? Who are those that have ears and hear not?" Paul says to them, essentially, that it reminds us in 2 Corinthians 3 that even to this day, when Moses is read, that is the law, there is a veil that is over their hearts. And Paul says, "Let's see who's really blind in regards to what the law teaches about the law."

You see, what had happened here, the Judaizers and the Galatians, being influenced by them, were kind of confessing a mastery of the law but missing the law's message. They approached the law as legalists but did not see what story the law was trying to tell. That in the commandments was a pointing to Christ. They saw the particulars and got caught up in the particulars, but they did not see the pictures of Jesus in the law. They were so concerned about observing ceremonies, days, and months, and years, and all these things, but they did not see that those ceremonies pointed to our sin-bearing Savior, who died to accomplish and to fulfill the law. And Paul says, "Let's look at the law then and see who it is, as it were, that is really blind. Do you want to live under the law? Let's see what the law says."

Now, Paul does this in a method that we are not so familiar with, which has risen to a lot of controversy regarding this passage. But it's a method that is scriptural, and the reason why I say that is because the Bible says it's scriptural. Look what it says in verse number 22, or 21. He encourages us to hear the law, which is God's Word. This is a biblical thing he's about to display. It says in verse 22, "For it is written." So he's going to the authority of Scripture to make his case. Verse 27, he says it again, "For it is written." And in verse number 30, he gives his final blow, as it were, by saying, "What does the Scripture say?" And so, immediately, we must understand that Paul is not imposing his own views on the Scripture. Neither is he twisting the Scripture. Rather, he's developing an argument from the Scripture in order to make his point to those who wanted to live under the law. He's developing an argument that is rooted in Old Testament Scripture, historical true accounts. And therefore, Paul is a believer—listen to this—in the authority of Scripture. Paul is not saying, "You who desire to live under the law, hear what I say." Well, obviously, he's under the inspiration, so he probably could say that. But what he is saying is, "Hear what the Word says," affirming the authority of Scripture. Something we must take away from this.

But his method is not only scriptural; it is also spiritual. He understands that when you read stories in the Old Testament and historical accounts,

that they're not just about the accounts themselves, but God is trying to communicate spiritual truths. Truths that may not seem so clear to the eye at first sight, but nonetheless are consistent with God's revelation, which God is teaching us about His character, about what He expects from us. And therefore, the truth is not always immediately so obvious, but it is nonetheless there and there by the Holy Spirit.

And so, Paul uses what is commonly known as a typology, and he also uses an allegory. Now, the typology is found in verse 21 to 23 of this passage. Have a look with me there in this text. He says, "For it is written, Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman, the other by the free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the free woman through the promise." First and foremost, Paul is talking about two historical sons and two people that existed. He's talking about Abraham; he's talking about Ishmael; he's talking about Isaac; he's talking about a real free woman called Sarah and a real woman called Hagar that were in the Genesis account. And he is saying that these people foreshadow; they point us to something that we are struggling with here in the Galatian situation. They point us to, as a type, as a shadow, as a foreshadowing to the struggle against those who are of the law and those who are of the Spirit and of the promise and of faith. This is seen, for example, in the Exodus account when Moses led the children through the Red Sea into the wilderness. This was a type and shadow of the salvation which was to come in our Lord Jesus Christ, and many other types of salvation, as it were, in foreshadowing this. So that served as a lesson, as a type, as a picture to the deliverance that was to come in Christ, as it were, the prophet like unto Moses that will lead His people out of their sin, through into salvation, the land of the promise.

And so, in the same way, Paul helps us see this. The sacrifices are another kind of type. So when you see a lamb being slain in the Old Testament, you shouldn't be thinking to yourself, "Oh, poor lamb, what's going on here, there's these animals." You should be thinking of Christ, the Lamb slain for our sins from the foundation of the world. And so, Paul here says, "Okay, in Abraham and in Hagar and in Sarah and in Ishmael and Isaac is a foreshadowing of what we're seeing here playing out in the life of the Galatian Church and through the struggle between those who are of the works of the law and of faith."

And then Paul uses an allegory. Now, this gets a little bit more tricky for us because now Paul says something totally outright that is entirely figurative, that you wouldn't get from the Genesis account. He says something like this: "These women are two covenants and two mountains." You're like, "Man, how on earth am I gonna read Genesis chapter 15 and 16 and 17 and find out and work out that these women are two mountains and two

covenants? Mate, they're women. What do you mean? There's a bond-woman and a free woman. I get that, the types and the shadows. But what are you doing here, Paul? Are you just imposing your views on the text of Scripture?" No, Paul is not teaching us to do that either. What Paul is showing us here is that when you root your doctrine in the biblical text and then you go to make applications, you can, as it were, allegorize and bring to bear on those applications, but the real root meaning is arising from the text itself and coming out in through the type, and then Paul takes the allegory to drive it home, as it were, with the application.

And this is what we'll see as we go through this passage. But Paul is using the allegory, as it were, to draw their attention to the application and to employ, as it were, their imaginations in helping them understand and make clear the point that he's trying to get at, which is consistent with the type, which is consistent with the message that is found in the historical account.

Now, you say to yourself, "What is the historical account? I am NOT familiar with Genesis. I haven't read it yet, perhaps you're a new believer, or you have not yet read through the Bible." Well, the account is regarding God's promise to a man who was 75 years old, and his wife was 10 years younger than him, was 65 years old, in Genesis chapter 12, and God said to Abraham, "Get up, go out of your country, go out from your kindred, and I'm going to make of you a great nation." But the problem was they had no children, and Abraham is obviously just thinking, "Okay, I'm gonna follow God," and he goes out, and he goes out, and years pass, and Abraham is about 80 years old now in Genesis chapter number 15, and he still has no children. And God comes to him with the promise again and says, "I'm gonna make of you a great nation, Abraham. I'm going to bless your offspring," and he's thinking, "I don't have any offspring." And Abraham says to God in chapter 15, verse number 2 of Genesis, he says, "Look, you have given me no offspring," and then he says this, "indeed one born in my house is my heir, Eliezer, my servant. He was born in my household; surely that's the heir you're talking about." But God says to him, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."

Now it's getting complicated. "I'm 80 years old, my wife's about 70, and we still don't have any children, and God is saying that it's not some figurative thing about the fact that it's going to be through my Eliezer, my servant, but it's going to be through my own body." And time goes on, and Abraham now is 99 years old—sorry, he's not 99 yet, he's about 85 now—and time gets on, and Abraham starts scratching his head, "So it's not Eliezer, he's coming from my own body, aha, Sarah says, 'I got an idea, here's the idea.'" Sarah says, "I have an Egyptian servant in my household whose name is

Hagar. Abraham, we're getting old, go to this Hagar, have a child with her, and you know, it's probably through Hagar that the promise will come. I guess it's still from your own body, right, you know?" And so Abraham's like, "Oh, good idea," that's when you shouldn't listen to your wife, and Abraham goes into Hagar, and Hagar falls pregnant, and she has a son whose name is Ishmael, who is the son, yes, of Abraham.

Abraham is about 86 years old when Ishmael is born, and then Genesis 16 goes to Genesis chapter 17, and Abraham's now 99 years old, and guess what? God comes to Abraham again, says, "Abraham, I'm going to give you a son from your own body," and Abraham says, "That your son will not be just from your own body, it's going to also be from Sarah. This is what I really mean about the offspring; this is what I was referring to." And he says, "As for Sarah, your wife, I will bless her and give you a son by her," and Abraham falls on his face, the Bible says, and laughed in his heart, and he says this, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is 99—90 years old, bear a child?" And Abraham said this to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before you!" Then God said, "No, Sarah, your wife, shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. My covenant," he says in verse 21, "I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." In other words, "Abraham, believe me. Isaac will be his name," and surely enough, that time next year, Abraham and Sarah, at a hundred years old and ninety years old, had a son by the name of Isaac.

And Paul refers to this account in the law to make his point, and he doesn't go through all I went through to explain, but he expects his readers to understand this because they understand the Bible, and they understand the law, but they're missing it, right? They're missing, as it were, they're focusing on the trees and missing the forest. Look what it says here in verse number 22, this is how he summarizes it. He says, "What is written? Abraham had two sons," and you better know the story, but now you do, but that's how it is. He had two sons, one Ishmael, one Isaac. Now, Ishmael was born, as the text says, by a bondwoman according to the flesh. This is the point. The point is that what Abraham did was not according to the promise and according to the Spirit and according to true faith in God and the promises of God. What Abraham did was that he acted in accordance to the flesh; he took matters into his own hands and went and tried to get to the fruit of the promise without waiting on God, without depending upon God. He took matters, as it were, into his own hands, and who was born to him was Ishmael, who was the son of the bondwoman, the servant woman, yes, by natural means, but as in they both were by natural means, but one was a supernatural birth, you could say, but rather also sinful and according to the flesh.

And Isaac, he says in this passage, was by a free woman, Sarah, born by the promise, born by the Spirit, as he says later on, according to the Spirit, through the promise. And Paul says there is typological significance here for us to learn. He says, "These two sons are two types of responses to how people respond to the promise of God in the gospel through Jesus Christ our Lord. There are those who are like sons of the faithless, that they, by their own human efforts and by their own obedience to the law, are seeking to try to earn favor with God and be acceptable in the sight of God. They are failing to depend on the promises of God that are yes and amen in Jesus Christ the Lord. And then there are those that are sons of faith in the promise. These are the ones who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the ones that do not trust in their own arm or their own flesh. These are the ones that don't try and take matters into their own hands regarding the promises of God, but they trust that what God has said is true, and I can bank my life upon it."

These are those who are saved by grace through faith, and what Paul points out in this passage is that they are the ones who are the true heirs of the promise. They are the true sons of Abraham. They are the true children, as it were, of Isaac. They are the ones that represent the children of the free that have been set free from the bondage of the law and of sin and of death and of hell and of destruction, and have been brought into the liberty of the children of God because God has come to them in the Spirit and by the promise and by the gospel, and they have trusted in Him. These are the ones that are true children of the promise, sons of divine power. Isaac was an impossibility, humanly speaking, and so is salvation apart from Jesus Christ. You get the picture here: the only way that a sinner has everlasting life is by faith in the promises of God and not by his obedience to the law of God.

Therefore, true sons of Abraham, true believers in Jesus, those who really belong to God, are those who believe in Christ alone for salvation. They are saved by an impossibility. Remember the disciples of Jesus: "Impossible, then, for people to be saved?" Yes, with man it is impossible, but with God, all things are possible. So in the narrative, as it's told and picked up in Romans, Paul says that even though that she was good as dead, her womb, everything like she's 90 years old, yet they believed in God that He was able to work and to bring life into that dead womb, and He did. And that's exactly what happens in the gospel, isn't it? What are the chances of a sinner keeping the law of God perfectly and inheriting eternal life? Zero. Impossible. What is the chance of a sinner being made right with God? Impossible, apart from the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ and believing in Christ. This is why it's called "according to the Spirit," according to the promise, it's the power of the Holy Spirit that gives life to the dead.

Paul says, "These two sons, these two women, teach us something," and he shifts from the historical account to the present account happening at Galatia, telling them why this is important. Look at what it says in verse number 24. He says, "Which things are symbolic," meaning they have symbolic meaning for us now, explaining the relationship between the Judaizers and current present Israel and Jerusalem with the Church of Jesus Christ. He says, "This is part of it; this is symbolic. For these are two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai, which is the old covenant, which gives birth to what? Bondage." So the law yet produces children, but it produces children like Ishmael and in bondage, doesn't it? Okay, "which is Hagar," represented by Hagar. Verse 25, "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia," so you get the whole connection here with the Old Testament, "and corresponds to the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children."

So he says, "Okay, this has allegorical meaning for us. Let's develop the picture here. Let's take the principle found within the text of a man that sought to fulfill the promises of God by his own works and not trusting in God, and let's compare the two sons, and now let's take it into our experience. Let's take it into our time, and let's try and work out what this is saying here." And he's saying, "This is what it means for us. Here's what it means for us: There are two kinds of children in the world—those that are in bondage under the law and those that are children that are promised by faith in Jesus Christ. And they have two mothers. The two mothers: there are those that, from the fruit of their womb, through Judaizing, through false teaching, through belief that a man is justified by the works of the law and not by faith in Jesus Christ, they are mothers, and those that produce children of bondage. And guess who the children of bondage are in this passage? The Judaizers and the Galatians that are beginning to believe that if they go down that path, they will be left in bondage, slaves, not sons."

And then Paul makes the most devastating claim, probably in all of Scripture. If there is ever a time where you could be like, "Whoa, this is offensive," this is really offensive. Look what he says in verse number 25, "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia." This Egyptian woman—remember who was enslaved in Egypt? Children of Israel, they didn't like the Egyptians, right? "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai." Oh, what happened on Mount Sinai? Yeah, it was in Arabia, the desert, but hey, that's where we got the law from. That's where God spoke to us. "Okay, this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Yeah, Paul says, "You know those people that are offering sacrifices in the temple there in Jerusalem right now, that are dressed in all their garments, and they're doing things in order to satisfy the justice and righteousness of God, thinking that Messiah has not yet come, or that



Jesus is not the fulfillment of the promise, or that they are the true children of Abraham because to them was given the law?" He says, "You know those people right there? They are children of Hagar, in bondage, and they are not the children of Abraham. They are children of Abraham, yes, but they are spiritually children of Ishmael. They are not true heirs because they do not yet believe in Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior. They are outside of the blessing until they come to Jesus Christ, until they trust in Him who is the true seed of Abraham." Devastating claim.

They are in bondage. The Judaizers are in bondage. They aren't the children; they are the children of Abraham, yes, but they are spiritually children of Ishmael. They are not true heirs because they do not yet believe in Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior. They are outside of the blessing until they come to Jesus Christ, until they trust in Him who is the true seed of Abraham. Devastating claim. They are in bondage. The Judaizers are in bondage. They aren't the children; they are the children of Abraham, yes, but they are spiritually children of Ishmael. They are not true heirs because they do not yet believe in Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior. They are outside of the blessing until they come to Jesus Christ, until they trust in Him who is the true seed of Abraham.

And then he says, "That's the old covenant which genders and produces bondage." And then he goes in the next part, by implication—he doesn't mention Sarah's name, and he doesn't even mention the Covenant's name. This gets tricky for us now, but it is quite obvious when we think about it well enough. Look at this in verse 26, "But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all." So he understands that there is this other mother who is the mother of us all, that corresponds not to the earthly Jerusalem but to the heavenly Jerusalem. And he's saying, "She is the mother of us all. This is the one who corresponds to Sarah, if we could say. This is the one who corresponds to the Abrahamic Covenant, now fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ, in the new covenant." And he's saying, "This is the child of the promise, and we, therefore, who believe in Him, we who are born from heaven, we who are sons of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ, we are those who are true heirs and Isaac's children, the children of God and of Christ." That's a glorious claim. He's essentially saying, "You see these Gentiles that Peter is afraid to sit with on the table in chapter number two because in case the Judaizers might see that he's sitting with them, so he segregates them from the body, as it were, and causes a separation in the church?" He says, "You know, that's all backward. The true sons of Abraham, they can always eat together in fellowship and harmony, of those that belong to Christ and united to Him by faith. These are God's heavenly children, no longer marked by circumcision of the flesh but circumcision of the hearts, no longer those that are in bondage by the law but the children of the free, no longer those that are

struggling in their own flesh to attain favor with God but those who are resting in the promises of God and by the Spirit have been brought to life from the dead. God has done an impossible work, and He has brought the Gentiles into the promises, and it is glorious, both Jew and Gentile."

And Paul says, "These are the sons of Abraham." Now, hang on, Paul could ask your question here. "We are part of the Jerusalem above, you're saying, but what about Israel?" Well, Paul makes a quotation here from Isaiah 54:1. It's important for us to understand this quotation. Look at verse 27 with me. It says, "For it is written, 'Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; for the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband.'" Now, this cannot be referring to Sarah because Sarah has a husband, Abraham. So what is Paul referring to here? Well, we heard from Isaiah 53 this morning, didn't we? And Isaiah 53 comes before Isaiah 54, and these are the servant songs. And in Isaiah 53, we are told about a Messiah, a Savior, God's servant, God's Son, that would come. He would be rejected, despised, but through his death, he will see his offspring; he will have children, as it were. They'll be born from above, from the heavenly Jerusalem. They will make up his people, those whose transgressions have been forgiven, whose sins have been done away with because he will intercede for them because he will bear their iniquities. And by the end of that chapter, what you have is a son, the Son of God, having, as it were, through his death, a family of those that belong to him. And in verse number 54, we hear this, "Sing, O barren woman, you who don't have a husband." Who's the barren woman? The barren woman is Israel. The Bible says that she was forsaken of the Lord, but not forever. She will be divorced; God has divorced her, but not forever. He has established a covenant of peace, and he has established even a new covenant, and he will bring her into it.

And Paul takes this passage here and he talks about us, Jew and Gentile, belonging to the people of God as sons of Abraham, and he essentially tells in the face of the Judaizers, saying, "This work has begun. The Servant has come, the Servant has died, and He has begun redeeming His people—to the Jew first and also to the Greek. He has redeemed His people; He is saving His people. But He is not just saving His people, Jewish people, but He is gathering together people from every kindred, tribe, tongue, and nation. He's restoring the forsaken. He is gathering together in one body a people for His name that will praise Him for all eternity because He has redeemed them by His arm and by His strength." And He's saying to the church, both Jew and Gentile, "Sing, O barren woman, because you've been born from above, and God is restoring His people."

Now, this is what Acts chapter 15 talks about when James says that the residue of the Gentiles shall come in, and God will set up His tabernacle,

David. God has begun the work, and He is not done yet. There is a day where He is coming again, and "all will look upon Him whom they pierced," and many Jews will be brought into the family of God. They will become true sons of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ as they yield to Messiah and see Him who is King of kings and who is Lord of Lords. But Paul wants the church to know the work has begun.

Paul makes himself clear that this people, the heavenly people, will have so many children because God will restore her. You can read Isaiah 54 and onward in your own time to look at that. But look at the conclusion he said in verse 28, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise." But as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Paul makes himself clear: "We, brethren, true Gentile, the church, as Isaac was, are children of the promise. We are the sons of Abraham, the true children of the promise, not those in bondage."

And therefore, he goes on to say, "It is no surprise then that you are being persecuted. It has always been that those under the law, bondage of the law, hate those who are free. They charge them with antinomianism; they charge them with freedom. They say, 'You guys, you don't care about God and obedience to His commandments.' They just understand the liberty that they have in Christ, and they're not under the bondage anymore, and they find reason to accuse them and find reason to destroy them, and they say, 'Yeah, that's exactly consistent because you know why? What happened? Ishmael, when he was 13 years old and little Isaac was born, they were playing, and Ishmael was mocking little Isaac, and Sarah saw that, and she said to Abraham, 'Get out, get that woman out of here, her and her son. Send them away.'"

Now, God's merciful; He made promises to Ishmael and promised to bless him. But you see the point: the point is that those that are in bondage hate those that are free, and therefore they persecute them. And then Paul says, "You could say to Paul then, 'What do we do with this, Paul? What do you want us to do with this?'" Well, this is what he says, verse 30 says, "This is what you should do with this information: Nevertheless, what does the Scripture say? You should do what the Bible says. What does the Bible say, Paul? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.'"

How should the church respond to the bondwoman and her son that is giving birth to children of bondage in her midst? Paul says, "What you do is what the Scripture says, and you cast her out with her son. You fulfill the word of chapter 1, verses 8 and 9: 'If any man preach any other gospel which I have not preached to you, let him be accursed.' Those who preach

bondage, those who preach legalism, those who preach law works that bind men's hearts under condemnation and sin and degradation, have no place in the house of God. They can go elsewhere, and it doesn't matter if they bear the name Christian. If they preach another gospel, let him be accursed. It doesn't matter how long historically they've been around; if they preach another gospel, let him be accursed. Why? Because the freedom of the children of God has been purchased for by the blood of Jesus, and it's a fight that we have to fight and should not let go of easily."

It amazes me how many churches today that proclaim the name of Jesus and proclaim the truth of the gospel that are willing to rub shoulders and join hands with people that preach another gospel, all in the name of unity. Paul says, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son." "Oh, but they break bread like we break bread, and they baptize like we baptize, and they're called Catholic, and they're called—listen, let me tell you this: if they preach any other gospel, they have no place in the church of God. You can befriend them, you can try and reach them, you can try and tell them the truth about Jesus, you can try and help them be free from their own bondage, but they are not to have place in the church of God and be received until there is a repentance and a turning from that false belief and coming into the true liberty of the children of God."

Why? Because for freedom, Christ has set us free. He died so that we don't have to be in bondage to the law, and therefore we ought to fight for that freedom, as we look at it next week. And so, Paul says, "Cast her out; there's no place." And therefore, what we learn from this text of Scripture, just in closing, is this: You and I must fight for the freedom which was purchased for us at the cross of Jesus Christ, and we should never give it up, no matter what it costs us. For you to go back under bondage, no matter what it cost you, cost Jesus the blood of Jesus Christ. You'd be free; live in freedom, walk in freedom.

Romans chapter 1 says that we're dead to the law through the body of Christ, that we should then live and serve not in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of the Spirit. And therefore, we need to guard our hearts from veering away from believing in the promise of God. This is where it all begins: unbelief creeps in when we doubt the promises of God, and then we start trusting in our own strength, and we start to take matters into our own hands, just like Abraham. And we look at our situation, and we say, "It's too hard, God. I'm a hundred years old, as it were, and the promise seems so far away." God reminds us here: He fulfills His promise.

You know, when I trust in my own self, I feel more—I feel kind of more secure because I've got a handle on my life. I feel righteous when I do this, and I don't need to trust in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I've got this.

No, you've got bondage. We must come and continue to come as the people of God to God through Jesus Christ, not by human effort. Let me tell you this: there's nothing you can do now before God that will make you any more acceptable in the sight of God if you're a believer in Jesus Christ. Let that sink in for a minute. There is nothing you can do for God right now that will make you any more acceptable in the sight of God, but rather faith in Jesus Christ, the salvation we have in faith in Him. Nothing. Nothing. But we let that creeping thought come into our minds, and we become legalists and Judaizing, and we start to think, "No, I got this. I'm climbing this mountain. I'm doing well." And then God shows you your sinfulness, and you fall into sin, and you're like, "I'm done. I give up. I can't be accepted by God now. That's too hard." And God reminds us, "You're in bondage. What are you doing? My Son has set you free. He's given you righteousness that didn't arise in and from you, but it's His righteousness. You're accepted in the beloved. What more do you want? Sing, rejoice, because you've been saved, you've been restored, freed, forgiven."

And so we must keep coming to God by faith, trusting in Him, leaning upon Him, not trusting in the works of our own hands, but trusting in His precious promises. And therefore, we must understand that if God tells us to cast out the bondwoman and her son, we must remember that if we are the children of the free, He will never cast me out. "He that comes to Me," Jesus said, "I will in no wise cast out." And you have an assurance and a boldness before God today because of the blood of Jesus, because of the truth of Jesus, because of the righteousness of Christ, that you can come to God through Christ and ask Him boldly at the throne of grace. And you can do that because of what He has done, and you have the promise that He will never cast you out.

Let me ask you this: Are you hearing the law this morning? Oh, no, I'm not talking about the particular commandments. I'm asking you, do you hear the Lord's testimony? Are you hearing and seeing the pictures and the purpose of the law? Do you see Jesus as you read the law? Has the Spirit opened your eyes, given you a heart, given you light to understand that it is God who saves and God alone through His Son? Or have you missed the forest for the trees? Hear the law, hear the prophets this morning, hear the Apostles, hear Jesus Christ, that there is no other salvation but in His name. And come to Him, believing the promises of God. "My sin is too great," you say. Listen, if it wasn't too hard for God to give Sarah a child through Abraham at a hundred and ninety years old, then it's not too hard for God to give you new life by the Spirit. Believe the promises of God. Look at the cross of Jesus; there is the promise of God's forgiveness, there is the promise of God's mercy. Flee to Him, run to Him, trust in Him alone for your salvation this morning. Why would you live in bondage, O house of Israel? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.

Trust in His blood. Come not to Mount Sinai, on to Hagar, but come to the heavenly Jerusalem through Jesus Christ.

And I'll read this text in closing: "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

You're a believer in Jesus; you have been brought into the heavenly assembly through the blood of Jesus Christ, that mediator of a new and better covenant.