



Sunday, December 3, 2017
Pastor Don Denyes

Introduction to Galatians 4:4-7

One of the unique things about Christianity is that God does not remain distant. God is not aloof or abstract—unknowable and unable to be appeased. Instead, God inserts Himself into our world. Well, really, it's His world, but it's our world in the sense that we have messed it up because of our sin and needed Him to come into the world so that we could be saved. Not only that, but when Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to come and dwell in and among us to secure our salvation.

One of the great illustrations Scripture uses to help us understand what it means to be saved is the illustration of family. When Jesus came and taught us about who God is, He identified Him as Father. Not only that, but in various parables and in the teaching of the apostles, it becomes abundantly clear that God delights in calling us His children. Now, as His children we want to serve Him, but we are not first and foremost servants, we are first and foremost His children, with all the rights and privileges thereof. That is what makes Christmas so remarkable—God entering the world through His Son so that we could become part of His family.

Context

This paragraph in Galatians comes at the end of a section where Paul has just been outlining how Gentiles receive the blessing of Abraham through their union with Christ. In fact, the paragraph (which begins at 4:1) almost mirrors the previous paragraph (3:26-29) in content and emphasis. Thus, this is a very important point that Paul wishes to make: Jesus came into the world so that we (Jews and Gentiles) could experience the blessing He promised so long ago to Abraham—that in Christ we can all be adopted as members of God's household through faith alone, not through ethnicity or by doing good works.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

“The Perfect Gift”

Read Galatians 4:4-7

God sent His Son to secure our redemption

- Christmas
- Son
- Timing
 - Universal language (Greek)
 - Widespread peace and prosperity (Pax Romana)
 - Infrastructure (all roads lead to Rome)
 - Spiritual hunger (disillusionment with pagan gods)
 - Sir Robert Anderson (on Daniel 9:25-26)
 - $7 + 62 (69) \times 7 = 483$ sevens (years)
 - $483 (360 \text{ days}) = 173,880$ days
 - Decree from Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem (445 B.C.)
 - $445 \text{ B.C.} - 173,880 \text{ days} = 32 \text{ A.D.}$
 - Jesus was crucified around 30 A.D.

God sent His Spirit to confirm our adoption

- Pentecost
- Trinity
- Heir

Discuss

- 1) How would you explain to someone what “the real meaning of Christmas” is?

- 2) Pastor Don talked about how at Christmas time we celebrate Christ’s first advent, when He was born in Bethlehem, but that we should also look forward during this time to His second advent, when He returns to earth to judge all people. How should Christ’s second advent, which is yet in the future, shape the way we live in the present?

- 3) Jesus’ first advent came at just the right time. According to God’s providence, He orchestrated the events of human history to make sure Jesus was sent at just the right time. How does this truth help us think through the timing of events in our lives?

- 4) Pastor Don quoted Charles Spurgeon as saying, “the change in our position [as God’s adopted children] should mean change in our disposition.” What should our disposition be as God’s children? How does your day-to-day disposition match with that?

- 5) Do you relate to God in a personal, intimate way (where you want to spend time with Him just because of who He is)? Or is your relationship to Him more transactional (giving and receiving without much personal relationship)?