

Living Up to the Promise

Scripture: Galatians 4:19-31

(06-21-26 Pastor Tony Hao)

The Galatian believers had tasted the beautiful freedom of God's grace. Yet, false teachers—the Judaizers—had slipped into the church. They convinced them that grace was not enough. They told them they needed to keep the Old Testament law and rituals to truly be saved. To snap them out of this trap, Paul uses an allegorical argument from their own history.

Paul uses the story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen. 16-17) as an illustration to contrast the child born into slavery, Ishmael, and the child born from the promise, Isaac. Paul says Hagar and Ishmael stand for the old covenant, the law, which produced slaves. But, Paul says, we have been set free. We do not become children of God by the law, by the old covenant, but by the promise of God, by the new covenant. We are not saved by obedience to the law, but by faith in the promise of God.

If you have trusted solely in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, you are a child of Sarah. You are born of the Spirit. You are an heir to every single promise of God. Stop trying to buy what has already been paid for. Throw out the heavy yoke of legalism, rest completely in His finished work, and walk confidently in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. How does Isaac's miraculous birth picture a believer's birth by the Holy Spirit? How are we miracle children (vv. 21-31)?
2. In what sense does the gospel bring freedom from slavery? What does it mean to live as a child in a relationship not enslaved to religion?
3. Why does the truth of the gospel often meet opposition from those who claim to be religious?
4. In verse 19 we see Paul's passion for the spiritual growth of the church in Galatia. In what ways can you foster that kind of love for fellow believers?