

Trinity Lutheran Church

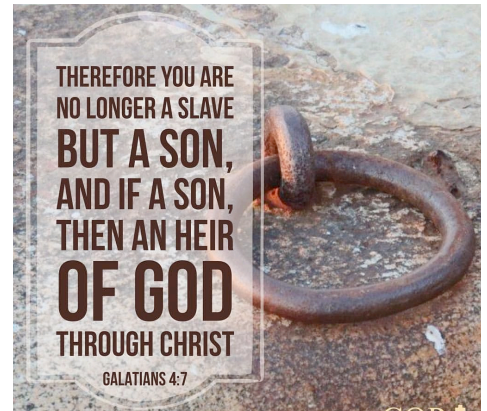
Norman, Oklahoma – www.tlcnorman.org

The Book of Galatians

Theme: “The True Gospel You Have Received”

Date: 8-21-22

Lesson: 22 - Chapter 4:7-11



TEXT AND STUDY

(7) So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through **God**. (8) Formerly, when you did not know **God**, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. (9) But now that you have come to know **God**, or rather to be known by **God**, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? (10) You observe days and months and seasons and years! (11) I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

(Is 1:13,14; 37:19; Jer 2:11; 5:7; 16:20;

Rom 1:28; 8:17; 14:5; 1 Cor 1:21; 8:3-5; 12:2; 15:34; 1 Th 3:5; 4:5; 2 Th 1:8)

Luther's Commentary – Vol. 26

If a son, then an heir through Christ.

Whoever is a son must be an heir as well. For merely by being born he deserves to be an heir. No work and no merit brings him the inheritance, but only his birth. Thus he obtains the inheritance in a purely passive, not in an active way; that is, just his being born, not his producing or working or worrying, makes him an heir. He does not do anything toward his being born but merely lets it happen.

Therefore we come to these eternal goods—the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, the glory of the resurrection, and eternal life—not actively but passively. Nothing whatever interferes here; faith alone takes hold of the offered promise. Therefore just as in society a son becomes an heir merely by being born, so here faith alone makes men **sons of God, born of the Word**, which is the divine womb in which we are conceived, carried, born, reared, etc.

By this birth and this patience or passivity which makes us **Christians we also become sons and heirs**. But being heirs, we are free of death and the devil, and we have righteousness and eternal life. This comes to us in a purely passive way; for we do not do anything, but we let ourselves be made and formed as a new creation through faith in **the Word**.

Through Christ.

Paul always has **Christ** on his lips and cannot forget Him. For he foresaw that in the world, even among those who claimed to be Christians, nothing would be less well known than **Christ and His Gospel**. Therefore he continually inculcates **Him** and presents **Him** to our view. Whenever he speaks about grace, righteousness, the promise, sonship, and the inheritance, he always makes a practice of adding “in” or “through” **Christ**, at the same time taking a sidelong look at the Law, as though he were saying: “We do not obtain these things through the Law and its works, much less through our own abilities or the works of human tradition, but through **Christ alone**.”

Or rather to be known by God.

God still knows you. As a matter of fact, our knowing is more passive than active; that is, it is more a matter of being known than of knowing. Our “activity” is to **permit God to do His work in us**; He gives the **Word**, and when we take hold of this by the faith **that God gives**, we are born as **sons of God**. Therefore the statement, “You have come to be **known by God**,” means “You have been visited by the Word; you have been granted faith and **the Holy Spirit**, by whom you have been renewed.”

Therefore even with the words “You have come to be **known by God**” he is disparaging the righteousness of the Law and denying that we obtain a **knowledge of God** because of the worthiness of our works. “For no one knows **the Father except the Son** and anyone to **whom the Son** chooses to reveal Him” (Matt. 11:27). And again (Is. 53:11): “By His knowledge shall He make many to be accounted righteous, for He shall bear their iniquities.” Therefore our knowledge about **God is** purely passive.

Here someone may say: “If the Galatians sinned in observing days and seasons, why is it not sinful for you to do the same?” I reply: We observe the Lord’s Day, Christmas, Easter, and similar holidays in a way that is completely free. We do not burden consciences with these observances; nor do we teach, as did the false apostles and as do the papists, that they are necessary for justification or that we can make satisfaction for our sins through them.

But their purpose is that everything be done in the church in an orderly way and without confusion, so that external harmony may not be disturbed; for in the spirit we have another kind of harmony. Thus it happened once that Victor, the Roman pontiff, excommunicated all the churches of Asia for no other reason than that they celebrated Easter at another time than the Church of Rome observed it. Irenaeus rebukes this action of Victor’s, and it was surely worthy of rebuke. For it was the utmost madness to hand the churches of the East over to the devil on account of such a trifle.

Most of all, however, we observe such holidays to preserve **the ministry of the Word**, so that the people may gather on certain days and at certain seasons to hear **the Word**, to learn to **know God**, to have Communion, to pray together for every need, and to thank **God** for His spiritual and temporal blessings. And I believe that this was the chief reason why the fathers instituted the Lord’s Day, Easter, Pentecost, etc.

LIFE APPLICATION

You are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through **God**.

So what ought to be your value system and worldview,
while living each day on earth?