



# MONDAY 9 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

## Read: Galatians 4:1-7

### **Plug In...**

Paul compares and contrasts a son with a slave. A son, while young, is comparable to a slave – they both have to do what they're told. The difference is, the son, although young and seeming in the same position as the slave, is actually an heir so things will change for him in the future.

Verse 3, Paul now says that the Jews, while underage, under the Law, were in no better position than Gentile pagans. Both Jews and Gentiles are subject to the forces that drive and entrap a person in sin. Here called, 'elemental forces' (the pagan term for spirits that control destinies, something like a full-on belief in astrology). Paul continues to show that the Law doesn't save, it exposes sin, and reveals the reality that sinful forces control humans, which condemn sinful mankind to a curse (3:10). Into such a humanity, God steps as the Son, born under the curse of the Law, to redeem those of us condemned.

### **Chew It Over...**

The event of Jesus hung on a tree (3:13) changes things; graduates us from slave to child of God. While sinful forces enslaved us, the Son redeemed us, thus adopting us. God considers us heirs of the promise; set to receive everything.

One of the things that has changed is that prayer is no mere speaking to God. Prayer is a child speaking to the father and the father responding.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

*Abba*, Father. Start your prayer today with all that this phrase embodies.



TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

## Read: Galatians 4:8-II

### **Plug In...**

“But now that you know God – or rather are known by God...”

### **Chew It Over...**

Galatians is fast paced, written quickly and intensely. With Paul’s rapid flow, he quickly does a sidestep to qualify the preceding statement. With all that Paul has explained about being young, enslaved, babysat, pagan, how significant is this brief qualification?

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Let the truths of our former state, the danger before the Galatians and us, and this qualifying statement shape your prayer today.



# WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

## Read: Galatians 4:12-20

### **Plug In...**

Throughout Galatians 3-4, Paul explains what is produced by the giving of the Spirit. Using the metaphor of a mother in labour pains, Paul agonises to see Christ formed in the Galatians. Previously, Paul resided with them and saw tangible evidence of the Spirit's fruit: they gathered around and helped him. Now Paul worries such manifestation has waned and he yearns to see the fruit of the Spirit appear in their lives again.

### **Chew It Over...**

In Galatians, what is the primary fruit of the Spirit? What does it look like? How do you know it when it is there?

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Who are you concerned about? Pray for them. Are there things you need to do? Pray that you labour for them. Do you lack concern? Pray that you have the heart of God's Spirit.



## THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

### Read: Galatians 4:21-31

#### Plug In...

Paul provides a contrast between two schemes. One leads to freedom, the other to slavery. He assembles this through sets of contrasts: two sons; two mothers, representing two covenants; two mountains, and two Jerusalems. Paul builds off the story of Abraham ([Genesis 15-17](#)). There, God promised Abraham a child through Sarah who would inherit the world. Only God could generate this for Sarah was barren and very old. Abraham intervenes on God and comes up with his own plan for producing an heir. He has a child through Sarah's slave woman. The verdict? That child cannot inherit the world for it was promised via Sarah. So, the child through the slave will never be more than a slave. [See: [Genesis 17:17-19](#).]

Pauls' point? Likewise, if a person looks at God's covenant at Sinai and tries to obey it by human muscle in order to inherit the promise, then they stay a slave. For, as Paul's explained through Galatians 2-3, human muscle is trapped in sin. The child that inherits the world is born by God's muscle – born from God's promise (v.24) via God's Spirit (v.29).

#### Chew It Over...

The language of 'born by the Spirit' is maintained throughout the New Testament. It captures the idea of no effort on our behalf. We do not contribute to our birth. We cannot contribute to our rebirth (*cf.* [John 1:12-13](#); [3:1-8](#)).

## **Prayer Suggestion**

See how important it is that we pray for God to give birth to those we will tell the gospel to. Pray for them now.



FRIDAY 13 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

## Read: Galatians 4:31

### Plug In...

In a massive culminating statement, Paul says you are 'children of God'.

### Chew It Over...

We are children of God by *grace*. We should be slaves. We should be stuck in our sinful nature and under judgement. Yet when we look at the cross we see that, in Jesus, God is gracious in saving us, and all without us having to do anything. It is not God being sentimental, but actually doing something that wipes out sin, achieves justice, opens relationship with God, releases the Spirit. God didn't have to do it, but we now have the identity of 'child of God' because of God acting in grace.

Think about how we talk about grace. Do we think of it as simply the idea that God forgives sin? Grace is God doing something about sin in Christ and applying the righteousness of Christ to us by the Holy Spirit. Grace is so connected to Christ, that we cannot talk about grace without talking about Christ.

### Prayer Suggestion

The more we understand that we are Christians by God's grace the more we will take prayer seriously. It is only as we see ourselves as needing total and complete dependence on Christ that we will call out to the Lord for all things. What in your life are you not praying about and have simply assumed or presumed? Call on the Lord over that today.



## WEEKEND 14-15 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

### *Grace Alone from Genesis 15-17*

#### **Plug In...**

The Reformers taught that our salvation is through *faith alone* (i.e. we add nothing to the effort of being saved). They also taught that it is *grace alone*. What is the difference? Where Paul has quoted from in [Galatians 4](#), [Genesis 15-17](#), helps us understand.

[Genesis 15](#) is a covenant ceremony that reiterates God's promise that Abraham will have a child through Sarah. Usually two people walk between the animals to signal that if either break the covenant then may they be torn in two. Here only God walks through, thereby committing that God does all the performing to keep this covenant. Abraham is to trust. This is faith alone.

[Genesis 16](#) records Abraham failing to trust and trying to bring about the promise himself. He produces a child through a slave girl Hagar. Abraham is an example of people being imperfect, sinful.

[Genesis 17](#) is God coming back to Abraham. God coming back to a man who has proven to be a sinful, untrusting person. God follows through on the promise He gave.

Faith alone is we contribute nothing; it is all God. Grace alone is we do not deserve salvation, but the Holy God, because He is gracious, comes to a sinful people and works out a sacrifice that doesn't treat sin lightly, but removes the necessity that we must pay for our sins.

The history of Israel is a story of grace to a sinful people: first Adam, then Abraham, then Israel. It is because of God's grace that He sends Jesus as the sacrifice.



## **Prayer Suggestion**

So many of the Psalms express Israel's basic identity as a people who had received God's grace (the blessing in [Numbers 6:24-26](#) shows this). You could choose one of the many Psalms to help you meditate and respond in prayer to God's grace. Here's a few: [Psalm 25](#), [Psalm 103](#), [Psalm 145](#).