

Who's Your Momma?

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[0 : 00] Last week we saw a pastor's heart as Paul continued to express concern about the Galatians being led astray by the Judaizers.

! Paul warned the Galatians that the false teachers were saying what the Galatians wanted to hear. Unlike those Judaizers, Paul demonstrated his love for the Galatians by telling them what they needed to hear.

In tonight's text, Paul reaches back into Jewish history for an example that demonstrates the difference between the Judaizers' false teaching and the true gospel.

Let's go ahead and read our text for tonight. That's Galatians chapter 4, verse 21, all the way through chapter 5, verse 1. Starting in Galatians 4, verse 21, Paul says, Now this may be interpreted allegorically.

These women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. She is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia.

[1 : 28] She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, Now you brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say?

Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman. So, brothers, we are not children of the slave, but of the free woman.

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Paul uses the example of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac to draw another contrast between true believers and the Judaizers.

The false teaching Judaizers and true believers all have Abraham as their spiritual father. The real difference between them is their spiritual mother. And that is the main idea.

[2 : 49] The Judaizers and true believers all have Abraham as their spiritual father. The real difference between them is their spiritual mother. And in this passage, Paul reminds the Galatians to remember who their spiritual mama is.

As we get into the lesson tonight, we'll see that all false religions have the same spiritual mother. And that spiritual mother is Hagar, Abraham's slave woman.

Hagar represents religions that are based upon human works. The only true religion, biblical Christianity, is based upon divine work, Jesus' atonement for believers' sins when Jesus died on the cross and rose again.

If every works-based religion has Hagar as its spiritual mother, that means Judaism also has Hagar as its spiritual mother. That statement would have been considered blasphemous by most Jews. But as we get into the text tonight, we'll see how Paul proves that even Judaism has Hagar as its spiritual mother. We're going to break tonight's text into three sections, starting with verses 21 through 23 of chapter 4.

[4 : 04] And in Galatians 4, 21 through 23, Paul provides some historical information. So historical information is the first thing that we'll look at. Let's read about that historical information by looking at verses 21 through 23 again.

Paul says there, Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman.

But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. For this section of the text, Paul assumed that his readers had considerable knowledge about Abraham's life and Abraham's calling.

The former Jews in the Galatian congregation certainly would have had that knowledge, and Paul likely taught the Gentiles in the congregation about Abraham when Paul was with the Galatians. Genesis chapters 12 through 21 document the significant events in Abraham's life. And we lack the time to cover those chapters in detail, but Warren Wiersbe used Abraham's age at the time of major events in Abraham's life to summarize the historical information.

[5 : 25] And you can find that summary on the last page of your handout. So let's look at those major events. When Abraham was 75, he was called by God to go to Canaan, and God promised him many descendants.

Both Abraham and his wife Sarah wanted children, but Sarah was barren. God was waiting until both of them were as good as dead before he would perform the miracle of sending them a son. When Abraham was 85, the promised son still had not yet arrived, and that's when Sarah became impatient. She suggested that Abraham marry Hagar, her servant, and try to have a son by her. And that act was legal in that society, but it was against the will of God. Abraham followed Sarah's suggestion and married Hagar. Then at 86, Hagar gets pregnant, and then Sarah gets jealous. Things become so difficult that Sarah throws Hagar out. God intervenes and sends Hagar back, and he promises to take care of both her and her son.

[6 : 40] And when Abraham is 86, Ishmael is born. When Abraham is 99, 99, God speaks to Abraham and promises again that he will have a son by Sarah, and God says to name the son Isaac.

Later, God appears again and reaffirms the promise to Sarah. Then when Abraham is 100, Isaac is born. But the arrival of Isaac creates a new problem because Ishmael now has a rival.

And for 14 years, Ishmael has been his father's only son, but now he has to deal with the presence of a rival, and it doesn't go very well.

By the time Abraham is 103, we arrive at the time when Isaac would be weaned. And when that happened, the Jews made a great celebration of it.

And at the feast, Ishmael starts to mock Isaac, and that creates more trouble in the home. There's only one solution to that, and that is a costly one, and that is that Hagar and Ishmael have to go.

[7 : 51] So Abraham sends them away because this is what the Lord tells him to do. And we didn't look at the Scripture references on all of those, but your handout has the Scripture references there if you want to go back and check me out later.

So Paul's going to use those major events in Abraham's life to prove that following Judaism is unnecessary for Christians, and we can apply his arguments to every works-based religion. Paul's approach shows evidence of his own intelligence and of divine inspiration. Think about what the Judaizers had been telling the people.

The Judaizers were saying that to be saved, people must follow Judaism and believe in Christ. Paul is going to dismantle the Judaizers' argument by using events from Jewish history itself.

Look again at what Paul says in Galatians 4.21. He says there, Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?

[9 : 02] Normally the term law referred to the whole of the Old Testament, but here the law refers particularly to the Pentateuch, the first five books of Moses. And the point Paul makes by drawing an analogy from Moses' writing is that the law can never be a means of salvation.

The law is instead the way of spiritual and moral bondage. Paul suggests that the Judaizers and the Christians who have been misled by them look carefully at the law that they so highly touted.

He says, in effect, are you willing to listen to what the law really says? Jesus used a similar approach with the Jewish leaders on several occasions.

In the Sermon on the Mount, after declaring unequivocally that he did not come to abolish God's law, Jesus nevertheless warned the legalistic practices of the scribes and Pharisees would never qualify a person for entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount was to show that no person is able in his own power to fulfill the holy demands of the law, the first of which is a righteous and perfect heart.

[10 : 17] Then later, when the priests and scribes rebuked Jesus for accepting the title Son of David, ascribed to him by the Palm Sunday crowd, Jesus had a sharp rebuke.

And remember, that crowd included many children. Jesus reminded the religious leaders of a well-known saying from their own scriptures on which they claimed to be the supreme authorities.

Have you not read, he asked derisively, out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies, you have prepared praise. So here in Galatians 4.21, Paul shows that he's willing to fight the Judaizers' arguments using the Judaizers' own ground rules.

He's willing to see what the law really says. So look at verse 22 again. Verse 22 says, For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman.

None of the Judaizers or their followers would have taken issue with what Paul wrote there. Paul simply is referencing people associated with Jewish history.

[11 : 31] Abraham's son Isaac was one of those. Isaac's mother, of course, was Sarah. The others were Abraham's son Ishmael and Ishmael's mother Hagar. And we know from the facts that we just reviewed that Hagar was a slave woman and Sarah was the free woman.

Then Paul establishes the basis for his arguments in verse 23 when he says, But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. What he's saying there is that Ishmael, the slave's son, was born by ordinary human means. That's what Paul means when he says that Ishmael was born according to the flesh.

When Abraham and Sarah thought that God was moving too slowly to fulfill his promise of a son to Abraham, Abraham and Sarah decided to take matters into their own hands.

In other words, they tried to accomplish by human works what God said would happen because of a divine promise. Isaac's birth, though, could only have been explained by divine intervention.

[12 : 40] We know that Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born, Sarah was 90 when she gave birth to Isaac. Listen to the conversation between Abraham and God in Genesis 17, verses 15 through 19.

Again, these verses are Genesis 17, verses 15 through 19. And God said to Abraham, As for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will become nations. Kings of people shall come from her.

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, Shall a child be born to a man who is 100 years old? Shall Sarah, who is 90 years old, bear a child?

And Abraham said to God, Oh, that Ishmael might live before you. God said, No, but Sarah, your wife, shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac.

[13 : 49] I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. Then if you stay in Genesis and just go a couple of chapters over, we'll look at Genesis chapter 21, verses 1 through 7.

And Genesis 21, 1 through 7, show that Isaac's conception and arrival happened just as God promised. So here are Genesis 21, 1 through 7.

The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised. And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, God has made laughter for me everyone who hears will laugh over me.

[14 : 59] And she said, who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have born him a son in his old age. So picture the scene here now.

If any Judaizers were listening to Paul's letter being read, they would have agreed with what Paul said in Galatians 4.23. The Judaizers were proud of the fact that they had descended from Abraham.

They knew all about Ishmael and Isaac and the conflict between the two half-brothers. Ishmael's descendants became the Arabs. Isaac's descendants became the Israelis.

And even up to current events, we know about repeated conflicts between the Arabs and the Israelis. Until Galatians 4.21-23, Paul has said many things that would have angered the Judaizers. But with these first three verses, he finally has said something about which the Judaizers could agree with him. Any Judaizer hearing Paul's words here might have even been thinking that Paul was building a great case for the importance of Judaism.

[16 : 10] What Paul's actually done is that he set a trap for the Judaizers. He's about to show us how Jewish history proves that salvation is by grace alone through faith in Christ alone.

He's going to use that Jewish history to disprove the arguments of the very people who wrongly teach the necessity of Judaism or any works-based religion. We've seen how Paul summarized the historical information.

We always need to remember that Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac were real people. But like so many things in the Old Testament, their actual lives symbolize the greater truth that's further developed in the New Testament.

In the second section of tonight's passage, Paul teaches the Galatians the greater truth by giving the Galatians a holy interpretation. So, holy interpretation is your next set of blanks.

verse 24-27, Paul explains what is symbolized in the lives of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac.

[17:22] Look at just the opening phrase of verse 24 first. It says, now this may be interpreted allegorically. John MacArthur noted, the translators of many English Bibles have chosen to transliterate rather than translate the term allegorically.

This has led to difficulty in handling the passage. Usually, an allegory is either a fanciful or fictional story carrying a hidden meaning, or a true story in which the apparent meaning is meaningless. But obviously, the record of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar is both historical and meaningful. It is best to identify this literal historical account as simply analogous to and illustrative of the spiritual truth that Paul explains with it.

The dictionary defines analogy as a partial similarity between like features of two things on which a comparison may be made. Paul simply is comparing the similarities between the story of Abraham and the spiritual truth that he is teaching.

So, except when we actually read the verse itself, we'll refer to an analogy tonight instead of an allegory. And the analogy uses a series of pairs.

[18:45] It includes two women, two covenants, two sons, and two cities. So, with that in mind, let's read all of Galatians 4, 24 through 27 again.

Now, this may be interpreted allegorically. These women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai bearing children for slavery. She is Hagar.

Now, Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia. She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother, for it is written, Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear.

Break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor. For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband. The Holy Spirit directed Paul to use this analogy to show the Judaizers that God's plan of redemption always has been by grace.

The law itself both teaches and illustrates that salvation never has been through the law.

Throughout the analogy, all distinctions between the two sons are based upon the fact that the sons had two different mothers rather than the fact that they had a common father who, of course, was Abraham.

[20:07] The heritage of the line through one mother is lostness and bondage, and the heritage of the line through the other mother is salvation and freedom. So that's why we can say the real important thing is who our spiritual mother is.

So is Paul correct that being a descendant of Abraham is less important than being the descendant of the correct spiritual mother? Well, the best way to answer that question is to go to other places in scripture and find out.

We know that Jews in New Testament times viewed their physical descent from Abraham as being extremely important for salvation. Listen, though, to what John the Baptist said in Matthew 3, 7-10. So here are Matthew 3, 7-10, and it's talking about John the Baptist. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bear fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not presume to say to yourself, We have Abraham as our father. For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

[21:28] Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. For our purposes tonight, verse 9 is the verse I want us to focus on there.

Speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees, John the Baptist said again in Matthew 3, 9, And do not presume to say to yourself, We have Abraham as our father, for I tell you, God is able to raise from

these stones children for Abraham.

Then listen to what Jesus said in John 8, verses 38 through 47, and Jesus said these words to another group of unbelieving Jews.

So here are John 8, 38 through 47. Jesus said, I speak of what I have seen with my father, and you do what you have heard from your father.

They answered him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, if you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.

[22 : 45] This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did. They said to him, we were not born of sexual immorality, we have one father, even God.

Jesus said to them, if God were your father, you would love me, for I came from God, and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.

Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe me?

[23 : 44] Then he says, whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. Neither John the Baptist nor Jesus would have won a lot of converts with opening statements like that, would they?

But they were very direct in what they said. But you can see from these passages that Paul is consistent with scripture when he says that having Abraham as a spiritual father is less important than having the correct spiritual mother.

So let's go back to Galatians 4 and start digging deeper into the analogy. Here are the end of verse 24 and all of verse 25 again.

Talking about Hagar and Sarah, Paul says, these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. She is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia.

She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. John Stott wrote, an understanding of the Bible is impossible without an understanding of the two covenants.

[24 : 59] After all, our Bibles are divided in half into the Old and New Testaments, meaning the Old and New Covenants. A covenant is a solemn agreement between God and men by which he makes his people and his promises to be their God.

God established the Old Covenant through Moses and the New Covenant through Christ whose blood ratified it. The Old Mosaic Covenant was based on law, but the New Christian Covenant foreshadowed through Abraham and foretold through Jeremiah is based upon promises.

In the law, God laid the responsibility on men and said, Thou shalt and thou shalt not. But in the promise, God keeps the responsibility himself and says, I will, I will.

Remember that Mount Sinai is the place where God gave Moses the law, and Paul says that Hagar, the slave, is from Mount Sinai. The law puts people into a form of bondage that they can never escape on their own.

People who try to earn their salvation and to justify themselves through the law become slaves to the law. We've seen many times in Galatians and in other scripture passages like the Sermon on the Mount that the law's purpose was and still is to convict people of their failure to keep God's commands and to convince those people of their need for a savior.

[26 : 27] The law itself can never save anyone. The Arabians were known as the sons of Hagar, and the Judaizers would have agreed with that much too, but that is where their agreement with Paul in his passage would have ended.

Paul says that the children of the law, just like Hagar's children, are slaves, so Hagar stands for the covenant of law, and then he says she also corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

So Paul's really taking it up a notch when he says that Hagar corresponds to the present Jerusalem. Those would have been fighting words to the Judaizers. The Judaizers were telling the Galatians that they must become Jews, and by extension then, they needed to get connected to Jerusalem.

After all, look at all the glorious things the Old Testament scriptures say about Jerusalem, and those things are all true. But the Judaizers failed to grasp the great truths that were taught in Ezekiel and Jeremiah that Jerusalem was predestined to become derelict and desolate.

Jerusalem first became derelict and desolate in the Babylonian captivity, and the same thing would happen again soon after Paul wrote Galatians. Therefore, the Jerusalem of Paul's day was a picture of Mount Sinai in bondage.

[27 : 56] And if the Galatians turn to Judaism, they will be returning to bondage, even as Paul had told them earlier. Just as Jerusalem is about to be cast off, they will be cast off as well if the Galatians abandon their faith.

A contrast comes in verses 26 and 27 where Paul says, But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. for it is written, Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear.

Break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor. For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband. Sarah, Isaac's mother, being a free woman, stands for the heavenly Jerusalem or the Christian church.

You notice Paul adds there, she is our mother. And as Christians, we are citizens of the Jerusalem above. We're bound to the living God by a new covenant, and this citizenship is not bondage, it's freedom.

When Paul talks about the Jerusalem above, he's talking about that heavenly Jerusalem. Citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem are members of the true church.

[29 : 16] Listen to what Paul told the Philippians chapter 3 verses 20 and 21. Philippians chapter 3 verses 20 and 21 say, But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

You probably noticed from your version of Scripture that Galatians 4.27 has a quotation, and that quotation is from Isaiah chapter 54 verse 1.

Isaiah 54 verse 1 says, Sing, O barren one who did not bear. Break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor.

For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married, says the Lord. Here in Isaiah chapter 54 verse 1, these words were originally written to cheer up the Jewish exiles in Babylon, but Paul applies these words to Sarah, a barren woman whose barrenness seemingly stood as an impenetrable barrier to the fulfillment of God's promises to her husband Abraham.

As freedom and greater fruitfulness came to the nation in Babylonian captivity, it also would come to the people in captivity to the law and the law's death penalty. So Sarah, the captive Jews, and the church all have one thing in common.

[30 : 57] The common thing for all three of those is divine power granting freedom and fruitfulness. Their blessings are the result of regenerating grace rather than human effort.

Earlier, we heard the quote from John Stott that ended the old Mosaic covenant was based on law, but the new Christian covenant is based on promises. In the law, God laid the responsibility on men and said, thou shalt and thou shalt not.

But in the promise, God keeps the responsibility himself and says, I will, I will. God first gave his promise to Abraham all the way back in Genesis chapter 12 verses 1 through 3.

And as we read those verses now, listen to how many times God says, I will. So here are Genesis 12 1 through 3.

And this was before Abraham had his name changed to Abraham. He's known as Abram here. Starting in Genesis 12 1, it says, Now the Lord said to Abram, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

[32 : 12] And I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Before we leave this section of our text tonight, let's summarize what the Lord has shown us. Paul is arguing that it is not enough to claim Abraham as our father.

The crucial question concerns who our mother is. If our mother is Hagar, we are like Ishmael, but if our mother is Sarah, we are like Isaac.

The analogy between Abraham's actions and what the Galatian Christians were tempted to do is clear. Abraham was justified by faith, but he sought to accomplish the promise of God in the flesh when he had a son with Hagar.

Abraham's attempt to produce bondage and he was still left without an heir. The Galatian Christians had received justification by faith and now they were considering fulfilling God's promised salvation by human effort by works of the flesh.

[33 : 32] Paul warns the Galatians that they are doing exactly what Abraham tried to do. The moment that they concur that Jewish ceremonies are necessary for acceptance with God and sanctification, they, like Abraham, are resorting to human works to accomplish the purposes of God and the end result of that always will be bondage.

Now that we've covered both the historical information and the holy interpretation, we're ready for the last section of tonight's text. And the truth and what the truth symbolizes lead to some heavy implications.

So heavy implications are your third set of blanks. The chapter break comes at an unfortunate spot here. Paul's thought carries through what we know as the first verse of Galatians 5.

So let's read Galatians 4.28 through 5.1 again. Paul says, Now you brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the spirit, so also it is now.

But what does the scripture say? Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman. So, brothers, we are not children of the slave, but of the free woman.

[35 : 02] For freedom Christ has set us free, stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Paul starts by reminding the Galatian Christians that they indeed are children of promise.

That's a good thing, but they and we never should assume that life will be easy because we are children of promise. The heavy implications that Paul mentions apply to the Galatians and they apply to anyone who's a believer.

One of the implications of being children of the promise is that we will be persecuted by those who are not. Scripture documents that Ishmael was persecuting Isaac when Isaac was weaned.

We can probably assume from that that Ishmael's persecution of Isaac probably started as soon as Isaac was born. Contrary to what the health, wealth, and prosperity preachers say, believers today can expect persecution as well.

Listen to what Jesus said in John 16.33. Jesus said in John 16.33, I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace.

[36 : 19] In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart I have overcome the world. For another example that we can expect persecution, here's what Paul wrote to the believers in Philippi.

These verses are Philippians 1.29-30. Philippians 1.29-30 say, For it has been granted to you for the sake of Christ that you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Possible separation is another heavy implication of who our spiritual mother is. Galatians 4.30 says, But what does the scripture say?

Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman. And this is a reference to Genesis chapter 21, verses 9-12.

And these verses highlight both Ishmael's early persecution of Isaac and the resulting separation. So here are Genesis 21, verses 9-12.

[37 : 37] But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had born to Abraham, laughing. So she said to Abraham, Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.

And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman.

whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

Ishmael had been in the home for at least 17 years, but his stay was not to be permanent.

Eventually, he had to be cast out. There wasn't room in the household for Hagar and Ishmael and Sarah and Isaac. One pair had to go. And for Christians, following Christ can lead to separation from friends and even family.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 10 verses 34 through 39, Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

[38 : 49] For I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it. And whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. So we've seen a couple of heavy implications that are negative.

But Paul closes with heavy positive implications. And one of those positive implications is adoption as sons and heirs of God.

At the end of Galatians chapter 4 verse 30, Paul briefly returns to a subject he covered extensively in the earlier verses of chapter 4. Look at what he says at the end of verse 30 in Galatians 4.

[39 : 52] He says, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman. We know from our studies of Roman adoption that only legitimate sons and heirs receive an inheritance.

And remember what Galatians 4, 4-7 told us. Galatians 4, 4-7 say, The final positive, heavy implication that true believers receive here is liberation.

Look at Galatians 4, 31 through 5, 1 again. Paul said, So brothers, we are not children of the slave, but of the free woman. For freedom Christ has set us free.

Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Now that Christ has come, the law has to go.

Jesus Christ, like Isaac, was a child of promise, born by the miraculous power of God. Once Jesus had come and died for the people, the law had to go.

[41 : 28] God's people have been liberated from the bondage of the law and can experience true freedom in Christ. Christ. The four implications of persecution, separation, adoption, and liberation may remind you somewhat of Peter's words in 1 Peter 5, 10 and 11.

Listen to what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5, 10 and 11. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. A major emphasis throughout Galatians is that historical, geographical, racial, social, and all other distinctions between men have no spiritual significance.

In fact, on a spiritual level, someone's identity as a Jew, Gentile, Arab, or whatever makes no difference. What unbelieving members of these groups have in common is infinitely more important and it's more damning than any of their differences.

Spiritually, unbelievers from any works-based religion are all lost because they are all spiritual descendants of Hagar and Ishmael, religious slaves who futilely struggle to gain their salvation by their own efforts.

[42 : 55] So remember the main idea. The false teaching Judaizers and true believers all have Abraham as their spiritual father. The real difference between them is their spiritual mother.

If Hagar is our spiritual mother, we are like Ishmael. If Sarah is our spiritual mother, we are like Isaac. The religion of Ishmael is a religion of nature, of what man can do by himself without any special intervention from God.

But the religion of Isaac is a religion of grace, of what God has done and still does, a religion of divine initiative and divine intervention.

Isaac was born supernaturally through a divine promise. The Ishmaels of this world trust in themselves that they are righteous. The Isaacs trust only in God through Jesus Christ.

The Ishmaels are in bondage because this is what self-reliance always leads to. The Isaacs enjoy freedom because it is through faith in Christ that men are set free.

[44 : 04] So for us, we must seek to be like Isaac and not like Ishmael. We must put our trust in God through Jesus Christ. Only in Christ can we inherit the promises, receive the grace, and enjoy the freedom of God.

As Paul wrote in Galatians 5.1, For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you again for this reminder of what you have done for us by rescuing us from being sons of a slave woman and making us adopted sons of the free woman.

Help us rejoice in that freedom and help us use that freedom to bring more and more people to that freedom when you work through us.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.