

"The Gospel of Grace"

Rev. Erika Martinez-Flores
Galatians 4.1-31
July 2, 2023
Westby UMC & Viroqua UMC

The apostle Paul has used many metaphors to illustrate his argument in favor of justification by faith. In this paragraph, continuing with his reasoning, he makes use of the legal figure of the heir, well known by the brothers of the Galatian churches. He tries to show that being in law is like a minor heir who will not be able to enjoy his inheritance, by the way, during this period nothing differentiated him from slaves, in the same way he shows that the older heir who represents those who are in Christ can fully enjoy his inheritance because of the freedom that Christ has granted them.

Life without Christ is a life of slavery v. 1-3

The heir had no difference with the slave, this was due to the impossibility of a child cannot dispose of property because of immaturity. The word child is the translation of the Greek word **nepios**, which literally means "without the power of speech," denoting a small child.

The child must be under guardians and administrators, the Greek word for guardian is **epitropos**: someone to whose care something is entrusted. Translated as steward in Matthew 20:8, and guardians in Galatians 4:2, the meaning here was that of the guardian of an orphan child, this person was a legal representative of the child. The other word Paul uses for steward is **oikonomos** and it was used of a servant given the task of steward of the child's property.

This inability of the child reached its culmination on a date established by the father, in Roman culture it was between 14 and 18 years of age.

The apostle Paul, after having used the figure of the minor heir as an illustration, now goes on to apply this illustration in the lives of all (Jews and Gentiles), saying: "So we also, while we were children, were subject to servitude under the elementary things of the world." Gal 4:3

Just as the minor was under the guardianship of people who guided him in the same way before the coming of Christ (which represented the minority) all men were subject, subjected or guided by "rudiments of the world".

This word rudiments comes from the Greek, meaning primarily whatever first things arise from, and refers to the misleading speculations of Judaic theories.

All Jewish and Gentile men had their guides, their tutors to achieve their own salvation, the Jews appealed to the law and the Gentiles to their conscience, which was also a law, for Paul, these people were enslaved.

The freedom of those who are in Christ v. 4-7

When the date established by the father is fulfilled, the heir begins to enjoy his assets by the right of the son, Paul making the analogy points out that this majority of age is represented with the coming of Christ that had been established by the Father, God does not act on impulse everything is properly calculated.

Jesus was born of a woman, he tells us about the humanity of Jesus, Christ is the seed of the woman who came to hurt the serpent on the head (Gen 3:15), a descendant of King David (Rom 1:3).

As a descendant of David, Jesus was born under the law, Jesus submitted to the law, was circumcised (Luke 2:21), presented in the temple (Luke 2:22-24), studied the law (Luke 4:16), taught the Jews that they should keep the law, (Matt 7:18-19; 23:3-4).

The two purposes of being born under the law were to redeem those who were under the law, to free them from their yoke and curse (Gal 3:13) and to have us receive adoption as sons, "Under Roman law, an adopted son enjoyed all legal rights related to his father's estates, even if he was previously a slave. He was not a second class son, he was equal to any other son, biological or adoptive, in his father's family."

The proof that we are children of God is that he sends into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, who is the same Holy Spirit and that is why we can address him calling him "Abba Father", (Rom 8:15-16). , the word Abba is the word formed by the lips of the infants, and implies

a total trust, this word was prohibited on the lips of the slaves to address the father of the family.

In Christ Jesus we are like the son of legal age with the right and freedom to fully enjoy the inheritance that we have.

CONCLUSION

Before knowing Christ, we resembled the minor heir since we were enslaved under the rudiments of the world, which is everything that governs, guides and includes what we believe and practice in our lives to achieve God's favor.

Now that we know Christ, we have been freed from these enslaving principles and we have been given the privilege of addressing our God as Abba Father, with all confidence.

So, the question is: if we have already reached the spiritual majority, that is, we enjoy the inheritance, why do we want to return again to the enslaving principles of the law?