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Sermon Notes

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Two Women Represent Two Covenants: Law vs. Grace

Galatians 4:21-31

In Galatians 4:21, Paul speaks directly to people who WANT TO LIVE THEIR LIVES UNDER THE LAW:

Galatians 4:21 you who want to be under the law

To be “under the Law” means to RELY ON SELF-EFFORTS at keeping the law... it means (as John Piper put it) to look on the Law as a “job description for earning the wages of God’s favor”... you, by your own efforts at keeping the moral standards, feel the need to earn God’s favor, earn God’s approval, earn right standing with God...

That’s what it means to be UNDER THE LAW... and Paul here calls it SLAVERY

Four types of people: (Tim Keller)

- 1) **Law-abiding, law-relying:** living in constant reliance on their own obedience to the moral standard... tend to be smug, self-righteous and superior; but also, deep-down, insecure—so they’re touchy, sensitive to criticism, irritable, devastated when prayers go unanswered. People from other religions, but also people who go to church. A lot like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day
- 2) **Law-disobeying, law-relying:** religious conscience based on strong works-righteousness, but they are failing to live consistently in it; therefore, they are more humble and broken-hearted, more tolerant of others, guilt-ridden, given to despair; they may attend church, but they stay on the periphery because they feel so worthless spiritually. They know they’re sinners, but their remedy is trying harder, which only leads to more depression
- 3) **Law-disobeying, not law-relying:** these people have thrown off the concept of God’s laws... they are totally secular and relativistic, or vague spiritually; they invent and choose their own moral standards a la carte, and try to live by them; thus they are often in many ways just as judgmental as the Pharisees; they are trying to earn their own version of salvation by feeling morally superior to others... but their system of righteousness is self-invented, self-defined, self-assessed

- 4) **Law-obeying, not law-relying:** these are Spirit-filled Christians who understand the gospel and are living out of the freedom of it. They obey God's moral law by the power of the Spirit in the grateful joy of knowing that they are totally secure, adopted sons and daughters of God. They know their failures are covered constantly by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. But most Christians in this category still struggle, and tend to see the world either as a #1 (the Pharisee), or a #2 (law-relying failure), or a #3 (secular moralist)... and the degree to which they have these false views is the degree to which they are impoverished spiritually

So... today, we come to one of the most difficult and fascinating sections of Galatians... in which the Apostle Paul uses an ALLEGORY based on the Old Testament to teach the same principle he's been teaching: SALVATION IS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST, not by self-effort based on the Law

Review:

Galatians is one of the most powerful writings ever penned by any human author! A mere 147 verses long, it searches out some of the deepest issues we human beings ever face... going right to the heart of our relationship as sinners with a perfectly holy God.

Paul was writing to the Galatian churches that he had planted by the clear proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They heard the gospel, believed in Jesus Christ, repented of their sins, and received the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. That must have been one of the greatest moments in the ministry of the Apostle Paul... he could see their joy and power in Christ! He could see the transformation of their lives! He could see the fruit of the Spirit at work in them! They were new creations, and were living lives of FREEDOM in Christ... free from fear of condemnation by God, free from patterns of sin, free from idolatrous pagan religions! FREE MEN, FREE WOMEN, FREE CHILDREN... walking in newness of life!

But some time after he left Galatia, some false teachers came. They began preaching a different message to these new Christians... a message of MIXTURE... OBEDIENCE to the Laws of Moses + FAITH in the cross of Christ = salvation... these gentile Christians could not withstand the onslaught of this FALSE GOSPEL:

Galatians 1:6-7 a different gospel-- ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Paul then spends almost two chapters defending his own ministry, his heavenly calling, his heavenly message, so he has the right to address this vital problem.

In Galatians 2:16, he gives the clearest assertion in the whole book of justification by faith alone, not by law:

Galatians 2:16 [We] know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be

justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

And then he lays out plainly his own relationship with Christ:

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Having established his own proclamation of the gospel and his own experience of salvation, he then proves justification by faith in the Galatians' own experience

Galatians 3:2-3 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

Then, Paul traces out clearly how justification by faith not be law is established in Scripture:

- 1) The case of Abraham... justified by faith, not works;

Galatians 3:6 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

- 2) So everyone who believes in Christ is a child of Abraham
- 3) Everyone who relies on the law is under a curse:

Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

- 4) Christ redeemed us from that kind of cursed life... instead, we can walk by the Spirit:

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

The law was given to bring us to faith in Christ...

Galatians 4:21-31 is the culmination of Paul's Scriptural proof concerning justification by faith apart from works

Galatians 5-6 will bring us into some AWESOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS of this doctrine

I. The Historical Background: Isaac and Ishmael, Sarah and Hagar (vs. 21-23)

A. Speaking Directly to the Galatians

Galatians 4:21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?

1. Paul is making yet another DIRECT APPEAL to these drifting brothers in Christ who are breaking his heart
2. He is speaking to those who seem to want to live like SLAVES under the constant demands of the Law
3. He turns the word “law” around on them... and asks, “Do you really know what it says???”
4. Jesus did this a lot with his enemies:

Matthew 12:3 He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?"

Matthew 12:5 Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent?

Matthew 19:4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'"

Matthew 22:31-32 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?

You've read this... read it again!! Read it more carefully!!! You are missing some key insights!!

B. Central lesson: Being a PHYSICAL DESCENDENT of Abraham is NOT ENOUGH

Matthew 3:9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

Jesus... to His murderous Jewish enemies:

John 8:39 *"Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did.*

John 8:44 *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.*

Paul reminds his hearers that Abraham had two sons, and he draws some key lessons from that:

C. The Tragic Story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar

1. Paul's straight statement:

Galatians 4:22-23 *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³ His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.*

2. Genesis 15: the purity of the promise from God... and of Abraham's faith in it

Genesis 15:4-6 *Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." ⁵ He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars-- if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

3. Genesis 16: the twists of unbelief, by Sarah and Abraham

- a. Many years passed after the promise of Genesis 15... God was still not acting on what He had promised
- b. Sarah saw that she continued to be barren... by then, she was 76, and Abraham was 86... the time for her to bear children was past
- c. Sarah got an idea, and took matters in her own hands;

Genesis 16:2 *"The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.*

- d. Abraham acted in self-reliance, according to self-wisdom; God did not command this, Abraham was not looking to God to fulfill His promise
- e. As a result, Abraham lay with Hagar, she conceived and gave birth to a son, Ishmael
- f. This is the son of the FLESH... a son born IN THE ORDINARY WAY... the son of the SLAVE WOMAN

4. The essence of the life under the law is "I am on my own! I must think, I must act, I must make it happen!" The flesh thinks, the flesh chooses, the flesh acts... the flesh gives birth to flesh
5. Ishmael was the son born according to the flesh... human power ON ITS OWN, unaided
6. Trouble came immediately into Abraham's family because of it
 - a. Hagar began to despise her mistress, Sarah
 - b. Sarah began to respond by mistreating Hagar... an on it went
 - c. The son of the flesh!! Immediately bringing distress into the world

D. Isaac... the Child of the Promise

1. Genesis 17: God spoke to Abraham and made it plain that Sarah would be the mother of the child of promise

Genesis 17:15-16 God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

2. Genesis 18: God visited Abraham and Sarah, and made it plain WHEN it would happen

Genesis 18:10 Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

3. Genesis 21: God fulfilled his promise BY HIS POWER in SARAH'S LIFE

Genesis 21:1-3 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.

Super-saturated in GOD language! Truly Isaac was born as a direct act of God's supernatural intervention

Romans 4:19-21 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead-- since he was about a hundred years old-- and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Romans 4:17 the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

E. Isaac was the MIRACLE BABY...

1. Born as a direct fulfillment of a PROMISE
2. Born as the direct result of a supernatural work of His power by the Holy Spirit
3. Born only to the glory of God... not to the cleverness of a human plan or the strength of a human body
4. This is exactly what is said of Christians

John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:5-6 Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 3:8 The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Ishmael is a TYPE of the normal human being... living a normal life by normal human power; seeking to please the master by works of the Law... but he'll never be more than a slave; Isaac is a supernatural creation of the sovereign God...a gift of God's grace

II. The Allegorical Meaning: Two Covenants, Law vs. Grace (vs. 24-27)

A. Paul Turns to Allegory... a Surprising Move

1. Challenging part of Galatians
2. Long history of ALLEGORICAL interpretations of Scripture...
3. Started with Jews living in Alexandria, Egypt... especially under Philo; he wrote an allegorical interpretation of the four headwater rivers flowing from Eden—prudence, courage, temperance, and justice.
4. Typical of the Jewish allegorical interpretation: numerology... Jewish letters standing both for letters and numbers
5. Christian interpreters later used this kind of interpretation as well... Origen (who lived in Alexandria) was a prime example

- a. Origen was constantly looking for secret, spiritual, hidden meanings in the text
 - b. The text was never what it appeared to be, but always something deeper, something spiritual... if you're mature enough to see it
6. Pope Gregory the Great: Job's seven sons represent the twelve apostles; his friends represented heretics; his 7000 sheep represented God's faithful people; his 3000 camels represented wicked Gentiles!!
7. The church has since come to reject the allegorical approach to interpreting Scripture; we seek the Grammatical-Historical approach; following rules of grammar, and the flow of redemptive history to ascertain truth
8. SO... why does Paul use ALLEGORY here?
- a. First, the word "allegory" literally means "to say other than what one seems to be saying"
 - b. A better idea is "ANALOGY"... one thing represents or illustrates another
 - c. I think that's what Paul is saying here

B. The Holy Spirit ALONE Has the Right!!

- 1. Ambulances driving with their lights flashing can run through red lights... so can police... so can the President's motorcade
- 2. Ordinary vehicles have to follow the rules of the road
- 3. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has the right to see a deeper, spiritual meaning in the story of Hagar and Sarah, Isaac and Ishmael

C. Basic Idea: Two Women Represent Two Covenants

^{ESV} ***Galatians 4:24 Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants.***

- 1. Hagar represents the Old Covenant... we see that especially with the Mount Sinai references

Galatians 4:25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

- a. Ishmael, her son, represents UNREGENERATE PEOPLE living under the Law of morality; trying to earn favor with God by their self-efforts; but never more than SLAVES in God's sight

2. Sarah represents the New Covenant... we see that with the reference to the Jerusalem that is above

ESV Galatians 4:26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

- a. Isaac, her son, represents true CHILDREN OF GOD, born by the power of the Spirit; walking in freedom, whose place is heaven

D. Hagar: Old Covenant... Mount Sinai... Present-day Jerusalem

1. Mount Sinai = the place where the Old Covenant Law was given
2. This is the Law that the Judaizers were trying to put on the necks of these Gentile converts to Christ
3. The Law laid out strictures and commandments that were impossible to keep perfectly
4. YET... the people confidently said they would be able to do it

Exodus 19:8 All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do."

Exodus 24:7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."

5. This is the confidence of the FLESH... human pride, human ability
6. Joshua knew the truth:

Joshua 24:19 But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins."

But still they answered:

Joshua 24:21-22 And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD." ²² Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses."

7. So... Hagar, the slave-woman, represents the covenant of SLAVERY that comes from Mount Sinai... everyone who tries to live out these commandments perfectly by their own strength for the praise of their own piety are UNDER A CURSE
8. Mt. Sinai is in ARABIA... the very place where the Ishmaelites settled down; they are the Arabs we know

9. Amazingly, Paul is claiming that these INTENSELY PROUD JEWS... the Judaizers... are like Ishamelites...

Galatians 4:25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.

- a. The Jerusalem of Paul's day was dominated by the Sanhedrin and the High Priest and the Pharisees and Sadducees... all of them unbelievers in Christ
- b. Paul's heart broke over their unbelief

Romans 9:2-4 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel

Romans 10:2-3 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

- c. But here, he says they are IN SLAVERY!!!

Galatians 4:24 One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.

Galatians 4:25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.

- d. They are trying to earn God's favor day after day by meticulously keeping the Law of Moses

Acts 15:10 a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?

- E. But Christians are a Supernatural Race... Born by the Power of the Spirit

Galatians 4:26-27 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband."

1. Every Christian is a miracle... a direct action of Almighty God on the human heart

John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:5-6 Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 3:8 The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

2. Our origin is "from above"... Just like Jesus

John 8:23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

John 17:14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

3. Awesome!!! We Christians are not any "of this world" than Jesus is! In one very powerful way, we are as much "conceived" by the Holy Spirit as Jesus was... not as though we were born of a virgin... but we were BORN FROM A HEAVENLY MOTHER: THE NEW JERUSALEM... the city that is above; she is our mother

4. Isaiah's quote:

Galatians 4:27 For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband."

- a. Isaiah's context: Jews in exile in Babylon encouraged because God would raise them up from the ash heap of history and restore them in large numbers to their Promised Land home; Jerusalem will be a populated city again
- b. The "barren woman" is initially Sarah... but it ends up being Jerusalem, lamenting for her children and her barrenness
- c. Because of the power of the Sovereign God, Jerusalem will overflow with children again
- d. Paul is seizing this image to speak of the huge influx of Gentiles into faith in Christ and into citizenship in the New Jerusalem... the city that is ABOVE

F. The New Jerusalem is Our Home

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ

Hebrews 12:22-23 *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.*

Hebrews 11:16 *Instead, they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

Revelation 21:2-3 *I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*

III. The Application: Living Like Free People, Enduring Persecution (vs. 28-31)

A. Paul Brings the Allegory Home: You Are Children of Promise

Galatians 4:28 *Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.*

1. Understand who you are in Christ!!
2. We are all “brothers” and we are all (like Isaac) children of the promise!!!
3. We are Spirit-born; God sovereignly acted on our hearts and moved in our souls and we were born again
4. HAS THIS HAPPENED TO YOU???
5. What is the “Promise” Made to Us?
 - a. Full forgiveness of sins

Hebrews 8:12 *For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*

- b. Adoption into God’s family

2 Corinthians 6:18 *"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

- c. The Promised Holy Spirit

Ephesians 1:13-14 *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our*

inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-- to the praise of his glory.

d. Promised security in the family of God

John 8:35-36 *Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

e. Promised presence of God till the day you die

Hebrews 13:5 *God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

f. A secure place in heaven

John 14:3 *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

g. Eternal life

John 11:25-26 *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.*

h. Resurrection of the body

John 6:40 *For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

6. We are CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE!!!

7. Have you believed in Christ for these promises

B. Expect Persecution... and Act in Faith

Galatians 4:29 *At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.*

1. The legalists always attack the true children of God

a. The bitterest attacks on Christians usually come from others fiercely committed to religion

b. In Paul's day, it was these zealous Judaizers who attacked him within the church and the unbelieving Jews who screamed for his death in Jerusalem

c. So Paul was getting these Galatian Christians ready to face the persecution and attacks of the Judaizers if they refused to be circumcised and to follow the Laws of Moses... the Judaizers would get very angry and attack them

2. How does this happen now?

- a. In churches in need of revitalization: some of the bitterest attacks come from unregenerate church members, who viciously attack pastors and other Christian leaders who stand up for the Bible and seek to be faithful
- b. In America, unbelieving Jews, zealous for their religion and vigorously against Christ, oppose the gospel in many hidden and many overt ways... they are the children of the earthly Jerusalem Paul mentioned

Jewish activist Rabbi Cheryl Rosenstein's attempts to force Kern High School District in Bakersfield to change the names of school breaks from "Christmas" and "Easter" back to "winter" and "spring."

November 11, 2013: The Jewish Anti-Defamation League expressed disappointment that George W. Bush has decided to move ahead with plans to speak at a fundraising event in Texas for an evangelical group that aims to convert Jews to Christianity.

The former president is scheduled to speak on November 14 at a fundraiser for the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute, a Texas-based group that attempts to convince Jews to convert to Christianity by promoting **the false and offensive notion** that Jews can accept Jesus as their messiah and still be Jewish.

Abraham H. Foxman, ADL National Director, issued the following statement:

We were disappointed to learn that former President George W. Bush has decided to move ahead with his plan to speak at a fundraising event for an evangelical proselytizing group whose stated goal is to convert Jews to Christianity.

President Bush is a friend who has an abiding love and respect for Israel and the Jewish people. I know that he does not represent or embrace the purpose or the mission of this group, and therefore I wish he would not speak there

It's hard to know how many Jewish leaders influential in Hollywood, Wall Street or on college campuses of America have used their influence to hinder the spread of the gospel and to persecute Christians

c. In Israel:

December 25, 1977: Israel's infamous "anti-missionary" law was enacted... . This is a statute that decrees a prison term of up to five years for any gentile attempting to proselytize a Jew away from his faith

- d. In non-Christian countries: zealous Muslims are the literal fulfillment of the Sons of Hagar... they are the Ishmaelites, following the ultimate Ishmaelite religion—Islam—a LEGALISTIC RELIGION if there ever was one!!!

The MAJORITY of antichristian persecution in 2013 took place in Muslim nations... 9 of the top 10 persecuting nations were Muslim

2,123 martyr killings in the world in 2013... 1213 in Syria alone

Persecution done by Muslims from America's allies (Saudi Arabia) and enemies (Iran); Muslims from rich nations (Qatar) and poor nations (Somalia and Yemen); Muslims from Islamic republic nations (Afghanistan) and moderate nations (Malaysia and Indonesia)... even in Kuwait, the nation rescued by America in the First Gulf War

More Christians were killed in Northern Nigeria in 2012 than the rest of the world combined; an Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram is seeking to establish an independent Islamic state in Nigeria with sharia law; and it is bombing churches during worship services

- i) Muslims are viciously persecuting Christians in the Sudan
- ii) Muslims are viciously persecuting Christians in Iran
- iii) Muslims are viciously persecuting Christians in Malaysia
- iv) Muslims are viciously persecuting Christians in Libya

Galatians 4:29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.

- 3. Understand what kind of sufferings our brothers and sisters are going through around the world
 - a. Pray for them
 - b. Educate yourself about their sufferings: voice of the martyrs; persecution project
- 4. Expect the persecution in our country to keep expanding
- 5. Pray for the persecutors: because the ultimate end of them is to be cast out ETERNALLY

Galatians 4:30 But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."

Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

C. Understand Your Status as an Heir

- 1. Heir of God... You will inherit God as your reward

Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

2. Heir of the Kingdom...

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

3. Heir of the New Jerusalem

Revelation 22:14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

4. Heir of the New Earth

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Romans 4:13 Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world

D. Embrace FREEDOM...

1. We are not slaves!!!
2. We are not "under the Law"
3. We do not need to study the "jots and tittles" of the Law to find out how to earn God's favor
4. Galatians 5 will be all about how to live out the freedom of the gospel and of the Spirit in a fruitful Christian life!!!
5. But REJOICE!!!! REJOICE IN YOUR FREEDOM!!!! REJOICE IN YOUR NEW BIRTH!!!! REJOICE IN YOUR STATUS AS SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD!!!!