

Dada

Galatians 3:26-4:7

Key Verse: 3:26-27

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

My little girl Ella turned 15 months this past Monday and she had her 15-month checkup on Friday. She's healthy, growing big and strong, and acts more like a little girl than a baby with every passing day. Just the other day, all on her own, Ella took all her jewelry out of her purse and put on bracelets and a watch on her arm. She put her purse on the other arm, right at the elbow and she picked up one of her dolls and proceeded to walk around our apartment. It was so strange and funny. Here was this 15-month old girl all dolled up with her jewelry, carrying her purse and baby around like she was all grown up. Ella is my daughter and I have a tremendous amount of love for her, not because she is cute or has done something to please me, but because she is my child and that is all I need to love her. Being a dad has given me a tiny bit of insight of who God is as a Father. I can now see that God's love for all of his children is because we are his children, and for us that is something that does not come by heredity, but because Jesus died for us. Because Jesus paid our price, we can be called God's little boys and little girls, and we can call him Daddy.

Before we get into the section of Galatians that we are going to study today, I want to go back a few verses to 3:22 and start from there. Paul wrote in Galatians 3:22-25, “But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.” Before Jesus came and before anybody has faith in Jesus, we are locked up by the law and legalism. In 3:10, Paul quotes from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” According to the law, you are not cursed if you continue to do everything in the law. If you follow all the law, then you are not angering God, but God's law is terribly hard to keep. We are unfortunately sinners by nature. Even if we were to keep everything to the letter of the law all the time, our thoughts and emotions will easily betray the law. Jesus said that even if we are angry with a brother or sister, we are murdering them in our thoughts (Matthew 5:22). That means, that if I yell at my wife out of anger, then I've just murdered her in my mind and I have broken the law. God's law is not merely a code of conduct, but a code of the heart and mind, and because we are sinful, our hearts and minds will always break the law. On top of that, even if we do keep the rules, we tend to become proud of our achievement and that causes us to break the first commandment, where we put ourselves above God.

So the law locks us up. The punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23) and because we have sinned in every possible way, we deserve a horrible death. That's the way that the law locks us up. We are imprisoned and awaiting our execution. So as 3:24 says, “So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.” We were under guard until Jesus came to justify us and set us free by faith in him. Because of Jesus, we no longer need to be under guard and locked up. Instead, as Scripture says, “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (3:26-27) Instead of the death sentence that we deserve, we are adopted and become children of God. Jesus paid our bond and our court fees. Jesus filled out the adoption papers and paid it all so that we can be God's children. The price for our freedom

was no less than the blood of God's one and only Son. Jesus was innocent but he suffered a terrible beating, where his flesh was ripped from his body. Nails were driven into his hands and feet, and he was raised naked for all to see. He was mocked and shamed and ridiculed all for us. "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) Jesus took our punishment. It should have been us on the cross, not Jesus; it should have been me hanging up there. But he was crushed to save me. He was pierced to redeem us. He was punished so that the greatness of our God could be known and those who are his enemies become his dear children by believing what he has done for you.

In Christ, we are all children of God through faith in him alone. When we believe in Jesus, we become baptized into Jesus and clothed with Jesus. When someone accepts Jesus as their savior, God doesn't see that person any more. Instead, because they are clothed in Jesus, God just sees his son. It doesn't matter what background you are from. When you are in Christ, God sees Christ in you. As the passage says, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (3:28) That doesn't mean men cease being men and women cease being women, or that your culture is gone, but that they aren't barriers to coming to Christ. It's not that all men are saved and women are not or that one culture is more perfect than another, but that Christ is our outer wrapper. We are not men and women who are Christian or Korean Christians or American Christians. We are Christian men, Christian women, Christian Koreans, and Christian Americans. We are Christians first; the second word is just spice. Christ is what matters most to our lives.

Since we belong to Christ, we become heirs of the promise that was given to Abraham, the promise of the Holy Spirit. (3:29, 3:14) It is amazing to think that we are given this opportunity. It is amazing to think that we can be heirs of the promise. God told Abraham, "I am your shield, your very great reward." (Genesis 15:1) From the beginning God told Abraham that the reward, his inheritance would be God himself and in Galatians we see that that reward is manifest as the Holy Spirit, one of the persons of God. We were once enemies of God and now we have the opportunity to have God within us and be his heir. That means we inherit heaven and eternal life, all of which leads back to God.

Paul clarifies believers being heirs in chapter 4, "What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world." (4:1-3) When we were under the law, we were in effect slaves, just like children in a household don't have a lot of freedoms that adults do. When you reach a certain age, you are allowed to drive a car. I don't let Ella drive; she doesn't have that freedom. Ella doesn't have access to our family's bank account, and whatever she has is because my wife Viola and I gave it to her. Ella isn't allowed to make family decisions. She is, in many ways, like a slave, until she comes of age. We were in very much the same state in regards to our spirit. We had no rights before God and only deserved death. We could not handle the inheritance that was promised Abraham.

"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship." (4:4-5) On the day that God chose, Jesus came into the world, born of a virgin, to redeem the lost. We were broken, dirty, moldy, and just falling apart, but Jesus purchased us, nonetheless, so that

we could be his children with the full rights as sons. In the culture at the time, only males were heirs. But in Christ, it doesn't matter our gender because we are all one in Christ. It doesn't matter who we were or are; we get the full legal rights as sons of God. We have the full right to God's own Spirit. "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'" (4:6) As we are adopted into God's family, we now gain the right to call God our Daddy. Again, it is such a privilege to call God our Father, to call him Daddy. By being able to do so, we saying that we have a connection to him and we can only say that with his own help. That's why we need the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who calls out. "Daddy." We don't think about that privilege much. We're a culture that feels entitled to everything, but in our sins, we don't have any rights to call God anything. In fact, we have the right to be crushed under God's feet. And yet, God chose to give us that privilege because he wants to be close to us.

So many times, we treat God like he is some far off figure and that we have to do things to please him. The Jews wouldn't even say God's name because they were so distant from him. Humanity likes to treat him like our boss and not our dad. What kind of dad would require his children to perform some task in order for him to love them? What kind of dad would tell his children to clean their room before they could receive a hug? What kind of dad would tell his kids that they would have to get straight A's in order to get lunch? That is a sadistic dad, a dad that is cruel to his children. That type of dad doesn't love his children; he loves himself and only cares how other people view him. God is not like that. While we were still sinners, God died for us (Romans 5:8). God is more loving than we could ever be and imagine, but we treat him like a cruel, sadistic dad. There are people who want to please God and receive blessing by dressing up for worship. There is nothing wrong with dressing up, but dressing up to please God shows that you think that God is happy when you act a certain way. But, you know what, God doesn't care whether you wear suit or not; his own Son Jesus didn't wear pants. There are people out there who are self-righteous because they wear a suit and there are people out there who are self-righteous because they don't wear a suit. Either way, though, is just lipstick on a pig, you are still a sinner at heart, but God loves you, no matter what, because you are his child. You cannot make him love you more, because he loves you more than you can imagine.

Because God loves us like his children, we should respond like he is our daddy. None of us may have had perfect fathers growing up, but God is the perfect Father, and we shouldn't put our preconceived ideas of fathers on God, but know that God is the perfect Father and we should respond like he is. One of the best ways to see how we should respond to God is to look at little kids. Their innocence gives us insight in how we need to see God as our daddy. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3) Little children just unconditionally love their parents. They rely on them for everything and are excited to see them.

My little girl Ella spends her days this summer with her mom, my wife Viola, while I am at work. But Viola tells me that pretty much everyday Ella is non-stop saying "Dada." She just keeps repeating it over and over when I am not there, and a couple of weeks ago, when at BBF, the really young children's ministry, someone asked where daddy was and she cried because she couldn't find me. When she couldn't see me, she incessantly wanted to know where I was and when she couldn't find me, she was upset. When we wander away from God, our reaction should be one that cries out for him. When we don't see him, we should never stop saying, "Dada, dada, dada," until he comes for us. It's really sad that our typical human response to our

being away from God is we blame him for being gone and we do not cry out to him to come close.

And when he comes, we should be so excited to see him. We should be excited to see him working in our lives and in the lives of others. It drives Viola nuts that Ella keeps saying “Dada” all the time, and usually, Viola calls me and we have a little video chat so that Ella can see me. When we connect, Ella’s face is the first thing I see and she has a big smile when she sees my face. She’s excited to see me. When I come home and open the door to our apartment, Ella is usually standing right behind it waiting intently for me to come home. Viola says that I am coming and she runs to the door to see if it is true. Ella is so excited to see me. (Now she’s not entirely a daddy’s girl. She acts the same way when her mommy is gone). Nonetheless, Ella’s excitement for her parents is something that is genuine and so simple. We should have the same reaction to God. We should be excited for God. We should be excited when we see him working. We should be excited to worship him and to hear his words.

Honestly, standing up here, you have a tendency to look a little dead or indifferent about worship most of the time. Where is your zeal for God? Where is your child-like desire for him? Where is your dada? I don’t mean to point my finger at you and look all self-righteous myself. I am no better than anyone in this room. When I see Ella just adore and love me, I’m convicted that I am not that way towards God. I easily get lost in my everyday life that I keep God at a periphery. He’s out on the edges of my life, and not someone that I eagerly desire to be around and want to see. I’m not talking about him nonstop. I’m not overjoyed to see him at work in people’s lives. I’m a rotten son, but I am thankful that God is a father that loves me no matter what. Being a rotten son does not exclude me from God’s love. He doesn’t disown me because I don’t do what pleases him. He’s not sitting up there with a checklist marking off how I fall short of his glory, and that’s because Jesus paid the price and now, when God looks at me, he sees Jesus: not because of what I have done, but because of what Jesus has done.

It all sounds like the same message over and over again in Galatians, but Paul is driving home a point. Our works don’t bring us to God; they don’t make us holy. God makes us holy and that is why we do works. We cannot choose who our father is. We are born to our parents and we were never asked if we wanted to be their child. And it is kind of like that with God. We don’t choose God to be our father, because we are born of God. John 1:12-13 says, “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” Who we are, what we have done or who is helping us does not matter. Those things do no help us to be a child of God. Only God can tell us that he is our Father, only he can make us his own. And he did so, like I said earlier, by sending his one and only Son to this earth to give us life in him. Jesus paid our price to become full sons and daughters of God with full rights as heirs.

What does this look like? The apostle John wrote in 1 John 3, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen

him or known him.” (1 John 3:1-6) “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.” (1 John 3:10) When we truly are God’s children, we become as Christ is. A transformation occurs in our hearts and we begin to love as God loves, we serve as Christ serves, we live as Christ lived. This all happens because of what God has done. “We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

Because Christ came, we no longer have to be locked up, under guard, waiting for our sentence to be carried out. We don’t have to be slaves any more. Chapter 4, verse 7 says, “So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.” God loves each of us so much that he bought us out of slavery and made us his child. Not only slavery, though, but also we were God’s enemy. And instead of letting us fall to rot in slavery, he made his enemy his child. That is a remarkable amount of grace that God has had for us. Even more than that, though, is the fact that we are not some low-level child or redheaded stepchild. We have full rights as sons, and we are made heirs to God’s great kingdom. So take a look at your life. Do you treat God as a cruel boss and taskmaster, who cares more about what you do than he does about you? Or, is God your Dada who loves you for you? God has given you so much and each of us is his child when we accept that the adoption papers have been signed with the blood of Jesus.