



## Sermon – Moving Out in March (They Both Can't Stay Here)

Preached at Cloverdale Baptist Church, 3/20/22

### Galatians 4:21-31

**Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? <sup>22</sup> For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. <sup>23</sup> But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.**

**<sup>24</sup> Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.**

**<sup>25</sup> For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. <sup>26</sup> But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. <sup>27</sup> For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.**

**<sup>28</sup> Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. <sup>29</sup> But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.**

**<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. <sup>31</sup> So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.**

#### **Background:**

Paul writes this letter to the Galatian churches where new Gentile believers were being strongly influenced to add traditional Jewish practices to their newfound faith. This influence came from Judaizers who taught that in order for a Christian to be truly right with God, they must conform to the Mosaic Law or become Jewish proselytes first and then they could come to Christ. So, it was a mixture of grace and works through keeping of the Law. For example, you needed to be circumcised before the Holy Spirit would be poured out on you. Paul is teaching them that we receive the Holy Spirit by faith. Can't have it both ways.

Paul is emphasizing that if you start out by faith, can't finish by trusting in your ability to obey the Law.

I want to look at this from a different perspective that we can apply today. Not an argument against the

Verse 21-23: The legalists argued they were children of Abraham. But Paul reminds his audience that Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac.

Paul starts breaking out the differences between the two sons.

- First Son – was born in bondage; 2<sup>nd</sup> Son – was born free
- First Son - is a product or result of the flesh; 2<sup>nd</sup> Son – was result of the promises of God

Allegory – a story that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning.

Paul now uses the story to show that these two different sons represent the Old and New Covenants.

- First Covenant represented from Mt. Sinai, but the second from Jerusalem.
- First Covenant represents the earthly Jerusalem, but the second the Jerusalem above.
- The woman, Sarah who was desolate will have more children than the first or the bondwoman.
  - This indicates that things are better with the second son rather than the first; things are better under the New Covenant rather than the Old Covenant.

Paul says we who are believers and brothers are like Isaac, we are the children of promise like the second son.

- We are free
- We are not of the flesh but born of the Spirit
- We stand by faith on the promises of God
- The story continues in that Paul states the first son, the child of the flesh, persecuted the child of the Spirit. It is still like that today. Wait....this happened thousands of years ago...how can it still be happening now...even today???
- Paul's instructions to these churches is to cast out the bond woman and her son, because they cannot have the inheritance that the children of the promise and the Spirit have.

So what does all this mean to us today. If Ismael represents the first or the old, if he represents the by product of the flesh, how can we use this story for our good today.

As Christians, we have been set free. He whom the Son has set free is free indeed. We are crucified in Christ. Our old nature no longer lives but Christ now lives in us. But like the Galatians, we still have to deal with the old creeping into our new season.

Like the story, we have an Ishmael at work. We have the old way persecuting and contrary to our new life in Christ. We have an Ishmael working against our ability to stand on the promises of God. Instead of walking by faith, we can be easily drawn back into our first life and away from the promises.

Ishmael represents our previous mistake, the time when what we wanted didn't match up to the things God wants from us. The time when fear and doubt ruled our lives and decisions. Money more important than ministry. Prejudice more than peace. Self more than service. The natural more than the spiritual. Fear more than faith.

Genesis 21:1-14

I used to think Sarah was cruel, but it was necessary....an allegory.

- Isaac – to laugh; God has made me to laugh. When she was barren and in a hopeless situation, facing problems that are no laughing matter, God delivered on His promises and by faith she can now laugh at the bad times because she now has something she never thought she would ever enjoy. Thought she was too old, but it was not too late.
- She saw the flesh, the first son, the mistake, the bondage, making fun of the promise. She wasn't having it. She was saying that decision I made that made sense back in the day but was a mistake, the decision I made when I lacked faith, when I stopped trusting in and standing on the promises, what came out of my past is not going to follow me into my future. Gotta go.
  - Even today, the flesh in us still makes fun and mock when we stand on the promises and try to walk in the Spirit.
  - The flesh still fights and lusts against the Spirit today.
  - My mistake will not occupy my future.
- Abraham's reaction is he is very grieved because he loved his son. So too, we will often find difficulty letting go of our past. We may have some trouble releasing the hurt and pain and heart break from yesterday. But you can't bring the flesh, the bondage, the doubt, the fear into the promise. They can't stay there together....one of them has to go.
- God steps in and tells Abraham to let it go. Only after God gets involved is Abraham able to send his past away.

Application, what is it that you may still be holding onto from the past that you need God to help you to let go? I know like Abraham, it may not be easy because that pain, that disappointment, that mistake, that hurt is a part of you. But it is part of the old you....let it go.

Pack up the previous mistakes, disappointments, failures, fears, disobedience, selfishness, attitudes, pride, wanting to do it your way rather than God's way. It can no longer stay here.

I don't want anything from my past to get in the way of His promises for me. My past has to move out today.....I am free!