

Title: Solid Reasons for Advent Joy

Chris Patton
Galatians 4:1-9
December 3, 2022

Sermon Theme: Advent joy, Christmas joy even in sorrow.

Text Summary

- Our passage begins with Paul saying — ‘we once were enslaved.’
- It then moves towards redemption and adoption and exuberant joy--By the Holy Spirit, our hearts cry Abba Father!
- Paul then exhorts the Galatians to never again return to their former way of life of enslavement to the elementary principles.
- Note: the catalyst that moved the Galatians from enslavement to joyful sonship was what?
- Verse 4 - It was Christmas. It was Christ. It was Jesus.
- The coming of Jesus Christ into the world changed everything for the Galatians and for us as well.
- In Christ and because of Christ, we have every reason to rejoice.

I. Reason to Rejoice: A New era

- The coming of Christ inaugurated a New Era in redemptive history.
- Perhaps we sometimes struggle to have joy in our hearts during this time of year because we do not truly perceive the dramatic difference the coming of Christ has made and continues to make, not only in our own lives personally, but in redemptive history as well.
- Just consider - Prior to the coming of Christ, the Apostle is clear: the spiritual status of both Jews and Gentiles in the Galatians church was verse 3 and verse 9 – enslaved -- enslaved to the weak, the worthless, the elementary principles of the world.
- This reminds us - spiritual bondage, spiritual slavery, enmity with God is the defining condition of all humanity apart from Christ.
- If Christ Jesus had not broken on to the scene -- if there was no first Christmas, all humanity would be forever lost.
- “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son.....”
- Numerous prophecies OT scriptures pointed to the coming of Christ, but the time wasn’t right yet (examples—Genesis 3:15, Genesis 12, 15, Is. 53, Is.61)
- On that first Christmas – Christ Jesus, born of woman, came and everything began to change.
- The baby grew up, lived a perfect life, died on the Cross and rose again -- thereby inaugurating a New Era and a New Covenant, in the blood of Christ.

- Now we live in the New Covenant Age—an era not rooted in obedience to the written code of the Mosaic law; but a new era characterized by the Holy Spirit poured out on all flesh.
- Ever since the time of the apostles, the gospel message, the message of liberty to the captives has been and continues to be proclaimed to the very ends of the earth.
- In this new era, people of every tribe, tongue and race believe the gospel, are adopted into God’s family and by the Spirit living within them, cry Abba father (vs.6)
- There is joy to be had in looking beyond our own personal circumstances and the news feed on our phones— to what Christ our King is doing and promises yet to do.
- The greater purpose of Christmas is even now being fulfilled as men and women boys and girls around the world are brought to faith and repentance and adopted into Gods family.
- One day Christ will usher in yet another era in redemptive history when the He returns in glory, and every tear is dried, and countless multitudes are before the throne exclaiming
- “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”
- All that is reason to rejoice!

II. Reason to Rejoice: A New relationship

- One of the main reasons Christ came into the world on that first Christmas was so that we might be adopted into the family of God and enter into a loving relationship with God as our heavenly Father (vs 4).
- On Christmas Day we give and receive presents. The greatest Christmas gift you will ever receive is the gift of relationship with God as your Father.
- When we believed the gospel, God justified us and adopted us into His family.
- God is our Father and our hearts now cry Abba Father—vs 6.
- We as liberated captives joyfully exclaim that God Himself is our Father!

The Aramaic abba was the term Jesus himself used in addressing his Father....In ascribing to Christians indwelt by the Spirit the use of this same term in addressing God, Paul shows that Christians have a relationship to God that is like (though of course, not exactly like) Christ’s own relationship to the Father. In “adopting” us, God has taken no half-measures; we have been made full members of the family and partakers of all the privileges belonging to members of that family. - Douglas Moo

- Our passage helps us to see that Christmas is in part, about fatherhood.
- It is about the fact that “when the fullness of time had come”, on that first Christmas, Jesus came, in part, in order that His Father, might become our Father.
- One of the very best ways we can celebrate Christmas is to enjoy our relationship with our Heavenly Father which Christ made possible by His coming.

Conclusion

- Even if you have had a trying and difficult year – *it is possible* for this to be a Merry Christmas for you.
- How can that be? First because of Christ, we live in a new era – a new time period – the era of the New Covenant – the age of “no longer enslaved”...the age of the Spirit poured out.

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;*

*Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray—
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.*

Hymn – Amazing Love (Charles Wesley)

- Secondly, that because Christ came on that first Christmas, you have been adopted into God's family.
- You are a child of God.
- God is your heavenly Father.
- In this we greatly rejoice in this Advent Season.

Questions for Discussion/Application

- Re-read the text, Galatians 4:1-9. What initial insights and observations do you have from reading this passage?
- We all desire to have Christ-centered joy in this season. What are some of the roadblocks/obstacles that can hinder us from being joyful in the Advent season? What are some of the things that can keep you from having joy at this time of year?
- Generally speaking, what difference has it made that Christ has come into the world? More personally, what kind of thoughts come to your mind when you consider what your life would be like apart from Christ coming into the world that first Christmas?
- What are some of the blessings that have come to us as a result of Christ coming into the world?
- What do you think of the idea that God is our Father?
- Do you ever struggle to live in the good of the fact that God is your Father?
- What difference can it make in our lives as believers to grow in our understanding and awareness of the fact that God is our Father?
- How practically can we grow in our understanding and awareness of God as our Father?
- Consider taking time to pray that God would help us to truly rejoice in this Advent Season in Christ, in who He is and what He has done.