

**February 5, 2017
Re-Created to Live in Harmony
Galatians 3:26-29; 4:1-7**

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,

²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs

¹What 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.

²The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.

³ So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world.

⁴ But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba Father."

⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ, I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord. (Psalm 122:1) The Lord's house is where you should find like-minded people. The Lord's house is where all that seek refuge should be welcomed. The Lord's house is where the truth is spoken and alternate facts are called lies. If this is where you wish to be then we say welcome. Welcome to an American Baptist church where we honor the words Paul wrote to the church at Galatia over 2000 years ago.

28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

This morning we begin a series of four sermons from Paul's letter to the church at Galatia. It would be helpful if you would read the entire letter, but if time is limited please read chapters 3 – 6. To prepare you for this series and your reading, here are a few facts about Galatia and the writing of the letter.

During the time of Paul, Galatia was a Roman province and located in the center of the region we now call Turkey. As a Roman province, the city was the third largest in the region after Rome and Alexandria. The region had fertile ground and many people moved there for the farming opportunity. Paul and Barnabas visited the region during their first missionary journey. This letter was written from Antioch after the visit and before the disciples met in Jerusalem for what we now call the Jerusalem Council.

This letter has a single purpose: **to explain that Gentiles who wished to become Christians did not need to become Jews first, in particular, they did not need to be circumcised.** There were other Jews, called Judaizers who were running around teaching alternate facts. And then just as now when you teach alternate facts you must discredit the person with the facts that don't agree with yours. In this case the Judaizers attempted to discredit Paul by saying he was not an apostle. Paul's letter therefore begins with an explanation of how God called him to be an apostle.

With that as background would you pray with me and for me as I work with this theme:

HOW ARE YOU LIVING?

SHALL WE PRAY?

Father God, we greet you this morning with Thank You. Thank you for sleep and waking. Thank you for food, clothing and shelter. Thank you for allowing us to call on you when our hearts are heavy. Thank you for answering prayer. Now we ask that you open our hearts, heads and hands in order that we may become the hands and feet of your Son Jesus the Christ. Abba, I ask that the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you for you are my strength and my redeemer. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen.

HOW ARE YOU LIVING?

One way of talking about living is to talk about how you are doing what you do in relation to something else. For example, a parent might say to a disobedient child "you are living on borrowed time" or my personal favorite "do you wish to live to get any older". A young person might say to an older person "you are living in the past". Or perhaps after witnessing the mistreatment of another you have even wondered "how can you live with yourself"?

As a Christian you should have some phrases, some actions, some thoughts, that apply to your living.

I want to speak to **three** of them this morning.

I. LIVING LIKE I HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY GOD THE FATHER?

Paul tells the church at Galatia and therefore us that when we accept Jesus the Christ as our Lord and Saviour we have all the same rights and responsibilities of any other person who does the same thing. We don't have to become Jewish first; we don't have to follow the Mosaic Law; we don't have any dietary restrictions. As a matter of fact, our changed status is like being freed from slavery, the slavery of sin.

So, what might this look like in the 21st century? All those who say they are Christian should be known by their works. Don't get confused, **I did not say your works would save you, I said it would identify you. LISTEN TO THE SCRIPTURE**

*But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works."
Show me your faith apart from your works,
and I will show you my faith by my works. (James 2:18)*

*For as the body apart from the spirit is dead,
so also faith apart from works is dead. (James 2:26)*

*So whoever knows the right thing to do and
fails to do it, for him it is sin. (James 4:17)*

Now, let's ask the hard questions.

- Can anyone tell you have been adopted into the family of God by your walk, your talk, your actions?
- Do you tell others about your family and invite them to study with you and find God for themselves?
- If someone read your social media page, overheard you on Friday night, or ran into you on Saturday night would they know you were a Christian, washed in the blood of the Lamb, saved, sanctified and set aside?

ARE YOU LIVING LIKE YOU HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY GOD THE FATHER?

II. ARE YOU LIVING LIKE YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER WHO ADOPTED YOU?

I read an article in which the author described a child's relationship with his father. Allow me to place it in my own words. As a baby, we said "da-da" and that cry covered all our wants and needs. "Da-da" was to know if we were cold, hunger or wet. "Da-da" was expected to translate those syllables into "I am lonely", "I am scared", "I am in pain". "da-da" was good morning, good night and I love you. Da-da was the beginning of relationship.

At some point, we graduated to daddy and daddy was the go to person for hugs and kisses; an intermediary with Mommy when she was unreasonable and a soft touch for an advance on our allowance. Daddy taught us to tie our shoes, ride our bikes and maybe even change the oil and tires on our car.

Then that **same man** eventually become Dad or Old Man. We didn't need him at night for we have an ADT security system and a mood elevator under our pillow. We don't need hugs and kisses for we have a significant other for that. We are wearing designer shoes without laces and have a AAA card in our wallet. In fact, we have really out grown the relationship and so we call or maybe visit at Christmas, Easter and Father's Day.

The author went on to say that some of us though adopted by God the Father and covered by the blood of us Son act as if we have out grown the relationship. We don't call **until** we need something, we only stop by His house for the birthday and resurrection of His Son and most Father's Day we are someplace eating bar-be-cue and probably forgot to say thank you for that.

In my early 20's I worked with a woman who had been adopted. We had friends in common so I saw her socially and met her parents. She was tall and blonde and elegant and her parents were both short, dark haired and very plain but it was obvious from the first meeting that they adored their daughter. But they had different last names. I knew the daughter had not been married and so I asked why don't you use your parents last name. She said it was too long, embarrassing and did not look good on her business cards. I was shocked then and I am still shocked. How could you refuse to use the last name of the people who took you in when your birth parents turned you away?

I wonder what God thinks/feels when fail to use His name or use it in vain. What does God feel/think when we lay Him down so we can take care of our business? What does God think/feel when we let dust collect on His Word? What

does God feel/think when people are surprised when we tell them we go to His house?

ARE YOU LIVING LIKE YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE? FATHER WHO ADOPTED YOU?

III. ARE YOU LIVING IN HOPE?

For the past 16 days, we have been living in a country where those in charge do not walk the talk. Or maybe they do walk their talk but it appears to have little to do with “bring me your tired your poor” or “one nation under God”. They declare themselves to be Christian but their actions say differently. They make decisions without thought or regard of the impact of those within the country and those outside of the country who may need to come home. They speak alternate facts to justify their actions.

But as children of God we are called not to despair. We are called to be witnesses and to do what is in our power to do.

*⁸ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;
we are perplexed, but not in despair;*

⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

*¹⁸ So we fix our eyes **not** on what is seen, but on **what is unseen**,
since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Cor 4)*

In the past 16 days, I have **seen hope** in action.

People going out of their way to help each other

People who have never before engaged me in conversation doing so

In the past 16 days, I have **been hope** in action.

Reading and listening to the news so I might be informed

Praying for those within and outside of my circle of influence

If you have ever been out for a meal with me, you might have experienced my lack of patience with poor service and disrespect. Yesterday was another of those days – the order arrived incomplete; things asked for never

arrived; the bill was inaccurate. As I pushed back my chair to find a manager my sister said “don’t, she may really need this job”.

I can't help but wonder if her statement was not born out of compassion that comes when you begin to understand... but by the grace of God.

My challenge to you this week is to:

LIVE LIKE YOU BEEN ADOPTED BY GOD THE FATHER?

**LIVE LIKE YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
FATHER WHO ADOPTED YOU?**

LIVE LIKE YOU HAVE HOPE?