

Galatians *Freedom in Christ*

4. Orphans or Heirs?

Galatians 3.6 - 3.27

Aim: To understand Paul's argument about what the Law of the OT was for, and to think about how being adopted by God shapes our identity.

To start with:

What were your childhood dreams? Did any of them come true?

Engaging with the Text:

Paul is arguing vehemently in Galatians that people are saved by putting their faith in Jesus, not keeping rules of any sort - not even the rules God gave to the Jews in the Old Covenant. People are (quite sensibly) asking "*What was the point of the law then? Was it useless?*" Paul answers in a number of ways.

1. Give pairs/ small groups the following sections and ask them to discuss and summarise what Paul says in their verses that answers this question.

Gal 3.6-9

Gal 3.10-14

Gal 3.15-18

Gal 3.21-26

Now ask half the group to imagine they are Jewish Christians and the other half gentile Christians then get one person from each group in order to read aloud their summary and conclude by reading **3.27-29**.

2. Ask people how they feel about what Paul is writing from their 'imagined' ethnic background.

What strikes you?

3. How do you feel about Old Testament law? How should we regard it/ use it today?
4.
 - a. We often talk about being 'adopted' or 'God's children'. **Read 4.1-7.** According to Paul what are the benefits of adoption by God?
 - b. When children are adopted they often struggle to grasp that new identity. In what ways do you think they can struggle and why?
 - c. How far do you think those sorts of issues affect us as Christians when we think about our heavenly father and spiritual family?
5. Paul begs the Galatians to accept their new status as inheritors of God's kingdom, and live like heirs - not act like spiritual orphans again. How might we encourage each other to live in our new identity, not the old one we had?

