

**12.19.10 / Galatians 3:27-29 and 4:1-7****Passage Insight**

When we are adopted into the family of God, we are given full and complete rights and privileges of being in God's family, being called "... heirs according to promise." In taking a look at what this phrase means, let's examine what it means to be Abraham's offspring. In Genesis 15:5-6, we read the following: "And he [The Lord] brought him [Abram] outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." Galatians 3:16 says this: "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ." The Lord promised to make Abram's offspring who would descend from Abram's earthly line, the Christ, many, though Scripture says that He is one. How do we make sense of this? Jesus Christ is the true promise of the Lord, and when we are saved by Him, we no longer live, but rather Christ lives in us, as we see in Galatians 2:20, which reads: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Likewise, 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 says this:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."

In short, when we "... have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27), we lose our old identity, and our new identity is Christ Himself. For this reason, the One offspring of whom Paul speaks is also many, as Jesus adopts the multitudes as co-heirs into the family of God.

When Abram began to have faith in God's promise, everything changed for him, and so it does for us as well. So complete is this transformation that our very identities are changed when we begin to have faith in the Lord's promises to make us part of His family. Who we are changes radically when we are brought into the family of God. We are no longer considered rebels who will suffer God's wrath, but rather treasured children who will enjoy perfect fellowship with the Lord for all eternity. The contrast could not be more stark. The dirtiest stain becomes clean. The vile heart becomes pure. The very essence of who we are changes as we receive the Spirit of the Lord and are empowered to live not by our own power, but rather by the power of the God's Spirit (Ephesians 5).

All of this is made possible not by our actions, but rather by the actions of Christ Himself, the God-Man, who makes all things right once again. We are made sons of God by THE Son of God. Jesus Christ is and has always been in the family of God as God's only begotten Son (John 3:16), and when we believe in Him, and it is no longer us who live, but rather Christ who lives in us, we are considered family as well. This is what it means to be heirs according to promise, fully adopted into God's family.

**Application Questions****Trying To Earn God's Favor**

- 1) Where do you struggle to see that you've been completely brought into the family of God?
- 2) How do you continually try to earn your way into what cannot be earned?
- 3) How do you compare yourselves with others either inside or outside the body of Christ?

- 4) Jesus' love frees us from division and instead unites us as one in Him. Pray for unity within your group, and thank Jesus for the freedom He has given us as co-heirs with Him.

**Old Identity**

- 1) Where do you see evidence in your life of living from your old identity?
- 2) Where do others see it (maybe you've written this off in the past)?
- 3) How should things look different if it is truly Christ who lives in you, not you who lives in you?

**Missing Your Need For Jesus**

- 1) Where do you struggle to see your need for adoption into God's family?
- 2) At the root of this is pride, entitlement, some other sin, or maybe just a failure to see your need for salvation. Which is it for you?
- 3) How can your Community Group help you with this struggle? Be specific.
- 4) Jesus stands ready to forgive every last sin and to welcome us into His kingdom as co-heirs with Him. What does repentance look like for you?

**Arrogance and Apathy**

- 1) Where do you use your salvation as a platform for arrogance, taking credit for the work that was done on your behalf?
- 2) Where are you instead apathetic in your response to what the Lord has done for you?
- 3) The good news is that Jesus offers grace for us either way! What do you need to do to seek healing where your arrogance or apathy has hurt others?
- 4) Pray for healing, and thank Jesus for grace upon grace!

**Sources**

- Prayer
- Thom Asta
- ESV translation of the Bible