

Kairos: The Purpose of Christ

Kyle Idleman wrote a book two years ago entitled *Aha: The God Moment that Changes Everything* (2014). In his book, Idleman states that the “aha” moment is “a sudden recognition that leads to an honest moment that brings lasting change.” We all need these moments that lead us to genuine transformation. Paul is confronting his Galatian readers who also need such a moment. They were seeking to return in their hearts, their conduct, and their traditions to the Judaism in which they had been trained. Paul seeks to describe for them why they must not do this. In chapter 3 of Galatians, Paul gives them the history of our redemption—God’s promise to Abraham, the giving of the law to Moses, and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Paul’s powerful reasoning in this text.

Galatians 4:1-7

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, **2** but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. **3** In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. **4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

I. **If you don’t have Jesus, what you have is not good enough (vv.1-3)**

As we can see in 3:19-22 and in 4:1-3, we were heirs, indeed, but still in the minority before the coming of Christ, and thus we were ruled over by tutors and guardians. This tutoring role was the role of the law in our lives. In order to enjoy our inheritance we must reach majority, which we do only through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul’s concern is that these Galatian Christians were returning to “the elementary principles of the world,” that is, the ABCs of Judaism. Paul is not critiquing the law, he is only critiquing our corrupt use of the law in allowing it to hold us back from true knowledge of Jesus Christ. John Stott in his commentary says, “God intended the law to reveal sin and to drive men to Christ; Satan uses it to reveal sin and to drive men to despair.” God meant the law as an interim step to man’s justification; Satan uses it as the final step to his condemnation. God meant the law to be a stepping-stone to liberty; Satan uses it as a cul-de-sac, deceiving his dupes into supposing that from its fearful bondage there is no escape.”

II. **If you do have Jesus, what you have changes everything (vv. 4-7)**

In Jesus Christ, God has given us some wonderful gifts.

a. He gave us His perfect love (v.4)

Notice that His loving gift is extravagant: He “sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law...” He loved us so much that He sent His beloved Son to suffer and die for us. Notice also in verse 4a that this gift was perfectly timed. It was in “the fullness of time.” God in His providence had brought the Roman government into existence with all of the peace, order, and new roads that allowed the gospel to flourish throughout the world; He gave us in centuries past the philosophy, language, and culture of the great Greek thinkers which gave categories for the world to understand the gospel; He instilled within both pagan worshippers and Jewish worshippers a restlessness which caused humanity to long for the coming of the Messiah. This perfect gift was perfectly timed.

b. He gave us our freedom (v. 5a)

Before we gave our lives to Christ, we were “enslaved” by the tutelage of the law and our traditions. When we came to Christ, we became mature adults, having reached majority with all of the rights of adult children. Because of Christ living in our hearts and setting us free, we now

live lives directed from hearts that love Him..

c. He made us His sons (v. 5b)

So many children of Christian homes reach adulthood with only the ethics and obligations of Christianity and not its great doctrine of adoption as sons; but Paul teaches the Galatians that in Christ they had been made sons and daughters of God.

d. He gave us His Spirit (v. 6)

This is the second great mystery of our faith. We have not only received Jesus Christ, but we have also received His Spirit, Who was sent into our hearts. Because of this great gift we have God's "DNA" in us. We are not only adopted, we have been made His "natural/supernatural" children. With His Spirit living within us, we now have a new power to live the Christian life (see Romans 8:14). One commentator put it this way: "Legalists are led by the law; hedonists are led by their desires; materialists are led by their possessions. But sons of God, Christians, are led by the Spirit."

e. He gave us His estate (v. 7)

Oh, what a future is ours! With all the sadness of human brokenness and death, and with all of the tears and sorrow of this inhospitable world, we have unspeakable joy. The light of Christ's Advent pierces through the darkest realities of this life.

The purpose of Christ's Advent was to ensure that God's people would be completely reconciled to Him in an intimate relationship of child, indwelt by God Himself, with the assurance of inheriting all the possessions of God.

Discussion Questions

1. To whom did Paul address his concerns in the text? What was it about them that caused Paul to write so urgently?
2. Can people who grow up in evangelical churches be "enslaved to the elementary principles of the world?" (v. 3) How does this happen?
3. What did Paul mean by "the fullness of time" in verse 4? Why was the timing of the Incarnation important?
4. What benefits of knowing Christ does Paul mention in verses 4-7? Why are these benefits life-transforming?
5. Why do we often forget or ignore these benefits? What happens to us when we do?

Going Deeper

1. How are you most often tempted to co-opt Jesus into your self-centered life?
2. What measures do you take to regain a Christ-centered perspective on your life?
3. What from this text means the most to you? Why?