

Heirs According to the Promise

✦ **beyond the chaperone (vv.23-25)**

✦ **adopted as sons (vv.26-29)**

In the name of God's Son our Savior, dearly loved of God:

Why does it seem some folks are only just beginning to ask if the world's gone crazy? A few are still with us who lived through the madness called "World War II." Was it any less insane during the Korean Conflict or the war protests and riots of the hippies in the '60s, when some of us grandparents were in grade school? One of the great blessings of history studies is to prove the Bible right; there really is *"nothing new under the sun."* (Ecclesiastes 1:9) This is also true of gender issues, the battle of the sexes, feminism and machoism – it's all been part of this mad, mad world since the Fall into sin. Everyone's been hurt by it, but only God can heal it. In fact, God has anticipated all this pain and provided day-by-day, eternal healing in His Holy Word, this Book of Books. One beautiful phrase to unite men and women is right here in our text. Together we are **Heirs According to the Promise**.

✦ **beyond the chaperone (vv.23-25)**

The area called Galatia where Paul was writing this letter was known for wild and crazy people. It seems they were highly emotional as happened on Paul's first mission trip there. The crowds in Lystra were so impressed when Paul and Barnabas healed a lame man that they wanted to worship Barnabas as Zeus and Paul as Hermes. But when Paul and Barnabas stopped them and preached God's kindness as their Creator, *"some Jews...from Antioch and Iconium...won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe."* (Acts 14:19f NIV84)

Crazy enough for you? Now we find out in Paul's letter to the Galatian Christians that they are a reflection of their volatile culture. Some were ready to abandon faith in Jesus just because some new arrivals from Jerusalem insisted on Jewish dietary laws. Have you ever known people who seem to glom onto every strange idea that comes along? Paul wants them to mature in faith **beyond the chaperone**.

That's what God's law was like, a **chaperone**. In ancient times a trusted male servant was put in charge of the master's son to make sure he didn't get into trouble on the way to school. Others did the teaching, but the **chaperone** was along every time the lad left the house. Interestingly, another translation of the Greek for **chaperone** is "tutor," not the teaching type, but like the tutors in our preparatory schools. They're young men or women assigned to live in the dormitory, limited teaching, lots of parenting.

Many years ago a tutor asked some boys, "Do you know anything about picking the lock in the back of the Administration Building?" Apparently some needed to get their gym clothes for laundry. That ended with the offer, "Just come get me. I'll let you in.." Deadbolts replaced those old style locks.

Imagine you just watched a basketball game where your classmates kept yelling at the ref. He happened to be a tutor who coached the freshman team. The more the sophomores complained, the worse his reffing got. But the complaining continued after the game. You're sitting on the stage and hear a rustling behind you. There's the tutor with one of your classmates in his right, the other in his left hand – up against the wall, feet off the floor. One solid scolding...a whole year of respect.

That's how God sometimes had to treat His ancient Israelites under Moses' law. Paul writes, *"Before this faith came, we were held in custody under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was*

revealed. ²⁴*So the law was our chaperone until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith.* ²⁵*But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a chaperone.*" ¹ God had to severely discipline His people in the time of the Judges like Samson, or kings like David, and David himself. But His motives were always in hopes of blessing them – much like our dormitory tutors wanted blessings for us students.

Loving disciple works when students learn the great Good News that we are truly *justified by faith* in Christ alone. At a school reunion our former Dean of Students was reminiscing about how they were always so proud of the students. Mostly he was just being nice. But he recalled one incident on a choir tour where everyone got back on the bus and were ready to leave. The store owner hurried out with a box. He told the Dean, "I'm so amazed at your students. They're so respectful of my store. And they paid for everything! I just want to give you this box of candy bars in thanks for being so good." Firm and faithful discipline with loving kindness in Christ provides powerful Gospel motivation. We can see **Beyond the chaperone**, that because of Jesus and by virtue of our baptism we are...

✦ **adopted as sons (vv.26-29)**

Many translations, even the old King James Version, interpreted this, "*Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*" But something is lost unless we translate the Greek more literally, "*In fact, you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.* ²⁷*Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* ²⁸*There is not Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one and the same in Christ Jesus.* ²⁹*And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise.*"

In those days outside the Promised Land of Israel, women had very few rights and girls next to none. Greeks and Romans thought girls were just another mouth to feed and left infants girls to die on the hillsides. In modern times where a government enforced "One-child-per-couple" laws, baby girls were abandoned at orphanages so they could try again for a boy. But wherever this Holy Bible has gone, the fact that God "*created them male and female*" has raised the status of girls and women. Different roles but equal status as **Heirs According to the Promise** – we have eternal life in Jesus Christ our Savior. For God's love and blessings, "*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*" His powerful love heals infant hearts with His Word-powered water because "*all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ.*" We are all children of God who actually want to be good inside and out.

The Holy Spirit relieved cultural problems in the early church: "*There is not Jew or Greek.*" Prejudice gone! "*There is not...slave or free.*" Paul wrote to his Christian friend Philemon about taking back his runaway slave Onesimus, "*no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.*" (Philemon 16 NIV84)

"*There is neither...male or female, for you are all one and the same in Christ Jesus.*" 1 Samuel 25 illustrates. Beautiful, intelligent Abigail was married to a man living down to his name; "Nabal" means "fool." He so insulted the future king, that David was on his way with an army to wipe out every male on their ranch. Abigail found out and rushed to the rescue of David. She knew there's "*a time to be silent and a time to speak.*" (Ecclesiastes 3:7 NIV84) Abigail rescued David from murder with a powerful emotional word picture: "*The life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.*" (1 Samuel 25:29 NIV84) Without pandering or patronizing for Jesus sake honor for women and respect for men!

"*And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise.*" From Abraham through Moses' law **the chaperone**, finally through Christ **adopted as sons** – "What a Friend we have in Jesus!" Truly He is the Friend of sinners whose peace guards our hearts, who lives the love He gives. By His powerful **Promise** we are **Heirs** together of forgiving grace! Amen.

¹ EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2017. NPH: 800-662-6022; also Amazon-Kindle. For *The Preacher's Apprentice (TPA)* sermon study or copies: m.cordes@comast.net . New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at www.wels.us/newlife . 180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126